

**Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**  
**January 28-29, 2016**  
**Admiral's Green Clubhouse, Allandale Road, St. John's**  
**DRAFT Meeting Notes**

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### **Attendees**

Paul Walsh, Delia Connell, Don Connelly, Elizabeth Chaulk, Lorna Gilbert, Dennis Gill, Phil Lundrigan, Justin Mercer, Mackenzie Mitchell, Patricia Moores, Donna Piercey, Nancy Reid, Katarina Roxon

### **Regrets**

Norman Austin, Paula Corcoran-Jacobs, Bruce Oldford

### **Opening Comments**

Paul Walsh, Chair, welcomed members to the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council.

### **Tabled correspondence:**

- Letter to congratulate the Hon. Minister Sherry Gambin-Walsh on her new appointment as Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities
- Invitation to the Provincial Wellness Action Plan session
- Letter from Communication Disabilities Access Canada on current communication standards for persons with disabilities
- Minister of Justice and Public Safety response to Council regarding supported decision-making (tabled September 23, 2015)

### **Member's Update:**

Lorna Gilbert, who attended the Provincial Wellness Action Plan session on behalf of the chair, informed Council about her suggestions for promoting inclusion.

### **The Learning**

#### **Presentations**

- Employment Talk – Kelly Mansell, Rocket Bakery owner and Wayne Smart, Sobey's Estates manager talked with Brent Meade, Deputy Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, on employers' experiences in hiring persons with disabilities. This interactive discussion included high points, challenges and how champions can promote hiring persons with disabilities as good business sense.
- Elections NL – deferred due to poor weather conditions
- DPO News - Council was briefed on the newly-elected Liberal government commitments as related to inclusion.

### **The Work**

#### **Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities**

Council welcomed and congratulated the Hon. Sherry Gambin-Walsh on her new appointment as Minister Responsible. The Minister requested Council members to stay on in the interim until appointments are made.

Issues raised by Council included:

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- universality becoming the default in all aspects of society
- inclusion-based Disabilities Act
- gaps in transitions through school and employment
- implementing disability lens in government decisions and actions
- loss of Deaf culture and sign language, especially in rural areas
- Universal design for all housing
- access to services and programs by Aboriginal children
- access to assistive technologies
- future planning when a family member has a disability
- physician-assisted dying

The status of the inclusion strategy's action plan; the submission process for Council's position papers, and the target of 30 per cent reduction/savings over a three-year period were also discussed. Council cautioned that targeted reductions would impact persons with disabilities disproportionately and advised that a disability lens should be applied throughout the Government Renewal Initiative process.

### **Work Plan Moving Forward**

Council reviewed their work plan, identified activities, updates and new priorities.

### **Assistive Technology Position Statement**

Council provided final revisions for the Assistive Technology Position Statement.

### **Inclusion-based Disabilities Act**

An overview was provided on existing disability-related legislation including Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Ireland's Disability Act, and Newfoundland and Labrador legislation addressing barriers experienced by persons with disabilities. Council discussed approaches for a provincial inclusion-based Disabilities Act, noting the link to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Universal design, and the continuing evolution of best practices. Council recommended that principles underlying new legislation and the new federal act be based on accessibility (freedom of choice) and universality (as the default).

### **Actions**

Disability Policy Office will:

- Update work plan, as per Council's directions
- Finalize the Assistive Technology Position Statement for submission to the Minister Responsible
- Prepare background documents and suggested readings on legislations in Canada and other countries designed to achieve accessibility and inclusion
- Apply a disability lens to Government Renewal Initiative proposals
- Follow up with Harris Centre on ensuring new Vital Signs publications include persons with disabilities

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- Follow up on an accessibility audit of the Colonial Building
- Follow up with Recreation NL and Seniors, Wellness and Social Development on impact of proposed age limits for para-athlete subsidies

**Next Meeting**

Next meeting is scheduled for mid-March in St. John's.