



# AAN HUMAN RIGHTS

**Date/Time:**

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 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)  
 Cam Stewart (Community Advocate)  
 Deborah Mebude (Alberta Human Rights  
 Commission)  
 Cal Schuler (Calgary Alternative  
 Employment Services)

Meri Topchieva (AAN)  
 Sam Mason (VAD)  
 Brittney Neunzig (Wheels of  
 Change)  
 Tony Flores (Community Advocate)  
 Jenna Galloway (Wymbin)  
 Stacey Perlin (Perlin Foundation for  
 Wellbeing)  
 Stella Varvis (Alberta Law Reform  
 Commission)  
 Greg McMeekin (Community  
 Advocate)

## Meeting Minutes

Land Acknowledgement  
Welcome and Introductions

Review/Approval of previous meeting's minutes

**Topics of Discussion:****Spotlight presentation:****Perlin Foundation for Wellbeing:**

- The Perlin Foundation for Wellbeing was founded because of the gaps in the representation of invisible disabilities such as mental illness.
- There are many barriers to receiving governmental support for disabilities that discourage people from accessing help. By empowering people within the community and helping them understand themselves better, it creates a sense of belonging which helps to address their discontent.
- They previously held a mini-mental wellness festival in Calgary at the Village Commons where people got to learn about mental health through their local partners. A bigger version of this event will be held in August where they will block off a street and have a dance exchange from different cultures.
- The Foundation is educating the public through art and culture projects about mental health literacy.
- They have many partners where they can contribute to mental health research, service agencies, and civic planning.

## **Wheels of Change:**

- This advocacy group was formed to represent people specifically with spinal cord injuries as there were no other advocacy groups that were advocating and addressing the barriers that they face.
- The Pay to Pee campaign which will be launched is based on increasing awareness among the public about how people with spinal cord injuries are affected by the cost of catheters. There is minimal government supports for catheters, and if people don't have insurance, they must pay \$2 - \$8 for a catheter every time they pee.
- The government funding provided for catheters allows for a basic catheter that is supplied to a person once a day. If people do not want to wash and re-use their catheters for hygiene, convenience, and quality of life reasons, their costs average \$1500 a month for catheters only.
- For the campaign, people track how many times a week they go to the bathroom and pledge to pay a certain amount per bathroom visit. People who cannot afford to pay for more catheters will start thinking of ways to decrease costs by drinking fewer liquids or re-using catheters which affect their mental health and quality of life.

## **Stella Varvis - Alberta Law Reform Commission**

- The Alberta Law Reform Commission conducts research, early consultation, and policy analysis. They do not create new legislation but recommend key parts of the legislation that should be included based on their research and consultation.
- They are looking for a transformative pivot project where Stella will recommend Alberta Accessibility Legislation to their Board of Directors. The community consultation, advocacy, and groundwork have already been established for Accessibility legislation; however, we are still missing the legal analysis of this legislation.
- Community engagement will be key in this process. Currently, we need voices of support stating that the community will help with the consultation process. Please email: [lawreform@ualberta.ca](mailto:lawreform@ualberta.ca) to voice your support.
- Stella will have a meeting with Minister Jason Luan in May to pitch creating a legislative committee for accessibility legislation. Some positives of the committee are: it allows stakeholders to make public submissions, everything is transcribed and well-documented, it takes the issue of accessibility and shares it with the public, and it is very transparent.
- Stella is asking if there are any concerns that the community foresees by creating a legislative committee for accessibility legislation.

## **Alberta Disability Advocate – Greg McMeekin**

- The Ministry asked Greg to work on the following priorities 1) meaningful employment for people with disability 2) work on issues that are exacerbated by COVID-19 such as mental health 3) champion and engage in the process of disability legislation in the province 4) improve upon access to justice for people with disabilities including access to legal services and 5) champion and work on access for housing and support for people with disabilities.
- Upcoming meeting with Minister Luan.
- Met with Ministry and Greg will provide research for accessibility legislation in terms of a jurisdictional scan as to what's being done in other jurisdictions. Greg and his team will be working on this together.



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- The Strategic Plan is over a 3-year period, this year will be the information/research piece, and the second year will be dealing with the new government mandate and community engagement.
- Office is going to be expanding into Calgary in the coming months.

## **Minister Rick McIver meeting**

- Minister McIver is in support of the accessibility legislation and asked for all related documents that we have prepared. The Minister was interested in seeing accessibility legislation from other provinces and what would work for Alberta.
- Minister McIver will have a conversation with the Minister of Community and Social Services, Jason Luan, and will update us after his meeting.

## **Presentation of Strategic Plan**

- "Nothing about us without us" has changed to "nothing without us".
- If anyone sees any changes that need to be made to the Strategic Plan, please find the link below.
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hYi3oEIS4DVWIA8wr-E4IhudTvlab7BS/edit>

## **National AccessAbility week**

- We have sent letters to the mayors across the province asking them to show their support for National AccessAbility week by 1) mentioning it to counsel 2) sharing it on social media and 3) booking a presentation from us.
- We have 5 booked presentations for mayors so far.
- Ron Wickman is an architect who has developed a campaign surrounding accessible architecture. We asked Mr. Wickman to provide a webinar about accessible architecture scheduled for May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Details to follow.

## **Action Items:**

- Meri and Mezaun will start sending recruitment letters for the Human Rights table over the next couple of weeks.
- Shino will share our invitation to the Human Rights table with her colleague in the interest of bringing more Indigenous representation to the network.
- Rebecca will contact the Youth Coordinator at the Miywasin Friendship Centre and invite her to our table.

Wrap-Up/Adjournment

## **Next meeting:**

**Date:** May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022

**Time:** 1:00PM – 3:00PM

**Location:** Zoom