



# Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, November 19, 2018

4:30 p.m.

Council Chambers, Town Hall

359 Main Street

## Agenda

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**1. Approval of Agenda**

**2. Approval of Minutes**

a. October 22, 2018

**3. Public Input / Question Period**

Procedure: A thirty-minute time period will be provided for members of the public to address the Committee regarding questions, concerns and/or ideas.

**4. Wolfville: Access by Design**

**5. Round Table**

- **Email: David Daniels**

**6. Public Input / Question Period**

Procedure: A thirty-minute time period will be provided for members of the public to address the Committee regarding questions, concerns and/or ideas.

**7. Adjournment**

Wolfville: Access by Design  
An Accessibility Plan for 2019-2022

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## **Welcome Message**

## **Introduction**

## **Statement of Commitment**

The Town of Wolfville is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion.

We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers by identifying, removing and preventing these barriers and by meeting the requirements of Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.

## **Buildings, Infrastructure and Public Spaces:**

### Policy Objective

We will ensure that Town-owned, leased and operated buildings, offices and public spaces are accessible. We will work with citizens, the business community and Acadia University to encourage that other public and private spaces are accessible.

### Baseline Report

#### *Overview*

The Town of Wolfville owns, leases and operates public facilities such as Town Hall, Rotary Park, numerous sidewalks, parking areas, and a wide variety of other buildings, parks and infrastructure.

#### *Achievements*

- Park improvements to create more-accessible areas at Reservoir park and along Harvest Moon Trail
- Smoother sidewalks, and increased speed for sidewalk repairs within the Downtown Core Area included as a part of the 10-year capital investment plan
- Increased speed of snow clearance after purchasing additional snow removal equipment
- The customer service counter in Town Hall is a height that is wheelchair accessible
- Town Hall is barrier free on the first floor

#### *Barriers*

- Uneven sidewalks and walkways
- Narrow entryways to existing public and private buildings
- Some public open spaces, such as the Mona Parsons Statue, Quiet Park and the Rail Trail are inaccessible to those with mobility challenges
- Bathroom facilities built without accessibility in mind
- Limited accessible parking options
- Steep ramps without mid-ramp landings (including at Town Hall)
- Lack of signage for persons with visual and hearing impairments
- Competing demands between car and pedestrian traffic for street priority and snow clearance Sidewalk snow clearing does not always meet accessibility requirements clearing
- Projects outside the scope of the 10-year capital investment plan do not have dedicated resources

**Commented [BJ1]:** Is this wording preferable to simply "Built Environment"?

**Commented [MM2R1]:** I wonder if there is a way to use both, i.e Built Environment (Bldgs, Infrastructure, etc) This might over time educate/inform public on standard terminology which is helpful in the muni world (i.e. if we all pick different terminology then comparison between muni units may become more difficult).

**Commented [MM3]:** This sentence seems to infer "all" spaces will be accessible? Is this the goal or is it to maximize accessibility. Are there spaces (eg. Mountain bike trails) that may not be accessible?

- The cost of retrofitting existing building can be prohibitively expensive
- Competing demands, including addressing infrastructure deficit to maintain existing essential services such as water and sewer services

**Commented [BJ4]:** These are more macro "barriers". Do we wish to include?

## Policies

- All municipal facilities are to meet the Accessibility requirements (Schedule "C") of the latest version of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulation by 2021
- All new municipal buildings are to be built to meet the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Gold Standard
- Encourage private developers to have their existing buildings RHFAC certified and for new developments to meet the RHFAC Gold Standard
- Provide basic access for all ages and abilities to public buildings, public washrooms, and at public parks with a natural slope of less than 5% (e.g. parts of Reservoir Park, Harvest Moon Trail, Quiet Park, parts of Willow Park, etc.)
- Ensure sidewalks and curb cuts within the Core area are improved and maintained, where possible, to CSA standards.
- Provide accessible parking locations, and associated curb cuts, dispersed throughout the Core Area
- Density Bonusing for Private developers who meet Rick Hansen Gold Standards within the Core Area RHF Accessibility Certification be considered as a "public benefit" under the Density Bonus Program
- Work with the Wolfville business community, including the Wolfville Business Development Corporation, to promote Wolfville as an accessible community.
- Provide crosswalks and curb-cuts in areas of high-pedestrian use, such as near schools and parks
- Encourage seniors to "age in place" through alternative housing options, such as "granny-flats", co-housing, senior shared housing with students etc.

**Commented [BJ5]:** I think this needs to have a timeline, but I'm not sure how to square this with the Building Code constantly being updated

**Commented [MM6R5]:** Agreed a timeline is warranted but I feel this is way faster than possible, OR practical. Fro example our current 10 Yr CIP has new Town Hall/Library out in Yr 9 ..... it does not make sense to totally retrofit Town Hall for today's code if its going to be replaced in the relative near future. I feel the timeline may simply be the legislated 2030.

**Commented [MM7]:** Do we know that they don't meet that standard now???

## Actions

- Commit an annual budget to install, maintain or improve accessibility infrastructure
- Dedicate 70 hours of staff time annually to conducting an audit of the municipal built environment
- Place street furniture, sandwich boards and sidewalk planters away from the path of travel and set back 1.5 m from curb cuts and sidewalks
- Provide power door operators or automated sliding doors and widened doorways at the entrance of municipal buildings and public washrooms
- Ensure access to Council Chambers meets CSA Accessibility requirements by March 31, 2019

**Commented [MM8]:** What would this involve? The requirement is this fiscal year.....no \$\$\$ were budgeted for this (depending on \$\$\$ needed). Similar to comment above, how much do we spend in the short term for a building scheduled to be replaced/major reno inside 10 years

- Provide auditory, visual and tactile markers at intersections with high pedestrian use, such as within the Core Area and near schools and parks.
- Sidewalk curb cuts at all intersections where sidewalks exist
- Accessible heights for service desks and self-service stations, including the Community Development and Public Works building
- Ensure library collections are accessible, including lowering and/or raising shelves and ensuring aisle way widths between book stacks and corridors are widened
- Sidewalk snow clearing is to meet or exceed the standard that is applied to the adjacent street
- Any renovations to private buildings made with the intent of meeting the RHF Accessibility Certification is to be fast tracked for approval, and have their development fee waived
- Should prospective developers or business owners wish to certify their building, that consideration be giving to:
  - deduct the cost of RHF Accessibility Certification from development fees, and
  - fast track these applications through the development approval process
- Explore amending Land Use Bylaws to expand the use of secondary and backyard suites and facilitate co-housing arrangements
- Promote the province's Small Business ACCESS-Ability Grant Program to the Wolfville Business Community, including the Wolfville Business Development Corporation
- Provide a mid-ramp landing to facilitate first floor access at Town Hall
- Ensure Aging in Place housing options are encouraged and allowed in the municipal planning strategy and zoning by-law.

**Commented [MM9]:** This is an interesting area of discussion and may involve more than at first glance .... Which may be more equipment and human resources to operate equipment. Clearly a goal, but requires thought to operationalize.

## **Information and Communications**

### Policy Objective

We will ensure that persons with disabilities can equitably receive and understand information and communications delivered by the Town of Wolfville.

We will build capacity about accessibility, and increase awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and barriers to participation.

### Baseline Report

#### *Overview*

The Town delivers information to the public through a variety of communication channels:

- Meetings of Town Council and Advisory Committee meetings, which are open to the public
- Email, the Town's website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other forms of social media are used to communicate with public
- Kiosks are used to promote events and special town meetings
- The town participates in public awareness campaigns

#### *Achievements*

- Meetings are generally held at Town Hall, the first floor of which is barrier free
- When meetings are not held at Town Hall, a wheelchair accessible venue is booked, whenever possible
- Agenda and minutes of all meetings are posted on the Town website
- Audio is provided for Town Council meetings in real time, and is archived on the Town's website
- Town Council meetings are streamed on Facebook Live
- The Emergency Management Office (EMO) Coordinator has reached out directly to seniors and to seniors housing to develop a contact list that can be accessed in the event of an emergency
- The Town engages a member of the local L'Arche Community to distribute posters to the various Kiosks and public bulletin boards. This provides a positive experience for the individual and helps to spread information to a segment of the population that may otherwise be missed.

### Barriers

- There is currently no process for hearing impaired individuals to attend or participate in public meetings, including meetings of Town Council and Advisory Committee meetings
- The Town's website is **not accessible**
- Staff are generally not trained to identify how inclusion can be promoted in communications, including how to use **assistive devices**, such as screen readers
- "Plain language" is not consistently utilized in written material
- There is an overall lack of awareness within the community regarding barriers to accessibility
- The Municipal Government Act creates restrictive requirements for certain public notices, such as requirements to publish advertisements in newspapers, which may not be accessible to persons with visual impairments

**Commented [BJ10]:** To whom? Persons with visual impairments?

**Commented [BJ11]:** This originally read "technology tools". Are screen readers an example of this? If not, what are some other examples?

### Policies

- On request, the Town of Wolfville will provide information in an accessible format, or with communication supports that consider a person's specific needs
- The Town of Wolfville's digital presence and IT systems are accessible and useable by persons with disabilities
- All Town of Wolfville in-person public meetings will be held in locations accessible to persons with physical disabilities

### Actions

- Large print editions of key municipal resources, including recreation guides, emergency management information and bylaw services will be produced using **plain language** and distributed, upon request
- By **20xx** the Town of Wolfville's web presence will meet the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0
- American Sign Language (ASL) and/or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services will be available at Town Council and other Town-hosted public meetings, upon request
- All new employee business cards are to include **braille**
- Relevant staff will be trained on how inclusion can be included in communications

**Commented [MM12]:** Does this mean the original bylaw, policy etc would be in plain language or that a second document is produced?? Is there a standard plain language criteria to use as reference???

**Commented [MM13]:** Only comment here is related to lack of access to braille printing. This might be a myth but a recent question on our AMA listserv seemed to indicated was only one source for braille print but I could be wrong.

- The Town of Wolfville will work with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) to advocate for the inclusion of accessibility considerations within the public notice requirements of the Municipal Government Act
- Develop and implement a public awareness program (internal and external) to build awareness around barriers to accessibility and what an accessible community means

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## Employment

### Policy Objective

We will remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities seeking a career with the Town of Wolfville. This includes ensuring our workforce reflects the Town's diverse population and that we are making our employment practices and workplaces more accessible for new and existing employees with disabilities. Through our procurement process, we will support businesses that employ persons with disabilities.

**Commented [MM14]:** We would need to measure this against the provincial requirements/regs as they relate to procurement

### Baseline Report

#### *Overview*

The Town employs 42 permanent employees. Representation on Town Council and Advisory Committees is open to all members of the public.

#### *Achievements*

- Members of Council are provided iPads for access to agendas and Town documents. This allows for the ability to zoom in on documents to enhance font size, making reading accessible to more individuals
- Town Hall is barrier free on the first floor
- Council table is generally wheelchair accessible
- The Public Works/Community Development building is wheelchair accessible on the first floor
- The Town provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) giving staff access to confidential professional services including counselling. This service was recently extended to the Volunteer Fire Dept members a couple of years ago

**Commented [BJ15]:** What does this mean?

**Commented [MM16R15]:** Was meant to indicate that a successful candidate for elected office (or citizen rep) would be able to sit at the council table if they had a physical disability vs. some other unique accommodation would have to be used if the room set up did not allow access to the actual council table.

#### *Barriers*

- The second-floor town of all Town owned buildings is not wheelchair accessible
- Staff, including senior management, are generally not trained to recognize barriers to individuals interested in employment opportunities
- Job Postings are distributed through traditional methods, including web pages, which may not be accessible to some individuals
- Because the Town does not have a Human Resources Department, there is a limited ability to assist staff with individual needs

**Commented [BJ17]:** Is this true?

**Commented [MM18R17]:** I believe so.... I think we only have two town owned bldg's with a second floor and they are not accessible.

**Commented [MM19]:** I added this as a thought..... in case there are avenues to post jobs that are non traditional that hit a segment of population we would otherwise miss.

## Policies

- Accommodation is offered during recruitment by allowing more time to write tests in a separate area and providing specialized tools or equipment if needed.
- Accommodation is offered to employees with disabilities, including providing assistive devices so that employees can be successful at their job.
- The Town of Wolfville will track the number of employees with disabilities, with the aim of reflecting the Town's demographic by 20xx.
- Town of Wolfville employees will build an understanding of the value of accessibility and inclusion
- When procuring goods and services, preference will be given to vendors that employ persons with disabilities.

**Commented [MM20]:** Not sure if this is applicable as use of tests is not a common practice here. But I get the thought in the circumstances when used

**Commented [MM21]:** I feel like this is something the committee should weigh in on before we set a date?? Would this be impacted on definition of disabilities to plug into ratio?

## Actions

- Survey municipal workforce to achieve disabled employee baseline data
- Produce annual diversity reports, which include trends and analysis regarding persons with disabilities
- A centralized "accommodation fund" will be established to pay for any assistive device or accommodation required by employees to be successful at their job
- Mandatory diversity training will be provided to all employees
- The employee training manual will be updated to include a section on respecting diversity
- All town employees will be required to take the Working with Abilities on-line training provided free by the NS Human Rights Commission ( [workwithabilitiesns.ca](http://workwithabilitiesns.ca) )
- Vendors who employ persons with disabilities will receive additional points during the procurement process
- Staff will investigate alternative strategies to promote job postings with the aim of reaching a wider and more diverse audience
- A designated staff person will be tasked with assisting individuals who may require assistance in order to be successful at their jobs

## Delivery of Services

### Policy Objective

We will ensure that persons with disabilities have equitable access to services delivered by the Town of Wolfville. This includes ensuring that there are policies, procedures and tools in place to promote accessibility in the delivery of services.

### Baseline Report

#### *Overview*

The Town of Wolfville provides numerous services to the public:

- Administering meetings of Town Council and various Advisory Committees
- Overseeing communication to the public (see Information and Communication section)
- Providing Customer Service counters
- Maintaining street infrastructure, including sidewalk snow removal (see Built Environment section)
- Maintaining numerous parks, trails and open spaces, including playgrounds, and a Visitor Information Centre

#### *Achievements*

- The customer service counter in Town Hall is at a height that is wheelchair accessible
- An accessible swing will soon be provided at Willow Park
- The Visitor Information Centre is wheelchair accessible
- The Recreation Centre at Rotary Park is wheelchair accessible

#### *Barriers*

- No staff members are trained in alternative communication methods, such as American Sign Language (ASL)
- No resources are explicitly available to access in instances of need for alternative communications
- The Town’s website is not accessible to the blind an visually impaired

### Policy

- No resident shall be denied a service provided by the Town of Wolfville on the basis of his or her disability

Commented [BJ22]: When?

Commented [BJ23]: When?

Commented [MM24R23]: I think it was earlier this year, I hedged and said soon as I didn't know the date

Commented [BJ25]: This is another "macro" barrier. Not sure it should be included

## Actions

- Entrance fees for individuals who support persons with disabilities in order to participate in leisure activities are waived
- An accommodation fund will be established to ensure access to services for residents with special needs
- An adapted listing of recreation programs and services for individuals with disabilities is available and updated annually
- Sign language interpreters are available upon request for persons to participate in recreation and library programs
- Accessible exercise equipment is available at municipal recreational facilities
- The Town's Building Inspector will attend accessibility training such as through the RHFAC training offered through the Nova Scotia Community College
- Front line staff will receive training to ensure the services they deliver are accessible to residents with diverse abilities
- An "Accessibility Lens"/Impact Analysis will be included in all reports to council, and consultant reports delivered to staff and council

**Commented [BJ26]:** Is there accessible equipment currently at any facilities? If not, this should be included as a barrier

**Commented [MM27R26]:** I don't believe anything beyond the swing recently installed...so as an action or goal this would still seem to hold. Would we want an action like this focused on the specific/identified needs from the community to?

**Commented [MM28]:** Would need to understand this better from a staff perspective. Mgt team is struggling with current report templates and sections that are underutilized as not applicable in some circumstances....so is it better to say in reports where applicable, than say all reports.

**Transportation**

Objective

We will ensure that persons with disabilities have equitable access to publicly regulated transportation services, including Kings Transit Authority and taxi services.

**Commented [MM29]:** Not sure KTA should be specified as the form and organization providing could change over time. KPPT may be the better vehicle to meet this need.

Baseline Report

*Overview*

Kings Transit Authority operates xx buses from Weymouth to Hants Border with service extending to Cornwallis Park, Upper Clements Park and Port Williams.

This is an interesting discussion area ..... but be aware that KTA cost have been escalating an a pace faster than most other areas of municipal costs and Windsor/West Hants have opted out of KTA service in resent past.

Will talk to you more about this when we get a chance.

The Town of Wolfville licenses xx taxis with service boundaries from ??

*Achievements*

All Kings Transit Authority buses:

- Are equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) via DoubleMap
- Are equipped with Automatic Voice Annunciation (AVA) Technology to assist passengers with visual impairments
- Are low floor, kneeling capable and have electric ramps
- Have priority seating

**Commented [BJ30]:** Does this app have any accessibility features?

**Commented [BJ31]:** In addition to voice annunciation, are stops also spelled out to assist passengers with hearing impairments?

Barriers

**Commented [BJ32]:** Is there an accessible bus service like Access-a-bus? Any accessibility features missing from the bus service? How many accessible taxis are there?

Policies

- No resident shall be denied transit or taxi service on the basis of his or her disability
- No resident shall be charged an additional fee for transit or taxi service on the basis of his or her disability

**Commented [MM33R32]:** This is where I think Kings Point to Point fits in.... I don't have the details but will reach out to them.

Actions

- Provide subsidized transit fares and/or transit passes to persons with disabilities and/or low-income individuals

**Commented [MM34]:** Similar to comment above..... municipal funding to KTA is growing at a pace that is problematic to municipal partner budgets. Currently the muni partners provide > 60% of the funding versus fare revenue, i.e. heavily subsidized now overall

- Priority snow clearing for transit stops
- Ensure the construction and placement of transit stops shall be designed to meet or exceed CSA Standard B651-12 — Accessible Design for the Built Environment
- Ensure accessible taxi service is available to the public by:
  - a) Consulting with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the public to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxis required, and demonstrate progress toward meeting that need;
  - b) Ensuring that no person with a disability is charged additional fees or is charged a fee for storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices; and
  - c) Ensuring that vehicle registration is visible, and available in accessible formats for passengers with disabilities.

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## **Implementation**

### Schedule

All Actions in this plan will be implemented by end of Fiscal Year 2022

### Monitoring

- The Wolfville Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) will prepare an Access by Design Report Card to Council at the end of each fiscal year measuring the performance of the Policies and Actions in this Plan. The AAC is also encouraged to make recommendations for improvement of the Plan
- The Access by Design Report Card will be a public document and posted on the Town's Website

### Evaluation

- A public review and evaluation of Wolfville Access by Design will be undertaken before Fiscal Year 2022

### Responsibility

- The ultimate responsibility for the implementation of Wolfville Access by Design rests with Town Council
- Administrative responsibility for implementation rests with the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Wolfville

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**From:**  
**Sent:** November 13, 2018 10:35 PM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Town Accessibility Plan and compliance

Jean-Luc:

Please distribute the following to all committee members for their consideration.

Thank you.

David

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November 13, 2018

Dear Fellow Committee Members:

As some of you may recall, one of the interests I have in being a member of the committee is to try to ensure that whatever substantive goals or objective are included in the accessibility plan, that the plan also includes provisions which address the issue of compliance.

With that in mind, I'm attaching correspondence I've had with the Town in which I raise issues concerning a building's compliance with the accessibility portion of the Nova Scotia Building Code. This Code is enforced by the Town's Building Inspector.

In the first email I raise particular issues I have concerning whether or not the building fully complies with Code's accessibility requirements.

The second letter is the response I received from the Town's Solicitor.

In the third email is my response to the Town Solicitor. I have not received any further response from the Town Solicitor or any other member of the Town administration. The questions I posed in my second email were not answered.

In the fourth paragraph of my letter to Mr. Nathanson I explain what I believe an adequate response would look like; in the fifth paragraph I briefly provide reasons why it is important that when a resident raises issues that the resident receives an adequate response.

I hope that the draft accessibility plan which this committee recommends to Council contains in some form some of the ideas I set out in these two paragraphs.

Sincerely,

David Daniels

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[June 29, 2018]

Dear Ms. Beaudin:

As you may recall, in April of this year, in a number of emails I raised concerns regarding the height of the handrails along the ramp on the east side of the MBL building.

In my final email to you on the subject of handrail height, dated April 24, 2018 I asked: "does the handrail on the east side of the ramp satisfy the requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code?" I never received an answer to my question. However, several days later I observed that a second handrail had been installed which met the height requirements of the N.S. Building Code as I had interpreted the Code.

I recently reviewed selected portions of the Code which address accessibility. I do not have ready access to the National Building Code, nor to the building itself. I have set out below sections of the Code which the building may or may not comply with.

I would appreciate receiving a written reply to my concerns.

Sincerely,

David A. Daniels

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Section 3.8.2.2(1) states: Entrances (See Note A-3.8.2.2., NBC)

*In addition to the barrier-free entrances required by Sentence (2), not less than 50% of the pedestrian entrances of a building referred to in Sentence 3.8.2.1.(1) shall be barrier-free and shall lead from*

- (a) the outdoors at sidewalk level, or*
- (b) a ramp that conforms with Subsection 3.8.3. and leads from a sidewalk.*

It appears that there are now three entrances to the building, a stairway on the west side of the building, and two on the east side, the ramp and the metal stairway. Only one or 33% of the barriers is barrier-free.

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Section 3.8.2.2(2) states: *A suite of assembly occupancy, business and personal services occupancy or mercantile occupancy that is located in the first storey of a building, or in a storey to which a barrier-free path of travel is provided, and that is completely separated from the remainder of the building so that there is no access to the remainder of the building, shall have at least one barrier-free entrance.*

If the commercial spa on street level is "completely separated" from the residential portion of the building, then it appears that the spa requires at least one barrier-free entrance. It does not appear that the spa has a barrier free entrance.

Section 3.8.2.2(6) states: *Where a principal entrance to a building of residential occupancy is equipped with a security door system,*

*(a) both visual and audible signals shall be used to indicate when the door lock is released, and*

*(b) where there are more than 20 suites a closed-circuit visual monitoring system shall be provided capable of connection to individual suites.*

It appears that the entrance to the residential portion of the building is equipped with a security door system, that is, some sort of key pad system. It does not appear that the security door systems have the required visual signal. I do not know whether they have audible signals.

I have been in the building a few times and do not recall seeing any closed-circuit monitoring system.

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July 24, 2018

Dear Mr. Daniels

RE: 336 MAIN STREET, WOLFVILLE

I am responding to your email to Erin Beaudin dated June 29, 2018.

In your email you raise three issues with respect to the property at 336 Main Street, Wolfville. You do not pose any questions as much as you state a conclusion that you have reached. Nonetheless, the Town has taken you (sic) email as posing three questions. The Town has consulted with building officials past and present and would respond as follows:

1. Entrances -- the Town's building officials have indicated that the building has four entrances at least two of which meet the requirements of Section 3.8.2.2.(1);
2. The Spa -- the Town's building officials have confirmed that the commercial space has at least one barrier free entrance. I understand it to be the front entrance that meets the definitional requirements of Section 3.8.2.2.(2);
3. Principal Entrance -- the Town's building officials are satisfied that the current arrangement satisfies the intent and requirements of Section 3.8.2.2.(6).

We trust that this responds adequately to your enquiry.

Yours truly,

Nathanson Seaman Watts.

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[August 23, 2018]

Dear Mr. Nathanson:

I apologize for the delay in responding to your letter, dated July 24, 2018. Before I responded I wanted to review portions of the NBC which I finally was able to do this past week.

You state at the end of your letter: "We trust that this responds adequately to your enquiry."

Unfortunately, for the reasons set forth below, your reply does not do so.

When a Town resident (and taxpayer) raises concerns about actions or decisions taken by the Town which are not on their face frivolous, repetitive or make no sense, the resident should receive from the Town a reply that explains or provides reasons for those actions and decisions. The response should allow the resident to say to him or herself: "I may not agree with that decision or action, but I understand why it was taken." Simply being told, in a conclusory fashion, that a town official or staff member has determined that the decision was proper, without explanation, is, in my opinion, insufficient.

Here are some reasons why I believe this is the better practice. Municipal officials and staff members make mistakes. In order to avoid mistakes, it helps to have them explain to others why and how they've reached their conclusions. Members of the public often have knowledge (technical and historical) that municipal staff and officials may not possess. If they are allowed to contribute that knowledge, the municipality may be able to make better and more informed decisions. By providing thoughtful responses to public inquiry, the public may feel that they have been part of the decision making process and therefore will more likely buy into the decisions ultimately made.

In March of 2014 I raised concerns before Council regarding the number of accessible units and parking spaces planned for the MBL building.

Thereafter, I sent an email to Joshua Pycrz, then CAO of the Town, detailing my concerns. I included with the email the relevant portions of the N.S. Building Code.

On March 31, 2014 I received the following email from Mr. Pycrz:

*Thank you for your follow up Mr. Daniels.*

*I have provided your interpretation of the code and consulted with Chrystal [Fuller] and Kevin White. The number of parking stalls designated as handicapped and the number of units (1) designated as accessible is, according to the Authority Having Jurisdiction, in compliance with both the code and the Development Agreement.*

*Thank you as always for your continual interests in the growth and development of Wolfville.*

*Cheers,*

In regards to the issues I raised in my email to Ms. Beaudin, dated June 29, 2018:

The first issue concerned the number of accessible entrances to the residential portion of the building. I listed three, only one of which is accessible. Your letter states that the building officials have indicated that there are four entrances and at least two of those meet the requirements of s. 3.8.2.2(1). Where is the fourth, accessible, entrance?

In regards to the spa, when I wrote my email to Ms. Beaudin I was under the mistaken belief that the spa door required an automatic opening mechanism. When I reviewed the Code again, I realized that such a mechanism was not required.

In regards to the principle entrance, you state in your letter: "the Town's building officials are satisfied that the current arrangement satisfies the intent and requirements of Section 3.8.2.2(6)."

The relevant section of the Code states:

*(6) Where a principal entrance to a building of residential occupancy is equipped with a security door system,*

*(a) both visual and audible signals shall be used to indicate when the door lock is released, and*

*(b) where there are more than 20 suites a closed-circuit visual monitoring system shall be provided capable of connection to individual suites.*

What do the Town Building Officials believe the “intent” of this provision is?

Does the principle entrance have a “visual” signal and if so, what does that signal consist of?

Does the building have a “closed-circuit visual monitoring system”?

What is the “current arrangement”? And how does that current arrangement satisfy the intent and requirements of Code?

Finally, since my original email was copied to Joe Rogers, the Province’s Building Code Coordinator and Gerry Post, the Province’s Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate, I will be forwarding your response and this email to them.

Sincerely,

/s/

David A. Daniels