

ACCESSIBIITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

CITY OF WEST KELOWNA

ATTENTION: CHAIR RUSTY ENSIGN AND MEMBERS.

Congratulations on the Establishment of this much needed committee and your appointments to it.

I wish to draw your attention to TWO Accessibility issues involving the City of West Kelowna Facilities and Programs.

1. I regularly attend events in Royal Lepage Place and sit in the stands. I'm A season ticket holder for the Warriors, annually attend Remembrance Day Ceremonies, and occasional other events such as the Circus last year.

I do have a hidden disability with a partially paralyzed left leg (from a major car accident in 1981) and with aging, I am finding it increasingly difficult AND dangerous to navigate the steep cement stairs, although I am finding using walking sticks helps. As I struggle, many RLP patrons comment how much the facility needs safety railings on the stairs. I drew this issue to attention of former CAO Paul Gipps 3 years ago, and a small number of railings were installed in one end section. It's not enough, as at last years' Remembrance Days Ceremony, I witnessed an elderly lady tumble down the stairs trying to get to her seat on the opposite side of the stands. I would ask that the Committee recommend to the City of continuation of the installation of railings in the aisles attached to the seats in all sections. Quite frankly this should be the highest priority for upgrades to RLP as it is a safety issue.

2. Following last summer's evacuations for the McDougall Creek wildfire (I was a volunteer for ESS) I was contacted by Arlene Brenner an advocate for Deaf and Hearing Impaired. Her issue is a valid one in that the media conferences and other communications are never in a format to communicate important information to Deaf and Hearing-Impaired residents about evacuations and support. I have advised her group on content and approach to make presentations to RDCO and Emergency Management BC. which she has done. While it is a Regional and Provincial Issue primarily, I believe the Committee should look into these requests and provide support and recommendation to the City as well on how communication should be improved. These are life/ safety issues.

Trusting the committee will find this useful information and make the appropriate recommendations.



Doug Findlater