



BIA HANDBOOK

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BIA Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide Business Improvement Area Boards of Management and its members, with a quick reference tool based upon By-law No. 183-07, as amended, which adopted Operating Guidelines for Business Improvement Areas. For specific detail By-law No. 183-07 is the governing document and should be referenced as needed. This Handbook does not replace By-law No. 183-07.

1.0 **PURPOSE OF A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

- (a) To oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally owned land, buildings and structures in the Area beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally;
- (b) To maintain Business Improvement Area-initiated streetscaping capital assets within the Business Improvement Area;
- (c) To promote the Business Improvement Area as a Business, employment, tourist or shopping Area;
- (d) To offer graffiti and poster removal services, respecting building facades visible from the street, to member property owners who provide written consent; and
- (e) To undertake safety and security initiatives within the Business Improvement Area.

2.0 **LIMITATIONS**

A Board shall not:

- (a) Spend any money unless it is included in the budget approved by Council or in a reserve fund;

EXCEPTION: The Board may spend unexpected revenues received subsequent to the approval of the annual budget by Council, provided the Board reports on such revenue and expenditure variances at the annual general meeting and through the audited financial statement;
- (b) Incur any indebtedness extending beyond the current year without the prior approval of Council;
- (c) Borrow or lend money;
- (d) Offer or provide support to political candidates or political parties;
- (e) Advertise or pay for advertisements in any Political Publication;
- (f) Make or fund Improvements to private property, with the exception of graffiti and postering removal initiatives pursuant to Section 1(d) above.

3.0 MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Members consist of owners of property who are assessed in the commercial and industrial Business classes within the BIA boundaries, and tenants of such properties.
- (b) In determining tenancy, the *Municipal Act, 2001*, provides that the Clerk may accept a list of tenants provided by the owner, or the declaration of a person that they are a tenant. The determination of the Clerk is final.
- (c) The BIA Operating Guidelines adopted by Council further provides that where recent purchasers of rateable property in the BIA but do not yet show on the assessment roll, must produce evidence of property ownership satisfactory to the Director of Corporate Services.

4.0 COMPOSITION OF BOARD

- (a) All Town BIA Boards are comprised of citizen appointees within the BIA boundaries plus 1 member of Council (the Ward Councillor) as directors, pursuant to the establishing by-laws passed by Council.
- (b) Of the citizen appointees, **one may** be a non-member of the Business Improvement Area, provided the person is nominated by a member of the BIA.

5.0 APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS

- (a) The directors of a Board are selected by a vote of the membership and appointed by Council.
- (b) Council may refuse to appoint a person selected by the membership, in which case, Council may leave the position vacant or direct that a meeting be held by the members to elect or select another candidate for the Council's consideration.

6.0 TERM OF OFFICE

- (a) The term of the Board of directors is the same as the term of the Council.
- (b) Each director holds their office from the time of his/her appointment until a successor is appointed, as long as the director continues to be qualified.
- (c) Each director is eligible for reappointment on the expiration of the term of office.

7.0 ELECTIONS OF NOMINEES VOTER ELIGIBILITY

Nominees by the membership for appointment to a Board are to be selected at the Annual General Meeting held in Council election years, substantially in the form of Appendix "1" (Nomination Protocol) annexed hereto. The Nomination Protocol may be altered, if necessary, in consultation with the Clerk. The Clerk and/or Legislative Assistant may oversee the election of nominees, if requested.

8.0 VOTER ELIGIBILITY

- (a) Only one (1) Board nomination per assessed property and one (1) Board nomination per Business is permitted.
- (b) All commercial or industrial property owners and commercial or industrial Business tenants, or the designates of the owners or tenants, may stand for Board nomination.
- (c) Each member of the Business Improvement Area is entitled to one (1) vote per question or motion at Business Improvement Area General Membership meetings, regardless of the number of properties that the member may own or lease in the Business Improvement Area.
- (d) Ownership of properties.
 - (i) Where a person is the sole owner of more than one (1) property within the Business Improvement Area, or is the sole owner of more than one (1) corporation that owns property within the Business Improvement Area, the person and the corporations solely owned by that person shall have a total of only one (1) vote, regardless of the number of properties owned by that person and the different corporations solely owned by that person.
 - (ii) Where a person is the sole owner of a property and joint owner of one (1) or more additional properties, one (1) vote is given for the property owned by that person alone and one (1) vote is given for each jointly-owned property, provided the co-owners in each case are different persons.
 - (iii) Where a person is the sole owner of a corporation and part owner of different corporation(s) that own property within the Business Improvement Area, one (1) vote is given for the corporation solely owned by that person and one for each jointly-owned corporation, provided the co-owners of each corporation are different persons.
 - (iv) A corporate member may nominate in writing one (1) individual to vote on behalf of the corporation.
 - (v) One (1) individual may be nominated for voting purposes by two (2) or more corporations that are members of a Business Improvement Area, provided that that member is not the sole owner of both corporations.
- (e) Proxy voting is not permitted at any meeting.
- (f) The Board shall submit the nominees to the Clerk for consideration and determination of appointment by Council.

9.0 **REFUSAL TO APPOINT**

Council may refuse to appoint a person selected by the members of a Business Improvement Area, in which case Council may leave the position vacant or direct that a meeting of the members of the Business Improvement Area or the Board be held to select another candidate for Council's consideration.

10.0 **OFFICERS**

- (a) Each Board shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and other officers from its Board members as it may deem necessary to properly conduct the business of the Board, as soon as possible after its members are appointed.
- (b) The Chair shall be limited to two (2) terms (commenced in 2010).
- (c) The Board has the option, by resolution, of establishing two (2) terms for officers other than the Chair.

11.0 **BOARD VACANCIES, REPLACEMENTS, ADDITIONS**

- (a) If a Board vacancy occurs for any reason, the Board shall notify the Clerk and solicit interest from the membership. The Board shall review applications received and submit to the Clerk all applications received by the Board together with a recommendation, who in turn shall provide copies of same to Council along with the recommendation.
- (b) If a Board resolves to seek the removal of a member from the Board or the appointment of a replacement or additional member to the Board, it shall give to the Clerk, signed minutes of the Board meeting at which the vote was held on this matter, and the Clerk shall report to Council.
- (c) If a Board vacancy occurs for any cause, a person may be appointed by Council to fill the vacancy for the unexpired portion of the term and the appointed person is not required to be a member of the Business Improvement Area notwithstanding Section 4(b).

12.0 **MEETINGS, MINUTES and RECORDS**

- (a) A Board shall hold at least four meetings each year, including the Annual General Meeting to which all members of the Business Improvement Area shall be invited.
- (b) A Board shall keep proper minutes and records of every meeting of the Board and shall forward signed copies of the minutes to all members of the Board and the Clerk.
- (c) The Board shall comply with direction received from the Clerk regarding what constitutes proper minute and record keeping practices.

13.0 **QUORUM**

- (a) A majority of the members of a Board constitutes a quorum of the Board (not a majority of the current members appointed where there are vacancies).
- (b) A member of Council appointed to a Board shall be included for the purpose of determining what constitutes a quorum of the Board.

14.0 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and NOTICE**

- (a) Notice of the Annual General Meeting must include the meeting agenda and proposed budget.
- (b) The Board's complete audited financial statements, with balance sheet and revenue and expenditure statements, must be available at the Annual General Meeting.
- (c) The Board shall supply the Clerk with the Notice of the Annual General Meeting and any accompanying materials, at least fifteen (15) days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- (d) The Board shall send the notice of the Annual General Meeting by prepaid mail, hand delivery or electronically at least fifteen (15) days before the date of the meeting to Business Improvement Area property owner members, tenant members and the Council member sitting on the Board.

15.0 **CHANGES TO BOUNDARY**

- (a) Council may alter the boundaries of a Business Improvement Area and the Board for that Business Improvement Area is continued as the Board for the altered Area.
- (b) Sections 16 to 25 of By-law No. 183-07, as amended, which adopts Operating Guidelines for Business Improvement Areas, provides the very detailed procedures in changing boundaries, including notice requirements, determining tenancies for notification, objections, consents, withdrawal of objections and consents, re-notification requirements if necessary, and the amending by-law.

16.0 **PROCEDURE BY-LAW and POLICIES**

- (a) Boards are required to adopt a procedural by-law for the Business Improvement Area which governs the calling, place and proceedings of meetings. The form of the Procedure By-law to be adopted is attached as Appendix "2" to the Operating Guidelines (By-law No. 183-07).
- (b) Boards are also required to adopt policies pertaining to the procurement of goods and services, the hiring of employees and the sale and other disposition of land.

17.0 **FINANCIAL PROCEDURES and REPORTS**

- (a) All bank accounts and financial records shall be maintained in a manner acceptable to the Director, Corporate Services.
- (b) A Board's fiscal year shall be the calendar year.
- (c) Individual Business Improvement Area special charges, when billed by the Director of Corporate Services, shall be posted to separate Business Improvement Area accounts.

18.0 **ANNUAL BUDGET**

- (a) Boards are required to prepare a proposed annual budget for each fiscal year by December 15th of each year and shall hold one or more meetings of the members of the Business Improvement Area for discussion and adoption of the annual budget.
- (b) Boards are required to submit the budget to the Director of Corporate Services by December 15th of each year including the notice and minutes of the budget meeting. Council may approve it in whole or in part, but may not add expenditures to it.

19.0 **AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

- (a) Boards are required to submit their audited financial statements for the preceding year for Council's review by the date and in the form required by the Director of Corporate Services.
- (b) Where the auditor for the BIA has identified audit or financial reporting related issues, the Board shall submit a letter to the Director of Corporate Services and Clerk indicating how the Board intends to address the issues.

20.0 **INSURANCE, LEGAL and AUDIT SERVICES**

- a) The Town provides comprehensive general liability and property insurance coverage for the BIA each year at its expense, subject to a deductible of \$10,000.00 per claim. The BIA is responsible for the payment of costs and amounts paid in settlement of claims up to a maximum of \$5,000.00 and the Town is responsible for payment of any additional amounts up to the deductible limit.
- b) BIAs are required to forward to the Clerk notice of all claims.
- c) Legal support to BIAs is provided by the Town Solicitor or external counsel retained by the Town.
- d) Commencing in 2009, BIAs became responsible for the payment to the Town for the cost of the annual audit fee.

21.0 **MEETING PROCEDURES**

This section is intended to provide an overview of the most common meeting procedures. For more detail, reference By-law No. 183-07.

21.1 Notice of Meetings

Boards are required to provide public notice of its meetings at least three (3) days in advance of the meeting date by posting on its website or in a visible location in the BIA office, or another designated location in the Business Improvement Area. Posting of the Agenda is sufficient for this purpose.

21.2 Delivery of Agenda

Agendas shall be delivered either by hand or electronically to Board members at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to a regular Board meeting.

21.3 Place of Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board are to be held at the BIA offices, unless otherwise decided by a majority vote of the Board members and with proper notice. In the event the Annual General Meeting is not held at the BIA offices or other common meeting place, notice of the location and time shall be given to the membership at least fifteen (15) days in advance of the Annual Meeting.

21.4 Absence from Meetings

Board members are required to give the Chair and the Office Manager, where applicable, at least seventy-two (72) hours notice of their absence prior to the commencement of a regular meeting, where practical.

21.5 Special Meetings

- (a) The Chair may, at any time, summon a special meeting of the Board, or upon direction of the Board given at a regular meeting, or upon receipt of a petition from a majority of the members of the Board.
- (b) The notice calling a special meeting of the Board shall state the business to be considered at the special meeting, and no business other than that stated in the notice shall be considered at such meeting, except with the consent of a majority of the members present and voting.
- (c) Written notice of all special meetings of the Board shall be delivered not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time set for the meeting to all members of the Board either by hand or electronically.

- (d) Notwithstanding subsection (c) above, on urgent and extraordinary occasions, and with the consent of a majority of the Board members present recorded in the minutes, an emergency meeting of the Board may be held, or a telephone poll or electronic poll of the Board members may be conducted to determine consensus by the members on a matter and such action and results shall be ratified by the Board at its next regular meeting.

21.6 Closed Sessions

21.6.1 Resolution

Before holding a meeting or part of a meeting that is to be closed to the public, a Board or committee of it, shall state by resolution,

- (a) the fact of the holding of the closed meeting and the general nature of the matter to be considered at the closed meeting; or
- (b) in the case of a meeting to train and educate members, the fact of the holding of the closed meeting, the general nature of its subject-matter and that it is to be closed under the subsection of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

21.6.2 Qualifications

All meetings shall be open to the public unless the subject matter being considered is:

- (a) the security of the property of the municipality or Board;
- (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or Board employees;
- (c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or Board;
- (d) labour relations or employee negotiations;
- (e) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local Board;
- (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose;
- (g) a matter in respect of which a Board may hold a closed meeting under another *Act*;
- (h) information explicitly supplied in confidence to the Board by Canada (federal), a province or territory or a Crown agency of any of them;
- (i) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the Board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons, or organization;

- (j) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial or financial information that belongs to the Board and has monetary value or potential monetary value; or
- (k) a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the Board.

Other criteria

A meeting or part of a meeting shall be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered is an ongoing investigation respecting the Board by the Ombudsman appointed under the *Ombudsman Act*.

Educational or training sessions

A meeting of a Board may be closed to the public if the following conditions are both satisfied:

- (a) The meeting is held for the purpose of educating or training the members.
- (b) At the meeting, no member discusses or otherwise deals with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the Board.

21.6.3 Taking of Vote

Only the following votes may be taken in closed session:

- (a) the closed meeting meets the qualifications for closing the meeting to the public, and
- (b) the vote is for a procedural matter or for giving directions or instructions to officers, employees or agents of the Board or persons retained by or under a contract with the Board.

21.6.4 Record of Meeting

The Secretary of the Board or designated employee shall record without note or comments all resolutions, decisions and other proceedings at a meeting of the Board, whether it is closed to the public or not.

21.7 Calling the Meeting to Order

As soon after the hour fixed for the Board meeting, and when a quorum is present, the meeting is called to order by the Chair who shall preside at the meeting. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside during the meetings.

21.8 Lack of Quorum

21.8.1 If a quorum is not present within thirty (30) minutes after the time appointed for the meeting, the Board shall stand adjourned until the date and time of the next regular or special meeting.

21.8.2 The Secretary shall record in the minutes:

- the names of the members of the Board who were in attendance,
- the names of those who were not in attendance,
- that the Chair waited thirty (30) minutes after the time appointed for the meeting to reach quorum but quorum was not reached and the meeting stands adjourned to the next regular meeting.

21.8.3 On occasion, the Board may have scheduled a special presenter, however quorum is not reached. If the presenter is unable to return to a subsequent meeting, the presentation may be given and recorded in the minutes, however, no business may be moved forward or decisions made.

21.9 Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

21.9.1 It is the responsibility of each member of the Board to identify and disclose any pecuniary interest as defined in the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, in any item or matter before the Board.

21.9.2 Written Statement

Effective March 1, 2019, members of Boards are required to file a written statement of the interest and its general nature with the Secretary of the Board. All Boards were provided with a pad of blank statements for this purpose. The Declaration must be recorded in the Minutes and must reflect the same information as on the signed Declaration form.

21.9.3 Registry

Effective March 1, 2019, Boards are also required to keep a Registry of Declarations available for public inspection. Each Board was provided with a Binder set up for a Registry for this purpose.

21.10 Agendas and Minutes

21.10.1 An Agenda is to be prepared for each Board meeting as well as the Annual General Meeting, which includes the order of business. Business may consist of any of the following:

- (a) Call to Order
- (b) Roll Call
- (c) Review of Addendum/Announcements
- (d) Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest
- (e) Adoption of Minutes
- (f) Presentations and Delegations
- (g) Communications
- (h) Reports of Committees
- (i) Financial Report
- (j) Discussion and Adoption of Annual Proposed Budget
- (k) Enquiries
- (l) Motions
- (m) Notice of Motion
- (n) New Business
- (o) Scheduling of Meetings
- (p) Closed Session, where necessary
- (q) Consideration of By-laws
- (r) Adjournment

- 21.10.2** The business of each meeting is to be taken up in the order in which it appears on the Agenda unless otherwise decided by a majority vote of the members present, and without debate.
- 21.10.3** The Secretary of the Board or designated employee is required to truly record, “without note or comment”, all proceedings of the Board. The minutes are not to include any discussion undertaken in the course of a meeting, but will only record decisions of the Board expressed in resolution form, and will record all resolutions as either “Carried” or “Lost”.
- 21.10.4** Presentations, delegations and other items on the Agenda shall be referred to in a brief manner.
- 21.10.5** The minutes are to be adopted, by resolution, for each and every regular and special meeting of the Board.
- 21.10.6** The Chair and Secretary sign the minutes.
- 21.10.7** The recording officer may effect any minor modifications, omissions or corrections of an administrative, numerical, grammatical, semantical or descriptive nature or kind to the minutes as may be deemed necessary after the approval thereof, which is to be recorded in a register.
- 21.10.8** The minutes are to be distributed to all members of the Board, the Clerk, and by posting same on the website, where applicable. The minutes shall also be distributed with the agenda for the next regular meeting.

21.11 Delegations

The Board may receive any person wishing to address the Board on any matter included on the Agenda. The request to address the Board should clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed. Delegations are to be limited to ten (10) minutes in their presentation.

21.12 Rules of Conduct and Debate

21.12.1 The conduct of members of Boards are governed by the Council's Code of Conduct, By-law No. 43-2015, as may be amended or replaced, and is available in the Clerk's Office.

21.12.2 In general, members shall not:

- (a) use indecent, offensive or insulting language;
- (b) speak on any subject other than the subject in debate;
- (c) where a matter has been discussed in a meeting or part of a meeting closed to the public and where the matter remains confidential, disclose the content of the matter or the substance of deliberations of the closed session meeting;
- (d) disobey the rules of the Board or a decision of the Chair on questions of order or practice or the interpretation of the Rules;
- (e) interrupt a member who is speaking, except to raise a point of order or a question of privilege.

21.12.3 The Chair presides over the conduct of Board meetings, including the preservation of good order and decorum, ruling on points of order and deciding all questions relating to the orderly procedure of the meeting.

21.12.4 The Chair may answer questions and comment in a general way without leaving the chair, but if he/she wishes to speak to a motion and take part in the debate, he/she shall first leave the chair and turn it over to a member who has not spoken to the question, and the Chair shall resume the chair after the question has been decided.

21.13 Enquiries

Enquiries may be made of the Chair or through him/her to any member of the Board or staff member, relating to any matter connected with the business of the Board.

21.14 Motions

Motions require a Mover and a Secunder before being debated or put to a vote. If there is no Secunder, the Motion is not put on the floor for a vote.

21.15 Miscellaneous Motions and Voting

Reference should be made to Council's Rules of Procedure By-law 36-2016, as amended, or replaced, for the various motions and voting procedures.

21.16 By-laws

All by-laws to be received by the Board shall be printed and numbered consecutively in the years in which they are considered eg. (1-2019), and passed by a majority vote of the Board.

21.17 Advice of Clerk

The Board may contact the Town Clerk or Legislative Assistant of the Town to seek procedural advice, as needed.

Appendix "1" to BIA Handbook – October 2019

Nomination Protocol for BIAs

To be used for Annual General Meetings or other Meetings where nominations to the Board are required.

1. At the Annual General Meeting, the Board selects a Board member to act as Chair to carry out the nomination process or may request the Town Clerk to do so.
2. The Nominating Chair shall call the meeting to order, state the number of directors to be selected and:
 - (a) Call for nominees, confirm willingness to stand and post names.
 - (b) Prior to announcing the closing of nominations, the Chair shall call for any further nominations two more times.
 - (c) At the close of nominations, voting shall be conducted either by show of hands, or by ballot.
 - (d) When the ballot is used, it shall be delivered to the Nominating Chair and one other witness for counting.
 - (e) The Chair shall announce the results.
 - (f) The Chair shall inform the Clerk of the results of the selection process, including number of votes per nominee who shall in turn submit same to Council for consideration for appointment.
 - (g) The nomination process shall be included in the minutes of the meeting.
3. Proxy votes are not permitted.
4. The Nomination Protocol may be altered from time to time in consultation with the Clerk.

Appendix "2" to BIA Handbook - October 2019

Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie

Operating Budget and Forecast

			FORECAST			
		Current Year Actuals	Current Year Budget	Budget Year	2nd Year	3rd Year
Revenues	Acct. #					
<hr/>						
Grants	0364					
Donations	0970					
Other: Surplus from prior year						
Event Revenue: (list below)						
Total Revenue						
Expenditures						
Postage	3210					
Training & Development	3150					
Advertising	3250					
Communications	3117					
Equipment Expenses	2294					
Materials & Supplies	2190					
Meeting Expenses	2993					
Events and Programs	3422					
Transfer to reserve:						
Total Expenditures						
NET REVENUE/EXPENDITURE						

Appendix “3” to BIA Handbook – October 2019

Town of Fort Erie SAFETY GUIDELINES

The Town of Fort Erie values the hard work and commitment of our community volunteers. These guidelines are intended to make your volunteer experience as successful and safe as possible.

Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer you have the right and responsibility to:

- ensure you have obtained training for the safe operation of equipment
- report immediately
 - a hazardous condition or faulty equipment
 - an accident, injury, or near miss (a near miss is an event that does not cause injury or property damage but could have if circumstances were slightly different – in other words, a “close call”)
- wear and/or use personal protective equipment as required (e.g. safety boots, gloves)
- refuse to participate in any activity you believe to be unsafe.

Equipment

- Use the right tool for the job
- Check equipment before using and report any defects
- Pay special attention to tasks that might be new or different
- If you are not sure how to use a tool, ask.

Avoid Hazards

There are hazards all around us;

- *Physical* hazards like heavy furniture, moving traffic, slip and trip hazards like wet floors; uneven surface; clutter on the ground; sharps (needles) or broken glass, etc.
- *Chemical* hazards like solvents, paints, acids, batteries, propane tanks, etc.
- *Biological* hazards like insect stings, bites, animal waste, dead animals, etc.
- *Ergonomic* hazards like moving or lifting heavy or awkward materials.

The 3-R’s;

- **Recognize** the Hazard – anything that does not look or seem right
- **Report** the Hazard – protect yourself and your colleagues. Create a safety zone around the hazard and report it right away.
- **Remove/Resolve** the Hazard – don’t do anything else until the situation is resolved.

Harassment

Recognize that not everyone on the Board will have the same opinion and views as you; so be respectful and mindful of others. Do not bully or harass others who express an opinion that differs from your own.

If you experience this kind of behaviour and an apology is not given, an acceptable resolution is not found or the harassment continues; this needs to be reported to the Chair of the Board. In addition you are able to report the incident to a senior member of Town staff.

Emergencies

In the case of an Emergency call 911

- Know the location of the nearest first aid station, fire extinguisher, fire alarm and emergency exit
- Evacuate the building
- Identify a first aider
- Get or administer first aid
- Complete an incident report.

Appendix “4” to BIA Handbook – October 2019

Making sure your BIA meeting is Accessible.

Advanced planning may help to ensure that the accommodation needs of people with disabilities are anticipated and acted upon ahead of time. Even when you may not know in advance whether any of your participants may need accommodations, you should be prepared to arrange your meeting or event to be accessible so that everyone can fully participate.

Here are some general points to think about when planning your meeting or event:

- Be prepared to respond to **accommodation requests** in the same manner that you respond to other requests and questions.
- An **assistive device** is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities. Personal assistive devices can include things like wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, braces, computer software programs, hearing aids, white canes or speech amplification devices. Allow individuals to keep and use assistive devices as needed. Make room to accommodate and do not touch or handle an assistive device without permission. Also let individuals know about accessible features in the immediate environment such as elevators or accessible washrooms.
- Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by a **support person** who might help with a variety of things from communicating, to helping with mobility, personal care or medical needs. A support person can accompany an individual to any part of the premises open to the public. If admission to an event is permitted and fees are payable to the Town, the support person is permitted at no cost. If the fees are payable to a third party, the support person is permitted to attend the event at their own cost. Speak directly to the individual and not to their support person.
- Guide dogs assist a person who is blind and **service animals** might open doors, pick up items, predict seizures and alert an individual to sounds. Service animals are allowed in all areas open to the public unless excluded by law. Remember that a service animal is not a pet, it is a working animal. Provide the location of fresh water for the service animals and where service animals may be walked to relieve themselves.
- You may be requested to provide or arrange for the provision of **accessible formats** or communication supports for people with disabilities. This is done in consultation with the person making the request. Accessible formats may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats used by people with disabilities.
- Always remember the key principles for being accessible: DIGNITY, INDEPENDENCE, EQUITY/EQUALITY, INTEGRATED, SENSITIVE, RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE.
- For further information view the “Planning an Accessible Meeting” found on the Town’s web-site on the Accessibility Advisory Committee page.