



AAN HUMAN RIGHTS

Date/Time:
May 30th, 2022 / 1:00PM – 3:00PM

Location: Zoom

Chairs: Mezaun Lakha-Evin, Sean Crump

In Attendance:

Mezaun Lakha-Evin (AAN)
Dan Pederson (Community Advocate)
Rebecca Stevens (City of Medicine Hat)
Bean Gill (Wheels of Change)
Shino Nakane (Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities)
Ermira Kusari (Community Advocate)
Deborah Mebude (Alberta Human Rights Commission)
Christopher Gordon (Community Advocate)
Sean Crump (Universal Access)
Linnie Tse (Government of Alberta)

Meri Topchieva (AAN)
Sam Mason (VAD)
Brittney Neunzig (Wheels of Change)
Stella Varvis (Alberta Law Reform Commission)
Andrea Van Vugt (Disability without Poverty)
Eryn Dewald (Children’s Link Society)
Jennifer Chappell (Government of Alberta)
Leslie Jerry (Community Inclusion – City of Medicine Hat)
Rae Martens (CanChild)

Meeting Minutes

Land Acknowledgement
Welcome and Introductions

Review/Approval of previous meeting’s minutes

Topics of Discussion:

Spotlight presentation:

Disability without Poverty:

- Andrea is the founder and President of the Disability Pride Alberta Foundation. She is also the Alberta Community Organizer for Disability Without Poverty. Andrea has taken part in various tables with AAN over the past 5 years and is an active member of the Poverty Reduction table.
- Throughout her career, Andrea has prioritized building relationships with people who have disabilities and with the communities and organizations that support them. She believes strongly in deliberative democracy and takes a grassroots approach to community organizing.
- Disability without Poverty is a group of people with disabilities throughout Canada who advocate for an increase in income benefits to close the income gap between those on income support and the working class.
- During the throne speech of November 2020, the government recognized that there was an income gap for people with disabilities. A bill to increase the

Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) was tabled after the throne speech of 2020. After the election was called, the bill was no longer tabled.

- During the 2021 throne speech, Disability without Poverty put a petition forward to fast track the increase of CDB which received 17,874 signatures by January 2022.
- Many individuals do not know 1 in 5 people have a disability; this encourages us to inform the public how common disabilities are.
- Created a video with people that have disabilities to advocate for the CDB bill. Please click here to view it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1C8tzUBKEI>
- The survey was initiated by Michelle Hewitt and supported by MP Mike Morrice which made it go to the House of Commons. Federally, an e-survey is accepted as they have their own verified platform for surveys. However, the process for a provincial e-survey is unclear.

Letter to Minister Luan

- Sent a letter to Minister Luan and his team proposing a government motion to appoint a legislative committee to address the long awaited legislation
- The legislature spring sitting unexpectedly ended, on May 26th and will return for the fall sitting on October 31st.
- We will start sending letters to the cabinet to gain some support from Ministers.
- Stella and Greg's meeting with Minister Luan has been canceled and will be rescheduled in the future.
- Shino still has her upcoming meeting with Minister Luan.
- Last fall we sent a letter to all the Ministers which was forwarded to Minister Luan. Some ministers didn't receive the letter since their staff assumed it was only for Minister Luan.
- We need to find the alignment with other Ministries and why it is in their best interest to support our ask.
- The Alberta Human Rights Commission has drafted a briefing note where they're asking Minister Shandro to support the development of a legislative committee. The letter will be sent on behalf of the AHRC's chief; however, they have a new chief as of July and will have to get approval from them once their term starts.

Communications Subcommittee

- Communications sub-committee will need to meet and draft a clear ask from all Ministries.

Minister Rick Mciver follow up

- We have sent Minister Mciver all of our resources for Accessibility legislation throughout Canada and his promise was to look into it and follow up with Minister Luan.
- As of May 26th, we have contacted him and received no response.
- As the spring session is over and the Ministers are back in their constituencies, Mezaun will connect with Minister Mciver and follow up with him.

Meeting with Mayor Johnson

- Mayor Johnson was not available and his Chief of Staff, Shawn, joined instead.
- Shawn was very enthusiastic about helping our initiative. As we need a municipality to bring forward a motion supporting the creation of Accessibility Legislation at the AB Municipalities AGM, we will ask the City of Red Deer if they can support our ask.

National AccessAbility week webinar event update

- For National AccessAbility week, AAN hosted a webinar where Ron Wickman presented on accessible housing.
- The top 5 ways to make a house more accessible are: 1) a no-step entrance 2) an accessible bathroom such as a wet room 3) Vertical access (elevators) 4) Interior space 5) an accessible kitchen (open layout).

- Many people were surprised how elevators cost only an additional \$20,000 (depending on design) when building a house. Considering how most houses cost \$500,000 and more, this option is relatively affordable for those looking at purchasing a house.
- Another major topic Mr. Wickman talked about is visitability – is your house visitable? Usually, people make their houses accessible only to them and do not consider how visitable it is for people with different disabilities.
- Mr. Wickman will be doing another webinar in the winter about making small spaces accessible.

Agency Updates:

VAD

- Offering free in-person screenings of Crip Camp for National AccessAbility week. They are offering them in Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Red Deer, and Medicine Hat.

Linnie Tse – Government of Alberta

- Accessible standards Canada and CMHC have collaborated to create a draft of requirements for adaptable housing which is up for public review. The deadline for review is June 13th. Please email Linnie for more information.
- Accessible Standards Canada has a possibility of funding for any project non-profit agencies have. If you're interested in this funding opportunity, please email Linnie at Linnie.Tse@gov.ab.ca and share a summary of the project you need the funding for. More information about this opportunity will be shared with Linnie in the coming weeks.
- If anyone didn't get their feedback or submission on time, please email Sean Crump at sean@universalaccess.me as he sits on the committee.

The City of Medicine Hat

- Free in-person screenings of Crip Camp on June 2nd at 5:30 at the Medicine Hat Public Library Theatre. If you want to register, click here: <https://bit.ly/NAAWMedicineHat>

Action Items:

- Stella Vargis will work on a letter to the cabinet urging them to propose a government motion to appoint a legislative committee to address the long-awaited legislation.
- The communications subcommittee will draft letters to all Ministries and ask them for their support in forming a legislative committee for accessibility legislation in Alberta.
- Linne will update the table on funding availability will after her meeting with Federal Gov re Barrier-free Alberta.

Wrap-Up/Adjournment

Next meeting:

Date: June 27th, 2022

Time: 1:00PM – 3:00PM

Location: Zoom

Please note that no table meetings will be held in July and August.