1. Roll Call

Present: Jarrot Zehr, Brenda Ronald, Mary Armstrong, Doreen Fader, Sarah Manary, Lisa Hooper, Shelby Merritt, Sandy Gdyccynski, Bob Brown, Chris Ayres, Bev Davidson, Councillor Van Tilborg

Regrets: Deb McNeil, Norm Barrieau, Councillor Kings

Staff: Jenny Sawicki, Elly van der Made, Maria Visocchi, Jim Quin, Ela Stypa Jones

L. Hooper called the meeting to order at 12:05pm

2. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

None declared

3. Presentations / Delegations

3.1 StopGap Program, Brooke Bell, Wilfrid Laurier University Student

Brook Bell was unable to attend the meeting. Jenny Sawicki presented the program on her behalf from an email message that was provided by B. Bell.

StopGap is a community ramp project. The StopGap foundation would like to create a collaborative community effort in Brantford to partner with and make the core of downtown Brantford more accessible to students and local individuals, by collecting donations and building ramps for one-step storefronts.

StopGap is a portable built ramp. Stores are encouraged to use it to make the entrance to their facility accessible. Most Brantford downtown stores and buildings are not accessible. StopGap will not eliminate all barriers, but will help to alleviate that barrier of entry. The program will still need to have someone provide assistance to open the door.

This project will have more impact if this committee makes a recommendation to Council to support this initiative.
L. Hooper asked if the committee is asking Council for money towards this project. J. Sawicki said no, this is a Wilfrid Laurier Brantford initiative and they are looking for support.

L. Hooper asked if these ramps are portable. J. Sawicki said they are portable and do not impede the sidewalk width.

B. Brown referenced a City of Brantford Task Force that was created in 2010 to create the most walkable and accessible town in Canada. How is this any different than that initiative. J. Sawicki said that this is a Wilfrid Laurier University Brantford initiative. L. Hooper noted that past Task Forces should not affect this particular initiative. A lot has happened in eight years and that this project should be looked at on its own.

B. Ronald asked if the portable ramps will be at the stores that request them or shared amongst stores in a row. J. Sawicki is unsure if it is one ramp per location. J. Sawicki will follow up with the program organizers to find the answer. L. Hooper said it would be ideal if every store had one instead of moving the ramps around.

C. Ayres asked where the funding will come from for this project. J. Sawicki noted that this is a Wilfrid Laurier University Brantford initiative and they would be responsible for fundraising.

S. Manary noted that if the store uses one of the StopGap ramps, the inside of the facility may not be accessible. Will someone be available to assist with maneuverability or rearranging of furniture or objects. J. Sawicki is unsure. She suggested to invite Brooke Bell back to discuss this project more and inquire about accessibility once inside the store.

D. Fader questioned about the liability of these ramps as some chairs are quite heavy. J. Sawicki said that the StopGap program has specific requirements. She has used them before and feels safe on them.

J. Quin said that last time portable ramps were discussed, there was an issue with compliance and the Building Code. J. Sawicki said that this is not a City program. This program is not unique to Brantford. It is implemented in other communities.

B. Ronald asked if a sample ramp can be shown to the committee. J. Sawicki will follow up with Brooke Bell.

E. van der Made noted that the committee should hold off on making a recommendation to Council until Brooke Bell is asked back to answer some of these questions.

4. Items for Consideration

4.1 StopGap Program

Previously discussed.
4.2 BlindSquare

J. Sawicki reported that Larissa Proctor from the CNIB has been given a grant to supply funds for BlindSquare. These are beacons that are Bluetooth compatible and are used as navigational items for persons with a visual impairment.

S. Manary noted that these small items pull information down from the Cloud and the BlindSquare app to work as a GPS device to help with navigation. The Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts has these items installed in their facilities as well as the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre. W. Ross Macdonald School did have them, they were not working well and were removed.

B. Davidson asked if this grant is for City owned facilities. J. Sawicki said that they were just asked if the City would like some of the beacons. The City would receive a set of beacons at no cost, then after the first year, there will be a $30-$35 licensing fee per beacon should the City wish to continue their upkeep.

J. Sawicki asked the committee for recommendations for which facilities would they see as the highest priorities for receiving these beacons.

L. Hooper asked if in order for these items to work, is there any infrastructure needed for them. These items are affixed with an adhesive backing. No changes to infrastructure is needed. S. Manary noted that the user would only need a cell phone and the BlindSquare app.

B. Davidson asked how many units are available to use. J. Sawicki said it is on a first come first serve basis. It was asked how where and how many of these units are needed for the size of a facility. One beacon could not cover a large facility, eg: the Brantford Public Library would need several as it is a large space. J. Sawicki noted that there may be 130 available for users to request in the community. The Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre has 15 installed.

Several questions were asked to J. Sawicki from the committee members:

- Is the offer of these units just for City facility or private? The offer is for City locations only.
- How is the number of beacons per location determined? It is based on public access.
- Can the units be held on to until the move to the new location at City Hall for use? The Wellington Street location will still house Social Services.

S. Manary asked for a definition of City owned buildings. J. Quin replied that they are corporately owned buildings with community and recreation space. He will provide a list of City facilities that can be circulated.

Additional locations were suggested for installing the beacons:

- Brantford Visitor & Tourism Centre
• Brantford Transit Bus Terminal
• Brantford Farmers’ Market
• City Hall
• Beckett Adult Leisure Centre
• Brantford & District Civic Centre
• Brantford Police Station
• Laurier YMCA. No, not city owned
• Brantford Public Library. No, library is run by a board. It is not a City owned building.

J. Sawicki noted that this is time sensitive. If the committee waits too long the beacons will no longer be available. Councillor Van Tilborg asked how time sensitive. J. Sawicki responded that there are only 130 available. S. Manary stated that the beacons were purchased based on the funding they received.

Councillor Van Tilborg said there is a way to acquire the beacons at no cost, but there will then be a concern about who will pay the yearly licensing fee. J. Sawicki said that this conversation is about determining locations and then to continue the conversation to secure budget, then an assessment to be done on those venues. L. Hooper stated that this is just for initial discussion to determine locations. Then it will be need to determine if this program can be budgeted for.

5. Consent Items

5.1 Minutes

Moved by Brenda Arnold
Seconded by Mary Armstrong

THAT the Minutes of the May 3, 2018 Brantford Accessibility Advisory Committee BE ADOPTED.

CARRIED

5.2 National Access Awareness Week – May 26 to June 1, 2019

J. Sawicki discussed this program with her Director. There is currently no budget for this event, but it can still go ahead with the Awards and advertising. If extra funds will be needed for an event during this time, a report will need to be written to council to request funding. This would be a committee run event as there are not enough staff resources. It is suggested to not hold an event in 2019, but to use the next year to do planning for the following year. M. Visocchi said it will be important to have some input from the committee to determine a meaningful and interactive event. Some examples from the committee would be helpful for the planning process. This would be in the form of identifying what the event would look like and the budget required to run that event. Ideas will be discussed at the next meeting as well as any feedback about the
accessibility awards for 2019. L. Hooper asked if the committee can then suggest to have this event for 2020. M. Visoci said there is no harm in asking for an event in 2019.

This event is to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

5.3 Updates

J. Quin gave updates on Corporate facilities:

- Firehall #3: new accessible washrooms and showers to be accessible
- Firehall #2: New Firehall will be located on Fairview Dr. It will be replacing the old one next to the Brantford General Hospital as it is not accessible. The new Firehall will have a public community room.
- Mount Hope Cemetery: Phase 1 is complete. Phase 2 to be completed next year.
- Federal Building/New City Hall: is past the 50% design. It will exceed the minimum standards for accessibility.
- An accessibility compliance audit is being conducted to determine what needs update and what the cost will be.

M. Visoci gave updates from Corporate Communications:

- Redeveloping the www.brantford.ca and www.mybrantford.ca website. To be ready for launch January 2019. The content for the site is being updating and a new navigation is being imbedded. There will be more contrasts, features to automatically increase font sizes, it will be easier for screen-reading devices to consume content and moving from pdf to fillable formats.
- As part of the user testing, this committee has been identified to be part of that phase to preview and provide feedback. This should happen mid-December.

Brantford Transit: Gord Leadbeater will be done his six-month term at Brantford Lift. Zeke Baker will be taking over for the next six months. Then a decision will be made for who will hold that position permanently.

6. Next Meeting

Thursday, November 1, 2018

7. Adjournment

12:59 pm