



**MINUTES OF THE
FIRST BARRIER FREE SUB-COUNCIL MEETING OF 2022**

DATE: March 22, 2022

TIME: 9:02 a.m. to 12:25 p.m.

LOCATION: videoconference

PRESENT: *Sub-Council Members*

Karen Muir, Chair
Bev Knudtson
Robert Lipka
Bob Macklon
Tanya Befus, Vice Chair (until 12:15 p.m.)
Ron Wickman
Georg Rath
Lee Ramsdell
Chris Chamber
Helen Evans Warren
Gunjan Dhawan

Safety Codes Council

Allison Karch, Kathryn Derkach

Alberta Municipal Affairs

Linnie Tse

REGRETS: Deliany Sather, Donna Monkhouse, Brian Huxley

GUESTS: Corey Klimchuk (BSC Liaison), Shannon Wiebe (CART)

RECORDER: Allison Karch

2022 MEETINGS: June 14, September 27, December 1

1. Meeting Opening

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. A round table introduction was held and members were reminded that their primary duty is to act in the interest of safety in the built environment for the benefit of all Albertans.

1.1 Agenda Adoption

The following adjustments were made to the agenda:

- Item 4.5. was renamed 'Code Change Breakout Time' from 'Working Group Breakout'
- Items 4.6.1.1., 4.6.1.2., 4.6.2.1., 4.6.2.2 were removed

Helen Evans Warren / Tanya Befus moved that the agenda be adopted, as amended; CARRIED

1.2 Adoption of the December 1, 2021 Minutes

Lee Ramsdell / Bev Knudtson moved to adopt the minutes of the December 1, 2021 meeting, as circulated; CARRIED

2. Matters for Decision

2.1. Closed Session

Helen Evans Warren / Bob Macklon moved to enter closed session; CARRIED

Lee Ramsdell / Bob Macklon moved to leave closed session; CARRIED

2.1.1. Vice Chair Election

The Chair called for nominations and Tanya Befus indicated she would like her name to stand as vice-chair. Two further calls for nominations were held and there were no further nominations.

Tanya Befus was appointed Vice-Chair by acclamation.

3. Review Matters Arising/Action List

	Item	Action	Date	Responsible	Status/Update
1.	Link to the Ministry of Community and Social Services	As issues arise and expertise is required, a guest may be needed. Municipal Affairs will look into a connection at the Ministry of Community and Social Services. AMA was able to connect with the Disability Advisory and Engagement branch at the Ministry of Community and Social Services. They will provide qualitative and quantitative data on issues related to the built environment.	Nov 20/19	Tse	Ongoing.

2.	Training on the accessibility requirements in the upcoming NBC(AE)	It was asked whether there will be training on the accessibility requirements in the upcoming edition of the NBC(AE) and whether that training would include rationale for the changes. Council staff will request an update from the Training department about what accessibility information will be in the Building SCO code update training.	Oct 13/21	Council Administration	There is no update yet because the code is not yet published; an update will be brought after the code's publication.
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4. Matters for Discussion

4.1. BSC Liaison Report

The BFSC Liaison reported:

- The Adaptable Dwelling Units document was reviewed at BFSC and comments from BSC members were captured and posted in the BFSC portal for this meeting. It was noted that these are not conclusions or recommendations from BSC but simply their initial comments for consideration.
 - A consideration identified by BSC is that the definition of adaptable seems to be loose and could be interpreted different ways. BFSC could consider what adaptable means and make a recommendation to put some parameters around it.
- AMA has notified NRC of the Alberta-specific variations that are priorities for being considered for inclusion in the national code. Section 3.8. (the accessibility section) is among the items identified.

4.2. Administrator/AMA Report

The Provincial Barrier Free Administrator reported the following:

- Section 3.8 is a priority because there are a number of changes to it in the national code. AMA is awaiting the final version from NRC. The Administrator is working with others at AMA to create a comparison chart of the changes and what will need to be prioritized within that. If there are significant items that can't be changed in the NBC(AE) this time, they can be put into the next edition of the Guide.
- Shawn Ewasiuk is the new Assistant Deputy Minister. His former role as Executive Director will be filled.
- Most AMA staff will be back in the office April 4th.
- A question was asked about priority items and door closers, and it was noted that this will be looked at more in depth in item 4.4. on this agenda.

4.3. Council Updates

- Office reopened March 14, staff may work from home on some days.
- The next meeting in June is tentative scheduled for in-person.
 - Staff will send an email before the next meeting to measure how comfortable members are with attending meetings in person, and whether they intend to attend in person or virtually.
 - There will always be an option to attend virtually but the meeting will be held in person only if the number of people attending in person equals quorum.

- The Council is looking for members' input on what safety system data would be beneficial to collect and analyze.
 - Please feel free to provide your thoughts by email to allison.karch@safetycodes.ab.ca
- Council Member Training
 - New Member Orientation: April 28, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
 - Contact gerry.letendre@safetycodes.ab.ca to register.
 - These will be offered in the fall as well.
 - Appeals Training: November 15 & 16, 2022.
 - [Appeals Overview video](#)
- Watch past webinars, including Variances, Refusals, and Appeals on the [Council website](#).

4.4. National Building Code Alberta Edition Review

The NBC 2020 will be published soon, then an Alberta Edition will be developed that has some variations from the NBC 2020. The target timeline for publication of the Alberta Edition is before the end of 2022. In particular, Section 3.8. is Alberta-specific and is generally more stringent than what's in the NBC. It was noted that new items can be incorporated into the next edition of the Barrier Free Design Guide, but it is not enforceable.

The aim of this agenda item is to identify any accessibility-specific items for potential incorporation into the next Alberta Edition that would not require a significant amount of work, in order to meet the target timeline. Since BFSC is a policy-focused sub-council, BSFC would identify the issues and the policy recommendations that would underlie the technical code provisions, and the technical details would be developed by BSC.

Council staff have created a shortlist of items that have been worked on by the BFSC working groups that are specific to the code and could potentially be addressed through a code change without a significant amount of additional work. The shortlist was viewed on screen and an overview was given of each item. A list of questions was viewed on screen. The answers to these questions would be provided to BSC to help them develop code change proposals that meet the policy objectives defined by BFSC. Although this list is new, the questions are very similar to the framing question that members have already been using when bringing topics forward. It was emphasized that members should focus on the policy behind the item rather than the specific technical code change.

The goal is to complete a document by the end of the next BFSC meeting that compiles the policy recommendations to be forwarded to BSC.

4.4.1. Adaptable Dwelling Units for Clarification

Vice-chair Tanya Befus chaired this item.

An overview was given of this document, which identifies code provisions that are ambiguous about the specific technical requirements and could lead to differing interpretations that may not meet the needs of people with disabilities. A key item that would benefit from clarity is about the structural support needed for future installation of lift tracks.

Karen Muir / Helen Evans Warren move to create a joint working group between BSC and BFSC to discuss structural support for lifts under NBC(AE) 3.8.4.2(9) to develop a proposed code change; CARRIED

Karen Muir / Georg Rath move that the joint working group provide a final report at the September 2022 meeting; CARRIED

Karen Muir / Helen Evans Warren move that the joint working group members include Karen Muir (Co-Chair), Bob Macklon, Chris Schamber, Georg Rath, as well as members from BSC; CARRIED

4.5. Code Change Breakout Time

Members split into small groups to discuss the items that may be proposed for incorporation into the next NBC(AE). Below are high-level overviews of the groups' discussion.

Items 1 & 2: Door Closers & Accessible Housing Issues

Door closers that require too much force to open can lead to negative social and health outcomes, such as isolation, for people with diminished strength and balance. A door closer that requires fewer pounds of pressure could alleviate this issue.

Various accessible housing issues are being looked at with a lens of inclusivity regarding age and ability. Each issue will be discussed further. [Evans Warren, Wickman, Rath]

3: Assistive Listening Devices

Current requirements around assistive listening devices may not meet all users' needs. This topic was begun by a working group. Members will continue to fine-tune the information to be sent to BSC. [Ramsdell, Knudtson]

4: Operating Controls

Currently, controls for things like elevators or door openers aren't accessible for people with a number of disabilities—for example, people with low vision need help finding the controls, and they may be at an inappropriate height for people with mobility disabilities. Members will continue working outside of the meeting on this topic. [Schamber, Dhawan]

5: Accessible Parking Stalls

Angled accessible parking stalls may provide better access. The path of travel could be improved through code language changes to ensure a true, clear, accessible path (not shared with cars, etc.). Members will continue working outside of the meeting on this topic. [Macklon, Befus, Lipka]

4.6. Working Group Reports

4.6.1. Awareness

The working group chair reported the following:

- Discussion was held about seniors' needs and the discussion notes were shared. These are helping inform the Accessible Housing issues topic above.
- Discussion was held about having accessibility information included in MLS listings; this discussion is ongoing.

- A draft checklist for visitable housing is being developed.

4.6.2. Technical

There was nothing to report as this group hasn't met recently. A number of the items discussed by this working group have moved forward into potential code change proposals discussed under item 4.5.

5. Meeting Finalization

5.1. Round Table

- The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association distributes hospital kits that give guidance to staff and patients about how to communicate with people with hearing loss.
- Gunjan Dhawan was welcomed to the sub-council.

5.2. Next Meeting

The next meeting was reconfirmed for June 14, 2022 at 9:00 a.m., tentatively in person at the Council office.

5.3. Meeting Adjournment

Bob Macklon / Robert Lipka moved to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

– NEW ACTION ITEMS –

4.5. Code Change Breakout Time

Items 1 & 2: Door Closers & Accessible Housing Issues

Each issue will be discussed further.

[Evans Warren, Wickman, Rath]

3: Assistive Listening Devices

Members will continue to fine-tune the information to be sent to BSC.

[Ramsdell, Knudtson]

4: Operating Controls

Members will continue working outside of the meeting on this topic.

[Schamber, Dhawan]

5: Accessible Parking Stalls

Members will continue working outside of the meeting on this topic.

[Macklon, Befus, Lipka]

– MOTIONS –

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5.3. Meeting Adjournment

Bob Macklon / Robert Lipka moved to adjourn.

– WORKING GROUP MEMBER LISTS –

WORKING GROUP	WORKING GROUP MEMBERS (Chair)
Technical	<u>Lee Ramsdell</u> , Brian Huxley, Ron Wickman, Keith Jansen, Helen Evans Warren, Chris Chamber, Karen Muir AMA Support: Linnie Tse
Awareness	<u>Robert Lipka</u> , Bev Knudtson, Bob Macklon, Donna Monkhouse, Deliany Sather, Georg Rath, Tanya Befus
Structural Support for Lifts in NBC(AE) 3.8.4.2(9) <i>formed March 22, 2022</i>	<u>Karen Muir</u> Bob Macklon, Chris Chamber, Georg Rath