



Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

MINUTES

A meeting of the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was held on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 12:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

Committee Members Present: Roger Koert – Chair Presiding, Jen Weber, Andy Mark, Kathleen Barry, Jamie Pritchard, Judy Hopf, Diane Sims, Councillor Bonnie Henderson, Joan Jones

Staff Present: Nolan Campbell - Engineering Design Technician, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Also Present: Mayor Martin Ritsma

1. Call to Order

Roger Koert, Chair presiding, called the AAC meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgement and a Moment of Silent Reflection.

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Policy.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

3. Adoption of the Previous Minutes – January 6, 2026

Motion by Andy Mark

Seconded by Diane Sims

THAT the minutes from the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting dated January 6, 2026 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Infrastructure Services Update

Nolan Campbell reported that the Queen Street reconstruction project is currently posted on Engage Stratford for public consultation. Mr. Campbell will share all future notices with AAC members when projects are added to Engage Stratford to ensure their participation.

5. Update from Site Plan Review Sub-Committee

Nolan Campbell, Engineering Design Technician, reported that the sub-committee completed reviews of the following site plans:

- 444 Douro Street (addition to existing medical building)
- 68 Frederick Street (multi-residential unit)

6. Update From City Council

Councillor Henderson provided the following update from Council:

- Confirming the development at 16 Kastner Street will have (4) accessible units and (5) accessible parking spots. There are a total of (74) units in the building.

7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

7.1 Special Event Application Review

Vicky Trotter previously circulated the current special events application to all AAC members to review and provide feedback to help update the form.

Roger Koert confirmed that there is information on the application regarding the use of the mobi mats. Mr. Koert did contact organizers of the Lights On event to inquire if they received any feedback from people about the mobi mats that were used on Tom Patterson Island but has not heard back.

At the previous AAC meeting, the committee made a motion to request that an accessible portable washroom always be booked at events if an accessible washroom is not already located at the event. Vicky Trotter contacted Community Services staff to discuss adding this to the application and they have no concerns adding that an accessible portable washroom is mandatory if there is not a permanent accessible washroom. Members added that the application should state that if only one portable washroom is required, it must be an accessible one to accommodate everyone.

Vicky Trotter will review the current wording on the application to see what it states as far as the permanent accessible washroom location and proximity to the event.

Councillor Henderson noted that there is a checkbox to indicate if service animals are permitted at the event venue. It is her understanding that service animals are always permitted, that this should not be on the application. This should be worded differently or removed altogether.

Please send any further suggestions to Vicky Trotter no later than February 27, 2026 and she will send the feedback to staff.

7.2 AAC Name Tags

Vicky Trotter shared some examples of name tags to members for their feedback and comments. Roger Koert and Diane Sims will work with Ms. Trotter to finalize a design for the March meeting.

7.3 Update on the Tom Patterson Bridge

Mayor Ritsma reported that he will be meeting with Festival representative today to gain insight into what the City has in mind for the bridge and also what sort of commitment the Festival may or may not be willing to provide. Mayor Ritsma will provide further updates when available.

Councillor Henderson inquired if there might be any grant funding available for the bridge project. Jamie Pritchard stated that Destination Stratford is always on the lookout for funding and have not seen anything currently applicable for this. Mayor Ritsma added that the City's Corporative Initiative Lead is also watching for grant funding.

7.4 Update on Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

Vicky Trotter reported that she presented this initiative to the City's Accessibility Steering Committee, which is made up of staff members. They are going to review the information and make a decision or provide direction at their next meeting. The AAC concerns about the cost of participating in the program was echoed by the Steering Committee. Ms. Trotter has reached out to legal counsel to inquire about the use of the sunflower in general.

Ms. Trotter added that there are some e-mails circulating with ONAP members regarding the sunflower program. There appears to be a lot of interest from

other municipalities about the program. Ms. Trotter will continue to monitor what the other municipalities are doing, the program seems to be gaining momentum, despite it being run out of the UK and the added costs that are incurred because of that.

7.5 Purchasing Accessible Sports Equipment

Vicky Trotter contacted the Director of Community Services regarding the possibility of purchasing accessible sports equipment. The Director stated that they do not currently have budget funds set aside for this request. Ms. Trotter is continuing to work with staff for clarification on ice regulations regarding the use of on-ice accessible equipment or assistive devices.

Ms. Trotter also noted that the City of St. Catherines contacted ONAP to discuss the inclusion of mobility devices at open skates. Ms. Trotter will continue to monitor the discussions from the other municipalities. Further updates will be provided at the March AAC meeting.

Andy Mark inquired if private citizens or businesses could possibly sponsor ice times for people to use accessible devices on the ice.

7.6 Update on AAC Motions

Vicky Trotter provided an update on AAC motions which was included in members' agenda packages. Ms. Trotter noted that Council approved proceeding with the application for the Rick Hansen Foundation Barrier Busters Grant and she has started working on the paperwork. Huron Perth Public Health has offered to write the required letter of support from a community agency.

Roger Koert suggested a more detailed site plan or concept be included with the application showing that Stratford is ready to execute the project.

Jamie Pritchard also offered to write a letter of support on behalf of the BIA and will discuss with Destination Stratford staff about a letter also.

8. New Business

8.1 Disability Pride Flag

Kathleen Barry explained at the recent Access Fest event she attended, they flew the disability pride flag. Ms. Barry inquired if as part of Bill 128, Ontario Act 2023,

officially recognizing July as Disability Pride Month, Stratford could also fly the flag to recognize this.

Motion by Councillor Henderson

Seconded by Jen Weber

THAT the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee purchase a Disability Pride Flag;

AND THAT the Accessibility Advisory Committee requests that Council fly the Disability Pride Flag on the flagpole at the front of City Hall for the month of July in recognition of Disability Pride Month. Carried

8.2 Accessible Boat Launch

Councillor Henderson inquired about previous discussions regarding an accessible boat launch. There had been some discussions at AAC, the Parks Board and also possible sponsorship ideas with local service clubs. Vicky Trotter will contact the Parks Board for an update on this initiative. Ms. Trotter will also reach out to the Town of St. Marys and representatives at Wildwood to discuss their accessible boat launches.

9. Upcoming Events

- Stratford Home & Leisure Show (Rotary Complex) – April 11 & 12, 2026
- Primary Care & Homecare Symposium (Stratford County Club) – April 15, 2026 (Jamie Pritchard, Diane Sims and Andy Mark volunteered to work at the AAC information table)

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next AAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 – Rotary Complex, Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

11. Adjournment

Motion by Jen Weber

Seconded by Andy Mark

THAT the February 3, 2026 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting adjourn.

Start Time: 12:00 P.M.

End Time: 1:00 P.M.