

Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
December 1-2, 2016, St. John's, NL
Meeting Notes

Attendees

Paul Walsh, Elizabeth Chauk, Delia Connell, Lorna Gilbert, Dennis Gill, Justin Mercer, Patricia Moores, Nancy Reid, Paula Corcoran-Jacobs, Bruce Oldford, Donna Piercey, Katarina Roxon

Regrets

Don Connolly, Phil Lundrigan

Opening Comments

Paul Walsh, chairperson, welcomed members to the 24th meeting of the Council and acknowledged Katarina Roxon's gold medal achievement at the Rio Paralympic Games 2016.

Tabled Correspondence:

Incoming:

- Human Rights Award event invitation
- Independent Living Award / Government House invitation
- Women Against Violence Flag Raising Ceremony
- Minister Trimper response on Hunters with Disabilities regulations / advice
- Minister Gambin-Walsh requesting input on the Children and Youth Care Protection Act review
- Response from English Speaking School District on accessibility as priority consideration when considering permanent school closures

The Learning

Building Your Disability Confidence Event

Council attended the Building Your Disability Confidence event on December 1; guest speaker was Susan Scott-Parker, Business Disability International.

DPO News Presentation

Information provided: knowledge building sessions with Susan Scott-Parker, Action Plan update, overview of The Way Forward, overview of November 3rd federal consultation on accessible legislation and procurement roundtable.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities Proclamation

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities Proclamation was signed by the Minister Responsible with the Council and representatives of the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities-NL.

Remarks with Minister Responsible

Council shared reflections, insights, and looking ahead remarks with the Minister Responsible, including:

- Summary of Council's accomplishments in the past three years, i.e. voting procedures becoming accessible; visitable social housing; Assistive Technology

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Advice paper; business champions for equitable employment; advice on access to disability-related supports; definition of accessibility, inclusion lens template/tool

- Strengthened relationships and impacts with community, business, and government sectors
- Role of Council is cross-disability, a think tank that has earned respect and is now more recognized and known in the community
- Outstanding issues that Council did not complete: aging care-givers and increased supports and options for living in the community
- Looking ahead: Services within communities (away from acute care and focus on individualized supports); services tied to person not program; Universal Design as default in programs, policies and infrastructures

The Minister Responsible acknowledged Council's accomplishments and dedication, and reaffirmed that the advice/support from Council makes a significant contribution to her mandate. The Minister encouraged Council members to maintain its leadership and voice in creating change.

The Work

Provincial Inclusion-Based Legislation

Council advised on supporting a cultural change with how society understands disability. This can result in shifting perspectives and changing attitudes that will advance inclusion and accessibility in our communities.

Council advised that the legislation be "rights-based" and broad in scope. It could protect or require access to disability-related supports; supported decision-making; legal capacity; inclusive education; accessible transportation and built environments; employment; procurement requirements and access to American Sign Language (ASL)/ support of Deaf culture as well as requiring an inclusion lens on all legislations.

Children and Youth Care Protection Act Legislative Review

Council discussed and will provide feedback on the act including:

- Shifting from 'best interest' to 'sole interest' of children and youth
- Providing support services to indigenous children and youth in the context of their culture
- Providing supports for parents/guardians who have mental health issues
- Strengthening prevention programs, disability-related supports, services and programs for parents/guardians

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – Optional Protocol

Council received an overview of the Optional Protocol for the Convention and was informed that Canada is consulting on their intention to sign. Council deliberated the issue, including benefits and potential risks. Council will advise the Minister that the Province should support Canada in signing the Optional Protocol and that it is viewed as an accountability mechanism.

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Council Reflections

Council reflected on its accomplishments in the last three years and highlighted things for future Council:

- Importance of building relationships within Council so there is a collective voice and understanding of Council's advisory role
- Maintaining a safe environment for members to share experiences and insights
- Sharing information, advice and insights with government departments, agencies, boards, community and businesses

Actions

Council will:

1. Provide advice to the Minister Responsible on the accession of the Optional Protocol
2. Provide advice to the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development on Children and Youth Care Protection Act legislative review

Next Meeting

To be determined.