

ACPD's Housing Working Group Meeting Notes

April 16th, 2024

Virtual Teams Meeting

10:00AM – 12:00PM

Members in Attendance: James Kemp, Paula Kilburn

Also in Attendance: Sam Hanna; Social Policy Analyst,
Housing Services

Members Absent: Benjamin Cullimore, Hargun Kaur,
Lance Dingman, Robert Westbrook

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of April 16th Agenda: Agenda was
approved

3. Approval of March 19th Meeting Notes: Meeting
notes were approved

**4. Universal Design Motion Discussion w/Sam
Hanna:** In Q4 2020, the HWG put forth a motion
asking Council to make all City funded housing
projects and renovations follow the principals of

“Universal Design”; some people know it as “Accessible Ready”. Sam Hanna is a social policy analyst and has been tasked with reporting what that might look like in practice. He attended the meeting to first get our take on Universal Design and ask us questions about how we see it implemented. Sam explained how he is trying to understand the overlapping regulatory issues and learning what changes can be recommended and what is out of our control at a municipal level.

Chair began by explaining how disability can happen to anyone and they often change over time, requiring different accommodations as we age. This can prove difficult if you have to move and search for appropriate housing that suits changing needs. While not everything can be foreseen, there are simple ways to make any home more accessible, like replacing door knobs with levered door handles, changing light switches for rocker switches and lowering their height, installing anchor points in walls for handrails or shower grab bars, etc.

Paula mentioned that the home she moved into was refitted to be more accessible.

Sam explained some of the list of questions he is trying to answer through discussion with other City departments, for example; if Universal Design is so

positive, why isn't it already used more in construction? Another question is; what sort of mandate can the City make and who would it affect? Chair replied that the original motion was referring to builds that are to some degree, City funded, for example: CityHousing Hamilton. Also mentioned some of our recent work with Amanda Warren-Ritchie regarding creating an accessibility department and how that might tie into this. We explained that we understood that the OBC sets a lot of the policy and we have no purchase to lobby change there, but we can suggest guidelines.

Sam then asked for clarification on our motion regarding who it would apply to or how we see it being applied. He pointed out that we mention City Funded buildings, but sees some issues with that as it is governed by the OBC. Sam explained how we cannot create a by-law as that would supersede OBC, but what we can do is surpass regulation on City Owned properties and that is within the realm of the possible. He also mentioned that requiring CityHousing to follow the guidelines is a tricky issue as it is an arms-length organization. He suggested that we can ask CityHousing to follow the principles of Universal Design within the residences themselves. Currently, they only incorporate it on the common spaces and Sam is waiting on an answer as to why.

Chair suggested it was because the AODA doesn't require accessibility within the home and only covers housing from a customer service standpoint. We then discussed the BFDG and how it was supposed to cover some of this, Sam mentioned it was written in the 2000's and doesn't cover inside the home as well. He further suggested this is where he might find leverage in his conversations with other City departments on what can reasonably be accomplished.

Sam explained how he is trying to put quantifiable numbers on the costs of incorporating Universal Design. In our motion it stated 1% of construction costs, but how is that quantified? Can a list of standards be created to quantify a building philosophy? What would those standards look like in a document?

We responded that we had that issue as well, what is accessible? How far do we go in this process? We cannot foresee every eventuality, but does this include high contrast tilework in the kitchens and bathrooms? If people have different issues and needs, what does appropriate attachment points behind the shower wall look like? We replied that we didn't expect everything, but we think it's important to keep having these conversations, and thinking of what hasn't been considered.

Sam suggested that he take what he has learned from us as a starting point and will circle back around after he has consulted with others for their perspective. We offered our services with any assistance he might require.

Sam then asked us if we were aware of the effort to harmonize building codes under a Federal standard to address some of the disparate codes across the country and is also meant to address accessibility needs. He did raise the concern that while accessibility is being addressed, it seems that residential homes will be excluded from the new regulations as well. This may severely affect its ability to make change. He will send us what he can on the new federal code as well as any further questions he might have.

- 5. Discuss Vice-Chair Nomination:** As it was just Paula and Chair, we tabled this for another day.
- 6. Review April's HWG Work Plan:** We went over the changes suggested at the last meeting and think it is ready for approval.
- 7. Review HWG's Report on RCFs:** Chair has not been able to finish this report and it will be tabled for another meeting.

8. EHWG Cool Kit Distribution: We have received 25 emergency cool kits from the Extreme Heat Working Group. While we were supposed to hand out much smaller information packets at upcoming events, we have received something else. They are to be distributed during heat emergencies to people that have no access to air conditioning. There is another version being developed for the homeless specifically, but requires training to distribute. We will demonstrate them at the upcoming Senior’s Kick-Off.

9. Other Business: There was no other business.

10. Adjournment

7.2(c)

CITY OF HAMILTON

M O T I O N

Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities:

December 8, 2020

MOVED BY J.

KEMP

SECONDED BY

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Accessible Housing (City Wide)

WHEREAS, the need for accessible affordable housing is at a crisis level;

WHEREAS, more than twenty two percent of Canadians have a disability;

WHEREAS, anyone can be born with a disability which can afflict them without warning, at any time in their lives and anyone of any age can be struck by illness or accident which creates a temporary or lasting disability;

WHEREAS, there is currently no law requiring that housing be accessible. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) does not mention housing;

WHEREAS, the Ontario Building Code only requires that 15% of new apartments be “visitable”, not accessible enough to live there;

WHEREAS, both the AODA and the Ontario Building Code are in contravention of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Motion respecting Accessible Housing (City Wide) the Ontario Human Rights Code and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Barrier free housing is a human right;

WHEREAS, Hamilton does not need to wait for the provincial government to make changes to the laws. Change can be made at the municipal level by mandating universal design in all future City projects or any new development built with tax dollars and / or land made available by the City, and through agreements with developers. All new and renovated Hamilton community housing units must also be made accessible;

WHEREAS, the current Housing Unit Modification Guide focuses mainly on addressing the issues of people with mobility devices like wheelchairs, power chairs and scooters for example; there is a need to revise the current guide to include the needs of other disabilities, both visible and otherwise, in what is called Universal Accessible Design. This can include things like high contrast paint jobs in kitchens and bathrooms to make it easier for the visually impaired, audible and visible alarms as well as door bells, tuned so as not to trigger seizure disorders, and textured switches to name a few;

WHEREAS, the extra cost of incorporating universal design is less than one percent more when planned from the design stage. It is the renovation of existing housing that is costly; and,

WHEREAS, making all new housing accessible will reduce the City's costs for future long term care and residential

care facilities by providing more independent living choices;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

Motion respecting Accessible Housing (City Wide)

(a) That the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities respectfully recommends that the City of Hamilton make all future and retrofitted housing accessible; and,

(b) That the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities respectfully recommends that the City of Hamilton expand its Housing Unit Modification Guide to incorporate universal design in order to address the accessibility needs of those not yet represented.