



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove



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## 1.0 Statement of Commitment

*The Town Council of the Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove are committed to developing an accessible community which is totally inclusive and are committed to “identifying, removing, and preventing” barriers to accessibility and inclusivity. Council realizes that this is a substantial undertaking, but they are committed to making this vision of a fully accessible community a reality for Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove. Their goal is to make the town - its programs, facilities, services, and operations as accessible and inclusive as possible and to be aware of (and remove) the barriers that prevent full accessibility in the future.*

## 2.0 Accessibility Goals

### *Existing Initiatives*

The town council of the Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove have already undertaken several initiatives to make the town accessible. They include:

- To accommodate people with physical disabilities to use the washroom while at the town’s Community Center, council has installed a fully functional ‘wheelchair accessible’ washroom
- To be able to access this new washroom, council has installed a ‘push button’ entrance to the washroom
- The town has undertaken considerable improvements at Bidgood’s Cove by having a wheel chair accessible ramp installed to make the facility more accessible to everyone
- There have also been improvements undertaken to the picnic tables at Bidgood’s Cove to make them wheel chair accessible
- Cribbies Park and Community Garden had a new accessible pathway installed to make the facility more accessible
- The town’s Tourist Information Center recently received a grant to make the facility more accessible by installing a wheel chair accessible washroom to accommodate those with physical needs
- The Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove fully supports Pride Month activities and flies the Pride Flag proudly over the town hall each year during this period of time to bring attention to the LGBTQ+ community and to show its support for them
- The town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove already has funding in place to upgrade the playground in Maddox Cove to make it wheelchair accessible.

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### *New Initiatives*

Besides the undertakings council have already committed to, there are many new initiatives council are fully committed to implementing as part of its commitment to improved accessibility:

- Council can be more fully aware of the issues of accessibility and inclusion in the town in everything they do at the local level; provide support (and funding) for the Advisory Committee on Accessibility (as part of the town's Accessibility Plan) to allow them to learn and grow in the broad areas of accessibility and inclusion
- Elicit the support of the public and help make them further aware of issues of accessibility and inclusion by sharing information, building awareness, and indentifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility within the town. Raising public awareness about issues of accessibility in the town is extremely important and the public has an important role to play in this.
- Start by making the 'Advisory Committee on Accessibility' as representative of the broader community relating to accessibility and inclusion as possible; nominate and/or appoint people to the Advisory Committee on Accessibility which are as representative of the broad community of accessibility and inclusion as possible, including consideration of the following:
  - People with physical disabilities
  - Those with visual impairments
  - Those with hearing impairments
  - Members of the LBGTQ+ community
  - Representation from indigenous groups
  - People with emotional or mental health issues
  - Those with intellectual impairments
  - Representatives of special interest groups, professionals, and advocates that have an established focus and agenda
  - Local representatives
  - Appointing a staff person to serve on the committee
  - Having a member of council serve on the committee who is committed to learning more about accessibility and to chair the initial meeting, at least

**DISABILITY**  
isn't contagious – **IGNORANCE** is

- 
- Commit to ongoing learning activities for members of council and the Advisory Committee on Accessibility, and offer ‘opportunities to learn’ more about accessibility issues to the public, as well; these ongoing learning opportunities could include:
    - Guest speakers
    - Webinars, courses, and other ‘on-line’ learning tools
    - An introduction and overview of the province’s *Accessibility Act*
    - Review of existing (and new) programs, initiatives, services , and facilities that are examples of accessibility and inclusion within the town (and elsewhere)
    - “Hands On” learning – consultations with professional representatives of those with various disabilities; first-hand experience of barriers to disabilities & accessibility within the town; learning from professionals working in the field
  - Ensure all future recreational facilities built by the town are accessible
  - Review existing recreational facilities and playgrounds, apparatus, & equipment with a view to accessibility (where practical) – i.e. removing and preventing barriers to full participation
  - Review council’s *Building Regulations* and set standards that demonstrate council’s commitment to improved accessibility to new buildings and properties (where feasible); obviously, properties that already exist would be “grandfathered” by these regulations
  - Make the public aware of council’s commitment to accessibility through its approval of the town’s revised Building Regulations and other commitments
  - Identify new initiatives and facilities which are affordable which demonstrate councils’ commitment to accessibility & inclusion (where feasible)
  - Make application for funding for apparatus and equipment designed to improve accessibility (now that Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove) is an ‘accessible community’
  - Proudly share the town’s ‘Accessibility Plan’ with taxpayers/public, and council should proudly take every opportunity to boast of council’s commitment to accessibility when talking to the public or speaking to various community groups and/or at functions
  - Provide an annual award for “Accessibility/Inclusion” to help raise awareness and to acknowledge acts that “include others” and improve “accessibility”
  - Consider making a survey available to residents (using survey monkey or some other cost-effective tool) to get their ideas on how to make Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove more accessible and inclusive (and other related ideas)
  - Consider the possibility of using Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove’s generous volunteers for a ‘cause specific’ fundraiser each year to help raise awareness of issues of accessibility & inclusion

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## 3.0 Barriers to Accessibility

In Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove there are several barriers to accessibility that we have identified.

### *Physical Barriers*

The physical barriers are more easily identified. The chalet at the community softball field is not wheelchair accessible, and is an obvious physical barrier for anyone using a wheelchair trying to gain access to the building.

The Town Hall itself is the biggest physical barrier. In the past, council looked into the cost of installing an elevator at the Town Hall, but the cost of installing this is prohibitive for a town the size of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove with its annual operating budget. There are many features of the building design and functionality of both the 'museum' and 'town hall' that would also have to be overcome to make them wheelchair accessible, as well.

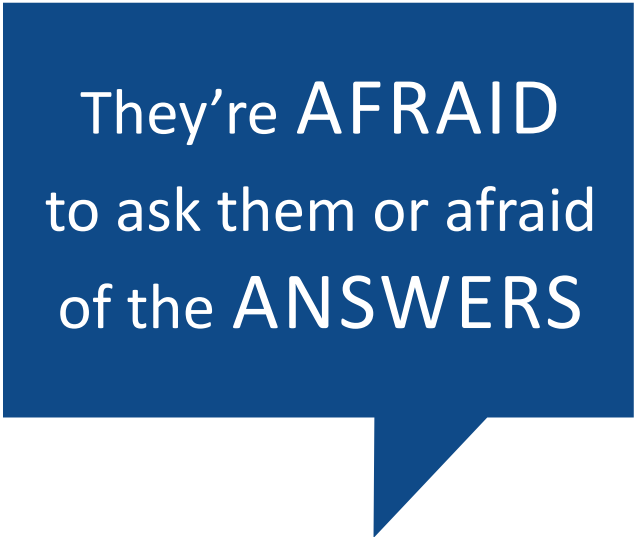
*Financial Barriers* – For small municipalities with a limited budget it is difficult to divest funds towards important issues of accessibility – recognizing that accessibility is an important issue. One thing often leads to another. Financially, the town is just getting by, and council is reticent to increase taxes (especially at this time) to cover the increased costs. Just getting the essentials of the community can be difficult, at times, with a small operating budget like Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove has. An example of this is the town office. The town office can only be made accessible by having an elevator installed. While space for an elevator is limited – it can be done. But the cost is prohibitive for a small town like Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove. A second elevator or considerable (other) accommodations would have to be made to make the museum accessible. Space is also very limited to build a ramp to the front entrance to the 'town hall' which would make the 'town hall' accessible. While this is costly, council will commit funds for installing a ramp outside the 'town hall'. But where do you go once you get into the building? The building design is simply not functional for wheelchair accessibility. There is a financial barrier that is stopping the town from moving forward with this important initiative. A 'town hall' that is not wheelchair accessible is a problem – council recognizes that. This is a small (but realistic) example of a budgetary or financial restriction. There are many others, unfortunately.

*Human Resources* – The town has a limited number of staff available at any given time. Even when staff are on annual leave currently, there are usually no replacements. The work is often left to face them upon their return or others have to 'pick up the slack' for shorter periods of time. But it is difficult, because staffing levels are at 'bare bones' already. Larger communities have special interest groups and municipal departments to undertake these initiatives and to give it the attention it deserves. The irony is that quite often smaller municipalities have to do the same things as larger municipalities (in order to be compliant) – but they have to do so with much smaller staffing allocations. This is definitely a barrier to accessibility.

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*Public Engagement* - Getting the public to engage in issues of accessibility & inclusion, especially persons who do not want to identify as having a disability, can also be a challenge. This is a problem for all municipalities, we realize that. But it is even more challenging in smaller towns where most people know one another. An example would be the stigma associated with a person living with a mental health issue or having an intellectual or cognitive challenge. While these conditions are more difficult to recognize, this creates its own challenge. Some disabilities are harder to detect and these are challenging for everyone to address, as a result. Even coming forward to serve on the Advisory Committee for Accessibility can be an example of this. While some peoples' participation may be obvious – others' may be less obvious.

*Communication* – There are segments of our municipal population with hearing issues or visual impairments. People with visual impairments may not be able to read information on the town website, for example, or even be able to read their tax invoices. Many people have hearing challenges - especially in large crowds or crowded rooms where there is a lot of chatter or peripheral noise. These are important barriers that need to be addressed. Because, as things stand right now, there are definite communication barriers, and they even exist with most social media devices and tools and on most social media platforms, as well. People often can't communicate well for various reasons, and this can present a problem for public bodies (like municipal councils).



They're **AFRAID**  
to ask them or afraid  
of the **ANSWERS**

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## 4.0 Focus Areas

- 4.1 The primary area of focus for the town's Accessibility Plan will be to make council and the general public of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove more aware of issues, concerns, and barriers to 'accessibility' (and inclusion) within the town. This will require a big commitment of time, energy, and resources. This education of council and the general public will be a 'process' rather than an 'event', but with a full commitment from council this *can* and *will* be completed, over time.
- 4.2 Council will make a proclamation declaring that the Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove is an *Accessible Community* dedicated to establishing and implementing principles of accessibility and inclusion in everything they do 'going forward'.
- 4.3 Another 'area of focus' will be to remove the barriers (where feasible) and especially to prevent the barriers to accessibility from being established in the future.
- 4.4 Council will, in future, consider all aspects of accessibility and inclusion relating to outside (non-elected) committees of council, volunteering with the town, working in the town, as well as hiring of new employees (where practical).
- 4.5 Involve staff in the development of the 'accessibility'. Employees can help identify specific budget items required in implementing the plan (in various areas of programs, operations, and services). These budget recommendations can be provided through the Advisory Board on Accessibility or they could be provided directly to council (through Committee of the Whole).
- 4.6 Ensure physical accommodations that are fully accessible are provided and available in the community.
- 4.7 Ensure the town's development regulations and permitting processes ensure healthcare facilities and clinics are accessible and inclusive for all individuals.

## Courage

doesn't mean you don't get afraid,

courage means you **don't let fear STOP you**


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## 5.0 Advisory Committee on Accessibility


- 5.1 One of the first considerations (from council's perspective) is who council is going to appoint from council to this committee. Obviously, appointing someone from council who is knowledgeable and sympathetic to the needs of the accessible community, and who is open to learning more about the issues and barriers that exist is very important. This individual will not only chair the (first meeting at least) of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility but will become knowledgeable of issues relating to accessibility on behalf of council and the barriers that exist. This councillor will likely "chair" at least the initial meeting of the committee (until a chair is selected) and will decide (in accordance with the 'terms of reference' that are adopted for the committee) whether they will chair subsequent meetings or if a chair is to be chosen from within the group that has been assembled.
- 5.2 The second consideration is "how" members will become part of the committee. The committee will be an "advisory committee", meaning that the committee can put forth 'recommendations' that may or may not be adopted (or funded) by council. They offer advice to council on issues of accessibility. They are considered "experts" in the field of accessibility in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove.

Will they be asked and be "appointed" to the committee? Will council put forth an 'Open Call' for nominations to the committee? If the first is chosen, how will potential committee members be approached to become part of the committee and by whom? If the second option is chosen to have an "open call" for nominations, how will this call be prepared and where will it be published? These are practical considerations that will have to be made before proceeding.

Assuming that council's committee will become a separate committee, will all members of the committee be residents of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove or will some advisory committee members be representative of professionals or 'experts' working elsewhere in the field. That decision must be made relatively quickly. Many committees on "accessibility" already have "terms of reference" adopted – so there is no need to re-invent the wheel. Borrow where and when you can. The 'terms of reference' can be revised and adopted by your own committee for use in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove.



I may be  
**DIFFERENT**  
from you, but  
**NOT LESS**  
than you



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5.3 How should the Committee on Accessibility be reflective of inclusion? Consider members of the committee from groups that are normally marginalized from the following:

- People with physical disabilities or mobility issues (1 or 2)  
At least one (1) from some of the others listed below (depending on the size of the committee):
- Those with visual impairments
- Those with hearing impairments
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community
- Representation of indigenous groups
- People with mental or emotional health issues
- Those with intellectual disabilities
- Representatives of broader special interest groups, professionals, and advocates that have an established focus and agenda
- Local representatives (living in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove)
- Staff person (who can assist the councillor and be a 'lead' and knowledgeable on issues relating to disability)
- Member of council who is sympathetic and is committed to learning more about accessibility to chair the initial committee meeting. Someone with a 'vested' interest. This person will become council's liaison on issues of accessibility – with help from the staff person appointed.
- Consider how each individual or group has had to overcome 'barriers' to accessibility when choosing membership to your committee. You may also need to consider representatives who live in your community. This will be a priority of council, we're pretty sure.

NOTE: Some disabilities may not be so easy to detect – like 'intellectual' disabilities. Other individuals may not want to be categorized or be seen to have a disability at all. This can make choosing who may or may not be asked to participate in the work of the committee even more challenging.

5.4 Should the committee meetings be 'public'? There are arguments to be made on both sides. Should the media be invited to attend? Having the meetings open to the public may provide an opportunity for others (other than those on the committee) to be aware of (or even participate) in things relating to accessibility. It also advances the arguments for openness and transparency. On the other hand, having meetings that are open to the public may prevent committee members from speaking their minds openly and thereby advancing the agenda of accessibility as it needs to be. Some committee members may not want the public to even know they are on a committee dealing with issues of accessibility & inclusion (or how they became involved). This is a decision that must eventually be made (by council or the committee itself). Perhaps it is something the committee can eventually decide upon.

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## 6.0 Council Commitment

- 6.1 A staff person should be appointed to become an accessibility ‘lead’, and to support the work of the councillor appointed to lead the committee as an advisory committee of council. The staff person can prepare meeting agendas, prepare (and circulate) copies for committee members, take and circulate minutes of meetings, arrange for guest speakers or other professional development opportunities, prepare & complete funding applications, schedule professional development opportunities, assist with ‘on-line’ learning, ensure the technology works, and perform other ‘day to day’ tasks, as required .
- 6.2 The committee should (early in the process) be provided with an opportunity to become familiar with the provincial **Accessibility Act** and what is happening on the provincial level to address issues of accessibility and to remove barriers. These learning opportunities are normally free of charge and are an important means of bringing Committee Members “up to speed” and getting them in touch with other professionals in the field of accessibility.
- 6.3 The **Accessible Canada Act** 2019 should also become familiar to committee members. Committee members should be challenged to become familiar with expectations and opportunities to learn more at the national level, and become aware of funding opportunities (both provincially and federally) to access funding to support their local projects and initiatives.
- 6.4 The Accessibility Advisory Committee can eventually “tweak” the Accessibility Plan to better suit their needs. The Accessibility Plan must become a ‘living and breathing’ document in order for it to become truly effective. Revisions and updates should become a normal part of the renewal process.

BUILDING minds  
building FUTURES

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- 6.5 Learning and collaboration should become a part of the routine work of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility. Learning about issues of accessibility should be a major focus of the committee. Council should work to ensure these opportunities are provided. While most of these opportunities are “free”, there may be donations to be made or registration costs to be covered etc... Things like arranging “guest speakers”, or other ‘hands on’ learning opportunities should be provided, as well as conference participation and ‘on-line’ learning opportunities. In other words, a commitment to learning should be made and provided by council as a priority.
- 6.6 Council should create a message about its commitment to improving accessibility and share its plan. The plan should become a much-publicized public document. If the plan and all of the good work of the committee is not widely shared with the public, the town will not likely improve substantially in the broad areas of accessibility. Sharing this information widely allows others to be more active in community events and thereby improves accessibility.
- 6.7 Implement the goals and actions identified in the Accessibility Plan. The plan is empty words without proper implementation. If council is truly committed to eliminating and preventing barriers to accessibility - action needs to be taken. It is often said, “talk is cheap” - and so it is. There will be costs incurred, but there also will be plenty of opportunities for funding (both federally and provincially). In any case, implementation is the key.
- 6.8 Making opportunities for members of the public in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove (and elsewhere) to learn more about accessibility is critically important. So, these opportunities should be well publicized and shared with the general public. Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove may eventually become synonymous with accessibility. That would be a tremendous thing to have happen as an “off shoot” to these initiatives.

Not taking  
action is the  
**ULTIMATE  
DISABILITY**

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## 7.0 Accessibility Standards

Eventually, either through a recommendation put forth by the ‘Advisory Committee on Accessibility’, or through other means, council will establish new standards for accessibility within the town. Affordability and practicality will be important in establishing these standards, and while they may apply more to future builds or programs, the standards will help identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility that currently exist. This will raise awareness, at least, to these barriers.

A standard may apply to individuals, organizations, or public bodies that:

- i. Design and deliver programs and services
- ii. Provide information or communication
- iii. Procure goods, services, and facilities
- iv. Offer accommodations
- v. Provide education or offer opportunities for learning
- vi. Provide healthcare
- vii. Provide opportunities for employment
- viii. Own, operate, maintain or control an aspect of the ‘built’ environment other than a private residence with 3 or less residential units
- ix. Conduct an activity or undertaking prescribed in the regulation

These standards cannot violate or supersede the standards set by the Province of Newfoundland Labrador through the Accessibility Standards Advisory Board in 2022. These are the standards that are to be applied in every situation that may exist in Newfoundland and Labrador when it comes to accessibility.

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## Glossary

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador defines “disability” as follows:

“A *disability* includes a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation that is permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature that, in interaction with a barrier, prevents a person from fully participating in society.”

“A *barrier* means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society, including a physical barrier, and architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, or a barrier established or perpetrated by an Act, regulations, a policy or practice.”

*Advisory Committee on Accessibility* – For the Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove, the ‘Advisory Committee on Accessibility’ looks at the facilities, programs, services, and operations that currently are in place in the town and puts forth recommendations on how the town can prevent or remove barriers so that the town can be more accessible (where feasible). The Advisory Committee on Accessibility become somewhat of local ‘experts’ in the area(s) of accessibility, but as an ‘advisory’ committee the committee can put forth recommendations and provide advice, but council does not have an obligation to implement the suggestions made.

*Accessible* – at the local level, it simply means putting forth efforts to remove barriers to participation; whether they be physical barriers or other barriers (such as enlarging the font size of the print on correspondence for aging adults or the visually impaired), or removing barriers to participation for various individuals or groups who may not otherwise be comfortable participating. At one time the term “accessible” referred only to physical accessibility, but it has been expanded to include much more.

*Inclusion* is a term broadly used to proactively remove any barriers that may exist from participation – these barriers could be physical, emotional, intellectual, or through discrimination as a result of prejudice, or removal of any type(s) of barriers of any nature.

*Goals* are defined as a desired result – something you are aiming to achieve. In terms of improving accessibility, the goals that are identified by the town are things the town would like to achieve to make Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove more accessible.

*Physical handicaps* – are barriers of a physical nature that may prevent some individuals from participating (such as not having wheelchair accessible washrooms).

*Local representatives* are people chosen to represent the town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove who actually live in the town.

*Building regulations* refer to the official regulations which govern builders which have been adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove to control building and development within the town.

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*Intellectual impairments* refer to barriers of an intellectual nature (such as autism) which are not so easy to see, but may be a barrier to an individual's full participation in programs or events in the community for various reasons.

*Accessible community* refers to a specific community of people which believes in and supports the principles of accessibility (in this case, residents of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove).

*Chair* as in "chairing a committee" refers to individuals who are elected or appointed to lead a committee. The additional responsibilities of the chair are to ensure meetings are scheduled; to help prepare the meeting agenda; to note who attends (and who is absent); to lead the discussion and maintain "order" in the meetings following the rules of order that have been adopted; to understand the basic principles of democracy and meeting decorum; and to ensure the "minutes" of the meeting are circulated to others (as decided by the committee).

*Public* refers to anyone who would like to attend a meeting, in this case – whether they be residents of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove or others living in neighbouring communities who may have an interest in issues of accessibility. When public is used there are usually no restrictions on who can attend.

*Lead on issues of accessibility* is normally the staff person appointed by council to serve on the committee and is an individual who can be trusted to be "in the know" and somewhat of a local expert on issues relating to accessibility that council can refer to for advice and to answer questions etc...

*Accessibility Act* is a provincial law (Province of Newfoundland Labrador) that governs all issues relating to accessibility, in general, which became law in 2021. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities oversees the work of his/her officials, and staff within the department can be a huge help and resource to people like those serving on the 'Advisory Committee on Accessibility' in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove, or the members of council, in general.

*Accessible Canada Act* is a federal law adopted by the Government of Canada in 2019. The law applies primarily to those under federal jurisdiction (such as indigenous groups), but many excellent ideas can be borrowed from this legislation and applied locally in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove.

*Public Document* is any document ordered by council to be prepared for viewing by residents of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove or elsewhere. A public document may be shared through social media and posted on the town's website and thus can be viewed by anyone, and is generally made available for viewing by members of the public (not just residents of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove).

*Open Call* is a term used in official "Rules of Order" that means that (in this case) council will prepare a document which will be made public "calling" for nominations to serve on the Advisory Committee on Accessibility. Depending on the response, not everyone nominated will serve on the committee. Ultimately, that will be council's decision. Whether the call will only be open to residents of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove (or not) or will include other professionals or individuals willing to serve who may live and/or work in other communities will be specified in the call, as well as things like "the terms of office" etc...

*Accessibility standards* are a set of standards that are provided to public bodies whereby they can (as a public body) develop a set of standards through the provincial *Accessibility Act* which governs all aspects of accessibility, in this case, within the Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove.

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## Conclusion

Developing this plan is an important first step and a huge commitment on behalf of the Town Council of the Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove. But it is just the beginning.

Council must be committed (including financially) to make commitments to building more accessible facilities and refurbishing existing ones (that are currently not accessible). Council must also commit to applying “an accessible lens” to everything it does – whether it’s developing a budget, hiring, accepting or including community volunteers, assigning people to committees, building new facilities or refurbishing old ones – a commitment must be made to being more accessible and inclusive. Involving people or segments of the population who may be disenfranchised is an excellent place to start. These people often have so much to offer. They just need to be asked or included.

Whether it’s serving on committees of council, volunteering in the community, coaching teams, hiring people inside or outside, providing places to meet etc., considering issues of accessibility and inclusion send clear messages that the Town Council of the Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove are committed to issues of accessibility and inclusion. ‘Doing’ is more important than “saying”. Council must be willing to set the example – to stand tall and be a leader on issues of accessibility and inclusion.

If council is committed to doing more and to working “side by side” with the committee on accessibility, things will slowly change. The most important thing is to try. Committing to ‘making the effort’ is a great starting point.

Normally, if there is no financial commitment made on the part of council, accessibility is not a priority – and it ‘must’ be. There must be room in the budget for initiatives pertaining to improving accessibility. This is where council needs to start. If something (like accessibility) is truly a priority – council must commit funds to it.

Perhaps with a new *Accessibility Plan* and a renewed commitment from council on issues of accessibility, council may be able to access more funding to refurbish facilities or to do other projects relating to accessibility. This will be viewed favourably by most members of the community. In any case, council must make issues of accessibility a priority during budget deliberations.

This ‘Accessibility Plan’ is a great starting point. We feel obligated to issue a reminder to council that this plan is meant to be a fluid document. It needs to be updated periodically to reflect changes and improvements that have been made. Perhaps this can be the work of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility to bring forth a series of recommendations or changes to be made to the Accessibility Plan that reflect the current state of affairs in Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove.



Attitude

is a small thing  
that makes a

Big

difference

