



Alberta Ability Network Human Rights Table

Date/Time:

September 25, 2023 - 1:00 PM – 2:00PM

Location: Zoom

Chairs: Sean Crump,

In Attendance:

Alison Kernick (University of Calgary)
 Alison Stutz (Deaf and Hear Alberta)
 Brenda Kinni (SCI – AB)
 Chris Ryan (Community Advocate)
 Cam Stewart (AHRC)
 Copelan Manzer (University of Calgary)
 Dan Pederson (Community Advocate)
 Deborah Abiola (ARHC)
 Joanne Dorn (CP Alberta)
 Keri McEachern (Self Advocacy Federation)
 Meri Topchieva (Alberta Ability Network -CP Alberta)

Michelle Trudeau (ACT Alberta)
 Milton (Accessible Housing)
 Sam Mason (Voices of Albertans with Disabilities)
 Sean Crump (Community Advocate)
 Stacey Perlin (Perlin Foundation of Wellbeing)
 Stella Varvis (Alberta Law Reform)
 Valeria Palladino (Edmonton Epilepsy Association)

Meeting Minutes

Welcome
 Land Acknowledgement
 Breakout Rooms
 Meeting considerations
 Review of last month's meeting minutes

Cerebral Palsy Alberta Update on AAN

- Mezaun, the Director for Government Relations, commenced her leave of absence at the end of April, and there has been no recent communication regarding her return date.
- Despite this, we will continue with the committee meetings as per the established schedule.
- We are actively in the process of recruiting a new Manager for Government Relations to provide support upon Mezaun's return. Interviews are scheduled for the upcoming weeks. Once hired, this individual will offer leadership to this and other tables, providing direction for the upcoming year.
- Chairs and co-chairs are tasked with staying updated on human rights developments within the city and the province. They are responsible for setting agendas prior to table meetings and leading the monthly gatherings.
- Organizations are appreciative of the sharing of events and studies and connecting table members.

- It is crucial that we define a clear direction and pinpoint key focal areas for the upcoming year. With numerous potential avenues, prioritizing and channeling efforts towards the most critical matters is paramount.
- Stacey has graciously offered to assist with agenda setting and collaborate on strategic planning with Sean and Meri.
- Some members have noted significant overlaps with other tables, suggesting regular reporting of activities from these tables would be beneficial.
- We are considering the initiation of a meeting involving all chairs and co-chairs from various tables. This would serve to ensure our collective efforts are coordinated and avoid unnecessary duplication of work.

Adjustment of Meeting time

- In response to feedback from committee members expressing a preference for shorter meetings, we have decided to convene for one hour and a half instead of the previous two-hour duration each month.
- While table meetings occasionally require only an hour, the inclusion of presentations and spotlights often necessitates additional discussion time. Consequently, the last half hour will be reserved solely if required.
- This adjustment addresses the challenge faced by some stakeholders who may have difficulty committing to the full two hours, potentially resulting in their non-attendance. This change aims to reduce barriers for new participants looking to engage in the table discussions.
- It's worth noting that typically, we manage to address all agenda items within the initial hour of the meeting. Therefore, this modification will not adversely impact the productivity or volume of work accomplished during our sessions.

Summer agency updates

Cerebral Palsy Alberta

- Remain steadfast in their commitment to extend support and services across the entire province.
- Anticipating the year 2024 with enthusiasm, eagerly awaiting the introduction of new and forthcoming programs.

The Human Rights Commission

- The Commission is commemorating its 50th anniversary in October, marking a significant milestone in its journey.
- The presence of both the current and former Chief Commissioners at this special event is anticipated.

- The Commission extends its deepest condolences to Margot Brunner's family and loved ones. Her recent passing this summer leaves a void that will be deeply felt.
- In their ongoing efforts to prioritize inclusivity, the Commission recently launched its website, with a strong focus on enhancing accessibility features. Notably, the accessibility bar is designed as a pop-up option, and they welcome valuable feedback from the community to further improve their offerings.

Self Advocacy Federation

- October 17th marks the International Day to Eradicate Poverty, and they are launching an awareness project in observance of this important day.
- Their initiative involves distributing paper bags bearing the message, "Disabled, please accept this as a token of my poverty." The reverse side lists various critical issues affecting individuals with disabilities, encompassing areas such as AISH, food security, housing, PDD, and more.
- Within these bags, a letter addressing their MLAs will be included. The letter will emphasize the importance of positive support for CBD, accessible housing, and related concerns.
- They would greatly appreciate support from the table once this initiative is rolled out. Your collective support will be invaluable in advancing this cause.

Perlin Foundation for Wellbeing

- They received approximately one-third of the funding compared to the previous year, which has necessitated adjustments in their operations.
- Stacey is presently serving as the Health & Safety Chair for IATSE 212 Caucus 2, which includes union events at Alberta Theatre Projects and the Theatre Calgary. This role involves working with the union to improve awareness and support improved standards in the workplace.
- Through the AAN, Stacey was recently approached to participate in a national research study on the accessibility of festivals and events for individuals with disabilities across Canada. Her contact is Omotola Abayomi (*the IL Canada Festival Site Coordinator for Alberta*) and the study falls under [Independent Living Canada](#) operations. Initial discussions have taken place, and Stacey will provide further updates as conversations progress.
- Stacey was involved in addressing a human rights violation related to equitable communication practices within the Calgary Downtown Association. As the situation develops, Stacey will keep us informed of any updates.

Alberta Law Reform

- There is an ongoing initiative to initiate a project aimed at reviewing the Residential Tenancies Act. While currently broad in scope, the project is slated to be refined in the near future.
- Stella will be leading a presentation on this project during the upcoming meeting, offering further details and updates.
- Emphasizing the importance of considering the disability perspective within the realm of residential tenancies is paramount.
- The Court of Kings Bench is scheduled to host a judicial symposium in January with a primary focus on disability and the law. Stella will be among the presenters and will provide an overview of the topics she intends to cover, including the historical relationship between law and disability.
- Please feel free to contact Stella for any questions at svarvis@ualberta.ca.

Deaf and Hear

- Support has been provided for the Human Rights Commission's new website through the inclusion of ASL interpretation and translation services.
- The Calgary Police Service has integrated its officers into the VRI on-demand system, granting them immediate access to ASL interpreters. This development has been met with enthusiasm, particularly as officers often encounter highly stressful situations where effective communication is already challenging.
- Collaborative efforts are underway with the RCMP and Edmonton Police Force, with the aim of extending this service to every police station and officer in the near future.
- The software is available for download by any interested individual or organization. Organizations can subscribe for an annual fee of \$150, with additional charges based on usage minutes. The cost is relatively low, offering organizations an accessible means to support ASL users.

Voices of Albertans with Disabilities

- They are maintaining their commitment to serving clients in their usual capacity.
- With the resumption of table meetings, there has been a notable increase in inquiries about Barrier-Free Alberta. Consequently, plans are underway to schedule the next subcommittee meeting.
- Recently, they marked their 50th anniversary with a celebration.



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- They are actively engaged in a legal proceeding against the City of Edmonton in conjunction with the Self Advocacy Federation, related to the displacement of encampments.

Human Rights Complaint against Government of Alberta regarding AISH

- Keri McEachern of the Self-Advocacy Federation is in the process of formally complaining about AISH, citing discrimination based on family status and source of income.
- The specific concern revolves around income clawbacks for individuals in domestic partnerships, as opposed to those cohabiting with roommates or family members. This distinction is discriminatory based on family status.
- An advocate has been engaged to conduct interviews and oversee the formal filing of these complaints, which is expected to take place within the next few weeks.
- This complaint is being pursued under the framework of Human Rights. Keri will provide updates promptly as soon as there is further information available.

Action items:

- Schedule Stella to present on the Residential Tenancies Act.
- Receive updates from Keri and Sam regarding their lawsuit against GOA.
- Receive Stacey's update about the human rights violation with the Calgary Downtown Association and their communication practices.

Wrap-Up/Adjournment

Next meeting:

Date: October 23, 2023

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Location: Zoom