

Briefing Note

Follow-up on Theatre Accessibility

Purpose

As per direction at the February 24, 2024, meeting, to update the Committee on:

- Existing policies and procedures in place to ensure Accessibility to the Theatre.
- To provide a response to the special circumstance encountered at the Town of Halton Hills 50th Anniversary event.

Key Points

The theatre currently has the following messages on the box office information website:

Hearing Assistance: Sound reinforcement systems for the hearing impaired are available at the Box Office in the lobby.

Special Needs: The John Elliott Theatre is wheelchair accessible. Please notify the Box Office when purchasing your ticket should you require special assistance. We will be pleased to help.

As per the AODA, the responsibility for enforcing accessibility standards falls under the purview of Town staff. In response, our staff have been trained to proactively address accessibility needs, particularly at the time of ticket purchase. When an individual requests accommodation of any sort at the time of ticket purchase, staff make every effort to meet that need. For example, if a patron advises that a wheelchair space is needed, staff take immediate action to ensure accommodation, including reserving the appropriate seating area and providing necessary assistance.

We recognize that some patrons may require accommodations on the day of the event without prior notification. In such cases, our staff are trained to handle these requests promptly and efficiently. For last minute and day of show requests:

ACTION: Measures have been implemented to ensure that staff are equipped to respond to last-minute accessibility needs, including having designated staff available to assist patrons with disabilities and providing flexibility in seating arrangements to accommodate unforeseen requests.

It has been identified that third-party groups running events at the theatre may not always be fully informed or invested in meeting accessibility needs.

ACTION: The Town is committed to improving communication with these groups to ensure they understand and prioritize accessibility while using the venue. We will work collaboratively with third-party organizers to educate them on accessibility requirements and encourage their cooperation in meeting the needs of all patrons.

ACTION: Additionally, staff will emphasize that attempts to circumvent our accessibility efforts will not be tolerated, and measures will be in place to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.

ACTION: In order to further reinforce our commitment to accessibility, staff will review the addition of an addendum to the permit information to confirm that Town accessibility policies and

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procedures are specifically included in all rental and permitting administrative packages. This addendum will ensure that all renters and permit holders are informed of their responsibilities regarding accessibility accommodations and compliance with AODA standards.

Special Circumstances on January 10

The case of missed accommodations during the sold-out event on January 10 was acknowledged as the result of special circumstances that are not likely to occur again. While efforts to accommodate patrons with disabilities are a priority, it was recognized that unforeseen challenges may arise during high-demand events. Steps, as reviewed in the previous section will ensure that 3rd party vendors/theatre renters not only abide by required accessibility guidelines but that they make every effort to accommodate those with needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the discussions and considerations outlined above reflect our commitment to addressing accessibility concerns at the John Elliott Theatre. Moving forward, we will continue to explore opportunities for enhancing accessibility within the constraints of available resources and operational considerations.

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Date: April 24, 2024

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Date:

Administration Follow Up: