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SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Ryan Fleury, Lis Malone, Steve Barclay, Susie Chant

R Rob Mineault 00:23
Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter,

R Ryan Fleury 00:28
Banter, banter

R Rob Mineault 00:29
hey, hey, this is the podcast where we have a cowbell, but zoom doesn't like it for a variety of reasons that we won't bother your audience with. But hey, this is, of course, the podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault, and joining me today, Mr Ryan Fleury,

R Ryan Fleury 01:03
Bah, technology.

R Rob Mineault 01:05
Yeah, you're having some some tech issues. I hear, Oh, well, it's, it's, it's all good.

R Ryan Fleury 01:11
It's what I do.

R Rob Mineault 01:13
And hey, look who else is here, straight from the storm. Miss Lis Malone.

L Lis Malone 01:22
I'm like the eye of the storm baby, wow.

R Rob Mineault 01:26
Eye of the Tiger.

L Lis Malone 01:27
No, eye of the storm baby,

R Rob Mineault 01:30
I see, well, so tell us what's going on down there.

L Lis Malone 01:33
Oh, I don't know. I'm I'm hiding underneath furniture.

R Rob Mineault 01:38
Okay, so you got some, a big storm going on down there right now?

L Lis Malone 01:42
I mean, when is there not a big storm? They're all storms.

R Rob Mineault 01:45
I mean, that was, that was my question. Is it Hurricane stormy season?

L Lis Malone 01:51
it's officially hurricane season, but this is not a hurricane. This is just a heavy downpour, which

you just have to worry about the trees, you know, and then no power, and, you know, all the things that come along with no power.

R Rob Mineault 02:07
Yeah, yeah, totally.

R Ryan Fleury 02:09
I can't charge my phone,

L Lis Malone 02:13
I can't text and tweet. No, I'm cut off from civilization. My life is over. I can't photograph and post my dinner.

R Rob Mineault 02:31
Lives will be empty.

L Lis Malone 02:32
My dog is doing the cutest thing the world must see it.

R Rob Mineault 02:37
Well, listen, we'll keep our fingers crossed and hope that you make it through the entire episode.

L Lis Malone 02:44
I'm trying. That's my listen.

R Rob Mineault 02:47
But if we hear a lot of racket and you disappear, I guess we'll know why.

L Lis Malone 02:51
Yeah, I'm a survivor, so don't worry about me.

R Rob Mineault 02:56
Okay, all right, cool. We're not that we were.

R Ryan Fleury 03:01
We have no way to contact you outside the show.

R Rob Mineault 03:04
Yes, we know nothing about you. We don't know where you live, not like we'd be any good to report to the authorities or anything.

L Lis Malone 03:15
Carolina authorities. It's some girl that we don't even know if that's her real name.

R Rob Mineault 03:19
Oh, exactly. Okay. Well, enough of that. Let's I think we should get started with the show before the roof does indeed blow off of Lis's house. So Hey, Ryan?

R Ryan Fleury 03:32
Yeah Rob? Just what the heck are we doing today? Today we are speaking with British Columbia's Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility and friend of ours. Susie Chant. Susie, welcome to the show.

S Susie Chant 03:47
Thank you so much, Ryan. I think it's a pleasure to be here. We'll see how things go.

R Rob Mineault 03:53
That's what we tell all our guests.

L Lis Malone 03:56
All right, I'll be on my best behavior, I promise

S

Susie Chant 04:00

If you knew this bunch, yeah, you wouldn't worry about it. I mean, you know this bunch, but I'm, I'm good, thanks.

L

Lis Malone 04:05

Somehow I can still bring it down to the gutter.

R

Ryan Fleury 04:08

So, yeah, so Rob, we're gonna have to have one show for us and one for Susie's wranglers.

R

Rob Mineault 04:14

One for you, you, one for us. Yeah, well we'll do the Director's Cut. No, before we get started. I mean, I guess we should kind of tell the audience a little bit of our background, of course, with, with Susie. You know, Susie's married to a good friend of ours, Rick, who we worked with for many, many years. So we've known Susie for many, many, many years. Decades even. But maybe we can start out in with you tell us a little bit about your background and just what inspired you to become involved in politics.

S

Susie Chant 05:05

Okay, so I have been I am a nurse by profession. I started nursing in 1985 so I'm now a senior nurse, thank you very much, and I still do work casual. So I can still say I'm a nurse, and I also have been in the military for 40 years. I retired in 2021 from the Navy Reserves, and I've been involved in variety of levels of service throughout my life, whether it be Guiding or coaching Sun Runners, or driving for Red Nose or whatever. So it's, it's not a big leap for me to be in public service within the political realm, in that in that way. What got me directly into it was, oh, probably 15 years ago or more, there was a article in the Canadian Nurse Magazine saying, hey, Nurses, do you know the government makes up all sorts of rules about you and there is not a nurse to be seen. And I went, huh? That doesn't seem right, at which point I approached the local group of the Party that I'm affiliated with and said, yeah, I'll come hang out with you guys and just work and see how it's going. And then around 2019 so up until then, I worked on campaigns that I worked, you know, between elections to support people and all that good stuff. And then around 2019 I basically, I was to retire in 2021 from from working, working in nursing and from the military and from Guiding and a bunch of other things. And so I said, okay, I will throw my hat in the ring the next election, which was supposed to be in 2021. However, that election came about in 2020 and was actually quite a surprise to me, since I didn't even know the writ had dropped until somebody told me while I was in a meeting with a whole bunch of other people, and so I had a whirlwind campaign during Covid that was completely artificial because we weren't able to knock on doors or go and visit with people or do any of the things you normally do when you're trying to get yourself elected. But everybody liked our Premier, which at the time was John Horgan. I was a nurse, so during Covid, that made

me a pretty trustworthy person in people's eyes, and the woman who was incumbent in my riding made a fairly critical faux pas about two weeks before the election, and angered a whole bunch of people that then decided they didn't want her back in. So between those three things, I ended up being the MLA, which is the member of the Legislative Assembly with the British Columbia Provincial Legislature, which basically means that my MLA role is that I am a representative and advocate for my Riding, for the people in my Riding, to the government, and I work with the government to represent my Riding and to be, you know, to make sure that we're included in stuff and that our voices are heard. And so the MLA role is always an underpinning role for whatever other roles you pick up. And as an MLA, I've been on a number of Committees that the government has - Child and Youth, Agriculture, which is surprising, is surprising to me, is to anybody else. I've been in government, finance, public accounts, Merit Commissioner, homelessness, addiction and mental health. And then about 18 months ago, when our current Premier, who is David Eby, came in and was brought into power when he formed government, he delegated the role of Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility to me, which is a very good fit, As a nurse. I've worked with a lot of folks that have a variety of accessibility needs, whether it's through accident, through aging, through chronic conditions, through lifetime conditions, and so it's it's a pretty good fit for me in that I'm very comfortable talking to pretty much anybody, and they get fairly comfortable talking to me fairly quickly. In that role, I was fortunate. There was already a Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility before me, so he had already got the momentum going in the role, and I stepped into it and kept it going. My job has predominantly been to further the implementation of the Accessible BC, legislation that was brought in in 2021 and. And that BCA was about the fifth province in Canada to bring it in. And Canada also has overall Accessibility legislation. In this role, I'm expected to interact with the various ministries where the roles overlap, and I'm also part of establishing the standards for implementation of the of the legislation. So the last little while, over the last year, we've been working on employment standards and service accessibility. And so those standards have been worked on by the Provincial Accessibility Committee, which I co-chair, along with my co-chair and that committee is made up of about a dozen people with various lived experiences in the various different realms of ability and diverse ability. And then also, there was two technical committees one worked on employment - accessibility to employment - and one worked on service accessibility. Initially, we were meeting about every six weeks or so, and then it went down to every month, and then it went down to about every two weeks. And the product of that work is the first two Accessibility Standards are now out for public consultation as of May 31 through July 31 and we're hoping to get a really broad audience looking at them to give us feedback as to how viable they are. And so, you know, we're hoping that folks that are in the diverse ability world, and folks that are in the employment world and folks that are in the service world, so that's pretty much everybody in the world. We'll have a look at them and give feedback on those two areas so that we can bring them back, tighten them up, and then present them to the Ministry for implementation down the road, depending on how much of it that the the minister feels are appropriate to move along. So it's it's been quite an undertaking. A lot of my time I get to go out and speak to different groups. I'm amazed at some of the work that's been happening, in my personal opinion, that we're further ahead in BC than we were 10 years ago around accessibility issues, and it's certainly a higher level of conversation and a more public conversation. Certainly, there's always a long way to go. I find it quite amazing. I was at an Inclusion conference last week, and there was about 500 people there. And in the past, when you had conferences like that, you were maybe working with 30, 50, maybe 60, and this time around, there was 500 people, and they're all working together on different aspects of what is accessibility for various groups, which was amazing.

R

Ryan Fleury 13:14

So how is the government trying to get the word out about these standards? I know you guys, you, I've heard it from you. I've seen the announcement on, I think, Disability Alliance BC's website. But other than that, I haven't seen it anywhere.

S

Susie Chant 13:31

Well, one of the things that we did before putting the Standards out, was to reach out and do what, what, apparently, was called a soft rollout, which was to reach out to different entities that we work with and Disability BC is a good collective of folks, and let them know that the standards were coming out, and ask them who would be good people to reach out to. Okay, so that was a that was done January through about March, and we got a lot of response on that. And so we're hoping that we get good response. There's also, you know, there's the usual, there's a website, and we're there's money available to put together small group sessions. So various entities could apply for \$2,500 grants to put together small group sessions. We're looking to do some regional town halls, virtually, right? And so there's a variety of ways of doing it, and then there's in just sending a written submission in or going on the online questionnaire or survey. So there's a variety of ways to do it, and we're trying very hard to get the word out to as many people as possible.

R

Rob Mineault 14:52

I feel like many people in the audience might not even really know what you mean when we're talking about accessibility standards. Could you speak a little bit to what they are and why they're important, and why community engagement is so key to a lot of this legislation that we're we're trying to drive forward.

S

Susie Chant 15:13

Sure, thanks, Rob. What happens is, when you would, you put a legislation through, such as the Accessible BC Act. It's kind of the overall umbrella that says, basically, we're looking towards making BC a barrier free environment so that everybody can be included, everybody can have the quality of life and the type of life that works for them, and that nobody really gets left behind. So the point of the legislation is to identify, remove and prevent barriers. And of course, when you think about accessibility and disability, there's such a broad spectrum of things to think about that you really have to be quite universal in in when you're when you're thinking, because what's useful. For instance, in blindness may not be useful for somebody who's neurodiverse. What's useful for somebody who's neurodiverse may not do anything for somebody with a spinal cord injury. So, you know, there's a whole variety of of things out there. And so the standards are basically, so we've got something to measure against. So when an entity is saying, as an example, say an employer says, I'm sorry, we can't hire you because of your disability. They're going to have to be able to say what it is about the disability that makes you not hireable. They have to be able to document that. And so it's, it's basically, it's basically trying to make it so there's something to measure against, and there's, there's kind of the things that you need to do within an entity and within as an employer through recruiting, training, retaining and managing a person, ongoing in terms of accommodation and in terms of

working with them in and that's on the employment side and on the service accessibility standards. It's to make all goods and services, events, information, websites, ie from the government, so that they can be accessed in a variety of ways and can be utilized by people. There's all sorts of examples out there about things that are difficult for folks with a disability to access for a variety of reasons. And so the what we've done in the part three of the Accessibility Legislation was we designated about 750 entities, public based entities, that essentially had to put together an accessibility committee, create an Accessibility Plan. And by an Accessibility Plan, I mean looking at their entity and saying, okay, how accessible are we at this point, either internally for our for our employees, or externally for the people that we provide service to. And where are the areas we need to do better? And then from that plan, they also need to develop a feedback mechanism so that people, either within the entity or outside of it, are able to feedback if there is an accessibility issue so that it can be recognized and ideally addressed. So these standards have been implemented within the public service already. The 750 initial organizations were expected to have their committees put together and their plans and their feedback mechanism in place by September of 2023 and the bigger organizations, such as your health authorities, are expected to have this done for September of 2024. So what that's doing is putting in mechanisms to really bring up awareness. For starters, the other side of this is that British Columbia has a whole workforce out of the out there that's not well utilized and, you know, that's being very sort of cut and dried, but we've got a whole bunch of people that could be augmented the workforce really, really well if we were able to engage and accommodate more effectively. And so that's that's a real big part of where these standards are coming in is to, is to sort of enhance the accessibility right across the province in and at the moment, the standards are around service, accessibility and employment.

R

Rob Mineault 19:40

Well, let's talk a little bit about about raising awareness, because certainly, as we know, that's going to be a big part of of moving all of all of this forward. Can you talk a little bit more about what other kind of things you guys are doing in order to raise awareness across the board.

S

Susie Chant 20:01

Well, I guess where I would focus is the work that we've been doing with the other ministries. My mandate letter had basically five different components to it. I was so one of them was, for instance, working with the Ministry of Housing around building codes. So both the Canadian building codes and the BC building codes have been upgraded to look towards universality in new builds and new buildings, so that establishments can be much more easily modified if accessibility needs are present with citizens affairs, which is the ministry that takes care of access to information around the government. They are have upgraded their websites and things so that they are more accessible from a variety of mechanisms, and they are also working with the other ministries to do that work so that informational stuff when you're searching online is compatible with various Augmented Technology. Minister of Education has been putting a bigger emphasis on making sure that kids have the supports they need to be able to access school in a variety of ways. And, for example, in Parks - now we're looking at much more accessible trails in a variety of ways right here in North Van, we've got a low stem trail that's for our neuro diverse community and also our seniors that still want to get out on trails on the mountain but don't particularly want to be run down by a mountain bike or a runner or something else. So starting to think in terms of accessing the outdoors Parks has also

made for accessible camping sites and so on. So, you know, usually, when we think about accessibility, the first thing we think is ramps and washrooms, and that's, you know, absolutely an important component for our mobility folks. But we've got so many other things that we can do to make things accessible for a whole greater spectrum of our population. BC, right now is running at about 22 to 25% of people that report self report as having a disability. That's a big chunk of the population.

R

Rob Mineault 22:32

Yeah, it is. And, I mean, you know accessibility can be very difficult. I mean, it's one thing when, when we're talking about changing build codes for new buildings to make it more friendly to universal design or having Universal Design Concepts built in. But there's a lot of places out there that are already there, that we've already built, and retrofitting those going to be, yeah, extremely difficult. Is there sort of a strategy around that?

S

Susie Chant 23:07

Yes. Um, certainly. You know, as an example the Rick Hansen Foundation has, has been, has set up a system where they'll go out and do an assessment and make some recommendations on how you can mitigate stuff, some things that you can do to mitigate on and there's other ways of doing that. And when, when these standards are, you know, implemented at to whatever level they are, the the expectation will be that you mitigate to the best of your ability and you do it safely. You either mitigate or you determine why you couldn't mitigate. So, I mean, for instance, one of the examples that we were using was, you've got a shop owner who is hesitant to have somebody in with a with a white cane, because they've got stuff on the floor that they're concerned just going to get broken by the white cane. So couple of things they can do. They can move the stuff off the floor. They can make their walkways maybe a little wider, you know, there. So there's a whole variety of things. And again, it also, you know, every community, their needs are different. And so the the goal is to sort of not try and get a cookie cutter response, but a way that meets the needs of the community involved. So, you know, we're not expecting everybody, right across the board, to do this and that, but they are expected to be aware of what the needs are and to mitigate them.

R

Rob Mineault 24:34

And you know, there can be a lot to be said for innovation. We talked to somebody not long ago, fellow named Luke Anderson, who has this company called Stopgap. And his the whole idea behind the company is that they build small custom ramps that are just essentially, you know, pieces of wood that will go up against, like a stair and just be able to have it be used, and then take it out again. You know, there's, there's all kinds of innovation out there to solve some of these accessibility issues. It doesn't necessarily need to be where you have to tear down an entire space and rebuild it. So it's just really a matter of businesses taking this on and accepting it, that this is going to be a priority for them.

S

Susie Chant 25:25

And again we want to be sure it's not too onerous for businesses either. You know, this is

and again we want to be sure it's not too onerous for businesses either. You know, this is something that that we want to make sure that that we're supportive of implementing. So, you know, and that's why we want businesses also to look at the standards and give us some feedback and tell us what they can work with as well.

R

Ryan Fleury 25:46

I'm sitting here just kind of shaking my head, because, well, we've seen this story before, over and over and over. You know, it's great that BC has an Accessible Act. Alberta is bringing one on board. Other provinces are stepping up as well. Hopefully we're not trying to reinvent the wheel. Hopefully we're learning from others, maybe in the US that have done stuff, taken things that have worked, worked on things that don't work, and customize the solution to our specific needs. But how serious is the government when it comes to accessibility, because we hear on the news all the time about the government wanting to speed up the build of housing and rezoning changes, and we know education is lacking when it comes to accessible design. Some places it isn't being taught. So developers are still building inaccessible units. How serious is the government?

S

Susie Chant 26:46

Well, you know, of course, I'm terribly biased -

R

Ryan Fleury 26:48

I know, and I understand you don't have all the answers.

S

Susie Chant 26:52

Yeah, I would suggest that the government is very serious. My role is within the the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. And within that there is an Accessibility Directorate, which is actually quite unusual. Most of the Ministries do not have a focus group of people that are working on a particular point, but accessibility is being worked on very hard by the Accessibility Directorate. BC is actually lucky to be at - let me see if I can get this right - the third meeting of the Pan Canadian Accessibility Committee. So here I was, I was in Victoria, and it's being at this point, it's being hosted and led by BC. Everybody takes turns, and there was reps from all the Provinces and all the Territories and also from the federal government at the table, and doing exactly that, try to move away from reinventing the wheel. You know what you know, who's working on what, who you know what's working well, what's not working well. We absolutely look at the ADA, the American Disability Act has been a something to look at and work with. It's had a couple of problems as well. The Canadian disability legislation also, you know, what's worked with it, what could be revised and made a little better. So I think this government is very committed to getting this done, as I say, and this is this. I mean, if you've got 20 to 25% of your population who reports as having a disability, you got to do something about that. That's an important you know, that's a big chunk of people, which is not to say that, you know, a smaller group of people don't get what they need as well. But this has been a long time coming, too. I mean I've done several efforts to try and get people out of GS Strong and get them home and work through that process. And it's painful, you know. And also to your

point about design, building design, the building codes will be coming in. I believe it's January of 25 maybe February of 2025 will be implemented. They've, they've been brought forward, right? And they're under the Housing Ministry. They're not, they're not part of our efforts. But, like, we're not working on those. And so they are out for the various folks that are doing the building to become aware of them and start working towards them. There are some places that are already doing the work. So, you know, it does look a little more positive. okay, I think anyway. But you know me, I'm, I'm a little bit of rosy colored glasses too.

R

Ryan Fleury 29:47

Well, you have the inside view as to what the government is actually working on, right? We hear drips and drabs and we see the doom and gloom. So yeah.

S

Susie Chant 29:56

True that. And this is the director at work. This is not my work. So I'm, I'm going from a little bit of heresay here. So bear with me. They keep a very close eye on what's going on across the Province, across the country, and actually around the world, globally. And to try and, first of all, make sure, as you're, as you say, if there's, if there's things that are coming up that are mistakes or that are not well implemented or not well put together, that we can avoid that. And secondly, when there's things that are coming up that are great, that we absolutely shamelessly steal them, and, you know, keep an eye on it that way. So our legislation, so the work of the legislation is in place, but now we're working on standards and then regulation relative to that, so that, and that's where, like, the legislation is the overarching thing, and then the standards and the regulation are the implementation pieces,

R

Ryan Fleury 31:40

And then enforcement!

S

Susie Chant 31:43

Well that's, that's where regulation comes in. Yes, right?

R

Rob Mineault 31:47

Well, it's funny that was kind of, that kind of came into my head too, Ryan. It's like, we should ask about that, because a little bit of a hot topic. But, you know, let me just pick your brain. And if you know you don't have any of the answers to this, that's fine, but, but what about enforcement? What? What's kind of the idea around this? Because it's great you can have the best legislation in place and and you can kind of, you know, certain businesses certainly will try to do the right thing, but at the end of the day, you always need the stick along with the carrot, yeah, so we're working with carrots. Are stick looking, yeah,

S

Susie Chant 32:24

Well, the carrot is out there. But the moment, we're working with the carrot. Because the regulation related to enforcement is not in place as yet, because it has to come based, I mean, you got to have a standard to measure to, right? So at the moment, we're still working with carrots. And there is, you know, there, there is an expectation that down the line, there will be an enforcement component. However, we really don't know what that's going to look like at the moment, until we start seeing what people are doing. You know, what the various industries are doing, what the employers are doing, etc. What you know, when these, as these places, as these get put into place, what is the reaction and where do you need to focus? Because, as you said, Rob, you know, some people do a really good job, and get behind it and get into it and do the work and everything else. And you don't want to come out with a swinging with a big stick with those folks, right? What you what you want to be doing is determining where, let's say, the additional motivation is needed, and again, it's, you know, a lot of the stuff that we've been doing at the moment is is champion, highlighting the people that are doing really good work. For instance, I was at UVIC, oh, probably about eight weeks ago, visiting their Can Assist program, which was interesting. And then I met with their accessibility committee for the University, and they've done some incredible work. You know, the campus there is, is not young and was not built with accessibility in mind for anybody. And they're slowly but surely identifying, they've gone around and identified what needs to be done. And you know, what is the top three that we'll work on now? Okay, we got those done. What are we going to work on now? And then they're not just working on physical aspects, but they're also working on things like, when students need accommodation to do exams or to to do their studies or to get access to their texts or whatever, to their textbooks. So there's a whole variety of things going on at UVIC as an example. And what will happen is that will get highlighted to let others know what's going on.

L

Lis Malone 34:44

As the ignorant American in this group trying to wrap my brain around what's happening in Canada, so I'm trying to understand - what exactly is your carrot? Since you're not, since you don't have any sticks right now - is the carrot public acknowledgement, pats on the head?

S

Susie Chant 35:03

Yeah, it's, it's basically highlighting those folks that are doing a good job and amplifying that, and, you know, encourage, encouraging them to to keep at it. And when other places are having a bit of a trouble maybe, you know, sort of partnering people, agencies, up and doing that kind of thing. And what we have done is we've basically implemented stuff within the public service so that the public service is kind of leading the way and then working it through the private side.

L

Lis Malone 35:36

Do you really feel that that's a motivating factor, that it's a kind of a symbolic carrot, as opposed to an actual like, carrot?

S Susie Chant 35:49
You're right. You're right.

L Lis Malone 35:51
I mean, so the incentive is social?

S Susie Chant 35:54
It's social incentive.

L Lis Malone 35:57
So there is no actual like - are they getting funding?

S Susie Chant 36:03
There has certainly been a lot of funding go out towards helping, like, for the part three that I was talking about, in terms of getting the committee set up, the plan done, and the feedback mechanism. There was funding put out for that, we have now put also put some funding out towards being able to get the public feedback done, so that groups of have got some money that they can bring people in and work on the consultation part. So there is a degree of funding. It's not massive, but it is there. And it's, it's just, you know, trying, because, again, you know, 25% of your population, this is work that needs to be done. And should, you know, should have been done long ago. However, here we are.

L Lis Malone 36:51
Is there a perspective that the use of the stick down in the United States is not very palatable?

S Susie Chant 37:02
I don't know enough about that. I would suggest that the use of the stick has been discussed in a variety of ways, and there are factions that are hoping that, I mean, are expecting that as regulation comes into place, there will be consequences for not following regulation

R Ryan Fleury 37:22
Well, and that's a bigger issue here in Canada as well. Because, yeah, we need the regulations in place. We need an enforcement mechanism. We need an accessible way of feed giving feedback. But in Canada, if you're at the end of your rope, and there are no other options,

there's the Human Rights which is three to five years or longer to wait for any action. So that enforcement mechanism, that feedback mechanism, the follow up and follow through, has to be very, very important, because the Human Rights just doesn't work. That system's broken, and I know they're looking at revamping that as well.

S

Susie Chant 38:02

Indeed, they are.

L

Lis Malone 38:03

Yeah, because that's, that's usually the first thing that we do here is that it becomes a violation of civil rights, and you go to court and you make a stink. And I'm not saying it's always successful, but it, you know, it has put some very large organizations on notice and made them change their behavior. Because, you know, they have to see that there's a penalty or a price to pay. So, you know, not just socially, and I'm sure there is a social price that they pay, but, you know, people feel it when it hits their purses,

R

Ryan Fleury 38:45

Yep, and we'll get there.

S

Susie Chant 38:48

Yeah, exactly. Let's say we're not there yet. And the other thing that we need to also bear in mind is that for the folks that are not being accommodated effectively. It is very difficult to have the motivation, the momentum and gain the traction to do that work of you know, as you're saying, raising a stink so when we're trying to make it so that when we've got the regulations in place, you can just basically pull them out and say, here we are. You're not. You're not doing this and trying to make it within the entity as well. But have a responsibility within the entity as well, to have an oversight that is that is built into every organization. So that's another component of this, because we're trying to be a little more universal than just buying disability to disability kind of thing.

R

Rob Mineault 39:46

So maybe we can talk a little bit about what the timelines are at least in terms of, say, the BC legislation. What are kind of the goals that the government has?

S

Susie Chant 39:59

Well. The only goal that I've got right now, and this is Susie speaking, the real goal is to get the consultation out and back by July 31 because, as you're aware, we are coming up to an election cycle, and when the election cycle starts, which will be the 21st of September, is when the Writ

drops, and then the 19th of October is when the election is. During that time, basically, the Ministry staff keep the lights on, but they don't do a lot of ongoing work, because the government is not in session at that point, right? So the goal is to get these out for public consultation and back in for August, for the analysis to be done and for it to get back to the Provincial Accessibility Committee with the feedback, and try and get it ready so that right after the election is that, again, get passed to the Minister and and the Ministry, you know, the government side of things to be reviewed and determined that you know what, what or all of it is going to be utilized and and to get timelines on that. So the only thing I've got timelines for is now till the end of July is consultation, and hopefully the month of August will be analysis and review, and through till the probably the 15th of September, and then we go on hold, and then, once the government is reformed, then we figure out who's who's who and where, and move forward at that point,

R

Ryan Fleury 41:43

And hope to hell that the new government doesn't decide that we need to study this again?

S

Susie Chant 41:53

Yeah, I agree. I agree.

R

Ryan Fleury 41:56

Enough's enough. It's been studied to death. Let's just keep moving forward.

S

Susie Chant 42:01

That's the goal, and that's, and that's one of my roles, is to keep things sort of going forward.

R

Rob Mineault 42:06

Yeah, excellent. Well, for anybody out there, like, how, how can people contribute? What do we need to promote here, for about the standards?

S

Susie Chant 42:14

Well, my, my goal is to have everybody in the province, all 5 million of you all listening to the show to go to go on the website? Are you ready?
<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/accessible-bc-standards/> So that is, that is the website that takes you to the to the standards, and then gives you the options of how you can provide feedback, and we'll take it from there.

R

Rob Mineault 42:22

R ROB MINEAULT 43:32

Perfect.

R Ryan Fleury 43:33

Does the government know that there are website URL shorteners?

S Susie Chant 43:39

Yes, you stop. I will give this to you, and you will do what you will with it.

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/accessible-bc-standards/>. Done. And there's also written submissions can go to Accessible BC at www.urbansystems.ca, so I'll send, I'll send this information off to you guys, and you guys can, can put it in your chat.

R Rob Mineault 44:17

Excellent, perfect. Well, listen, we want to thank you so much for coming on and talk about this. I mean, honestly, it's, it is really fascinating to sort of hear the some of the inner workings of what's going on, because that that really is an issue. You know, when you only you know, you start, you sort of only see the headlines here and there. You get information drips and drops it. It does feel like you know nothing's happening. So as I mean, it's, it's so heartening to hear all the hard work that that you guys are putting in and driving some of this forward, because you're absolutely right. This is so long overdue. Yeah, thank you for all the hard work that that you've been putting in for this.

S Susie Chant 44:57

Well, thanks more to the Directorate and the teams that I've been working with, the committees and teams, because they're the ones that are doing the hard work. I'm very fortunate. I take information in, I take information back, I give information out, but that the teams and the and the committees are doing such amazing work, and I'm so appreciative of the work and that they do and that they offer, it's really amazing.

R Ryan Fleury 45:25

And I'd be willing to bet that 25% number is low.

S Susie Chant 45:29

I'd be willing to bet you are right.

R Rob Mineault 45:31

I bet a lot of people don't report..

S Susie Chant 45:35

And that's a whole other conversation. Yep, we'll have comfort in reporting or comforted or accommodation and resistance.

R Rob Mineault 45:48

100% Well, you know you haven't always have an open invite onto the show. Please come back, when there's when there's more to report. We'd love to have you back and and, and have you as a guest.

S Susie Chant 46:03

I'd like to do that. Thank you so much.

R Ryan Fleury 46:05

Excellent. Another guest that will come back.

S Susie Chant 46:18

Nice to talk to everybody, and we'll talk when we do.

L Lis Malone 46:21

Nice to meet you too. Susie, okay, talk again. Bye, bye.

R Rob Mineault 46:26

There you go.

R Ryan Fleury 46:28

There you go.

L Lis Malone 46:30

I realize how little I really know about Canada.

R Ryan Fleury 46:35
Yeah, it goes both ways. We know very us. All we know is a very litigious.

L Lis Malone 46:40
We're very litigious. That is the American way. That's all you need to know.

R Rob Mineault 46:47
May not be litigious, but I feel like we're still, we're still pretty heavily steeped in bureaucracy.

R Ryan Fleury 46:51
So you know, this is all infant for us, like this is all so new, yeah, this is baby steps.

R Rob Mineault 47:02
The ADA has been around since, what, 1990? The accessible Canada Act, back in five years ago.

R Ryan Fleury 47:12
Baby steps for Canada accessibility,

R Rob Mineault 47:14
Yeah, that's right, yeah. So, you mean it is, it is a pretty new process. I mean, embarrassingly, like, you know, our the Accessible Canada Act only came about it like, yeah, five, six years ago. That's our first, you know, federal disability legislation. So, and then, you know, we have all these provincial which are, you know, essentially the equivalent of state legislation, here and there. But even then, not every province has it, so we're still we're way behind you.

L Lis Malone 47:44
So okay, so and I'm just jumping in. I don't know anything about any of any of your stuff, but to me, it just seems like it's making the process longer by waiting for every single component to be ready to go and boom, and then just drop this whole big thing when, when you say, everything's in place, and blah, blah. And I understand that in theory, but at the same time, like, why don't you, like, roll things out so that, you know, you can kind of start to see what's working, and then you can kind of see what things need to be put into place. Because

sometimes not everything is going to be ready on day one, you know, you think about just, you know, I compare it to here in the US, and when the Obama Administration rolled out healthcare.gov and he said, Oh my God, it's gonna be the most amazing site, and everyone has to sign up, and everyone needs to get their health, and boom, it crashed. And they were, you know, and it created turmoil. And, yeah, I mean, yeah, they fixed it. But it's sometimes, it's like, you know, just roll it, roll things out, and then you can, kind of, like, kick the tires a little bit, and, like, then let people get used to it, as opposed to, just, like, having everyone just, like, ping, boom. Like, every, every part of this act, just gets dropped.

R

Ryan Fleury 48:57

Well, that's why I asked if, that's why I asked if we're actually looking at other you know, or other organizations, other provinces, countries, and their accessibility, right? Like do we need a standard that says all public access need to have wheelchair ramps or need to be wheelchair accessible bathrooms? No, that should already be in there, done. We don't need a standard for that. That's a given, right? Let's move on. So how long are we going to how long is it going to take for these standards to actually take place? It's probably going to be a year or more. Yeah, so we're still years out.

R

Rob Mineault 49:33

Well, for sure, yeah, you know. And I wouldn't disagree with you either, I mean, but I mean, you got to assume that there are, there are people that are much smarter than us, I would hope, working on all of this. So I'm sure that I'm hoping there's reason behind it. It is very complicated, these are not necessarily easy issues to tackle. You know, especially when you talk about retrofitting places and all of the enforcement mechanisms and reporting and standards. I mean, yes, it is all important. Could it be moving faster? Probably, but there's definitely movement happening.

R

Ryan Fleury 50:09

You know, governments and agencies need to be talking to each other. You know, I think Tokyo, or somewhere in Japan, has the most accessible rail system in the world, you know, we have municipalities who put in audible traffic signals in Coquitlam, which are different than the ones in Burnaby, which are different than the ones in Surrey. Like, it's absolutely ridiculous. Whereas in Australia, they are all the same. It's consistent, no matter where you go, you know, the cheep, cheeps and the chirp chirps and the new, the tactile buzzing - like it's consistent, and if nobody's talking to each other, we're just in for a mess.

L

Lis Malone 50:51

Well, the thing is that you got to start putting something in place, because you're not going to have anything perfect. And I know that, right? I mean, I had more questions I would have loved to have asked but, you know, I'm not a voter.

R

Ryan Fleury 51:04

So that's the other big thing, is, we do have an election this year, yeah? And so if this government doesn't get back in, then what happens?

R

Rob Mineault 51:13

Yeah, well, and that's the trouble that they had in Ontario, right? Yeah, that's what set them back, is that every time they'd make some progress there would be an election, the government would change, and then the priorities all shifted, and people moved around. And then it took, you know, years for things to get back up to speed. That's part of this big problem about a lot of this legislation, right? Governments change.

R

Ryan Fleury 51:38

Willingness to spend, you know, again, I think it comes down to the almighty dollar, right? It's going to cost billions of dollars.

L

Lis Malone 51:45

Well, yeah, well, I know she, she mentioned, she may mention that there were things that Canada likes about the ADA, and then things that they said were problematic. I am kind of curious about what they consider to be problematic, because, I mean, there were things that don't cover everything, and as things change, you know, we've, you know, there have been modifications, or other other bills that have been been passed and to to kind of fill those gaps. And yeah, it's a process, but you have to have something to build on. You can't just how. You're not going to just have a perfect legislation package on your first go right now.

R

Rob Mineault 52:24

Yeah, that's true. The first thing about, about any any project, you want to have a goal, a reasonable goal, a timeline. You want to have goal markers along the way.

R

Ryan Fleury 52:39

Talk to those with lived experience involved.

R

Rob Mineault 52:42

They're doing that. Maybe, like I said, I hope that there's method to the madness, and I totally hope that the election doesn't screw things up, because that's the I think that's the bigger danger. It sounds like we're making some headway, but like you said, if, if new government

comes in and all of a sudden they decide they decide they want to shake things up or redistribute things, or we don't feel like working or plugging money into this, then, yeah, we're right back where we started. Time will tell.

L Lis Malone 53:13
Interesting. By the way. Go Panthers.

R Ryan Fleury 53:16
Oh no way. Go Oilers.

R Rob Mineault 53:25
What? When did this all start? So it's the wait. Let me get this straight. So it's the Edmonton Oilers and the Florida Panthers? Florida Panthers, isn't that one of the teams that you were hoping for Lis?

L Lis Malone 53:37
Yes, the whole Eastern Conference Finals laid out exactly as I predicted. I see if Steve were on here, he'd say, my gosh. Lis, you got him. You nailed that one.

R Rob Mineault 53:49
See, reading The Art of War helped. Well, that's interesting. Well, so there you go. Maybe we will have a little bit of a friendly bet or something interesting. So next week, maybe we'll, we'll, we'll figure out a friendly bet between, I like, I don't really have a dog in the race so maybe I'll go on Lis's side just to be fair.

L Lis Malone 54:19
To be on a winning team.

R Ryan Fleury 54:20
Yeah, the married couple against me and Steve.

L Lis Malone 54:26
Rob's like, ew, she's a girl. She has cooties. Ew.

R Ryan Fleury 54:34
Alright, let's get out of here.

L Lis Malone 54:36
She smells like flowers.

R Rob Mineault 54:38
Oh, listen, lap, last episode and you talking about about what you'd be doing to Brad Pitt, I don't want an apple in my mouth or being spanked with a riding crop, thank you very much.

L Lis Malone 54:50
Oh, that's right,

R Rob Mineault 54:52
Yeah, we had an insight into the mind of Lis Malone. A very scary place.

L Lis Malone 55:00
We were talking about Brad Pitt. He's a handsome fella. That's not, that's not my fault. There are a lot of we could talk about another handsome fellow, if you'd like, I don't care. Pick another one.

R Rob Mineault 55:12
Um, George Clooney.

L Lis Malone 55:14
Oh, I don't like George. Oh, my God. I wouldn't, pee on him if he were on fire.

R Ryan Fleury 55:21
Well, that's been another episode of AT Banter.

L Lis Malone 55:29
Great, now I'm never going to be allowed into Canada.

R Rob Mineault 55:33
All right.

R Ryan Fleury 55:33
Bye.

R Rob Mineault 55:34
No wait. We have to hey, Lis.

L Lis Malone 55:38
Hey, Rob.

R Rob Mineault 55:39
Where can people find us?

L Lis Malone 55:41
They can find us at www.atbanter.com

R Ryan Fleury 55:45
Yeah, yeah.

R Rob Mineault 55:58
Clearly you don't have Aphantasia.

L Lis Malone 56:06
I have the Hyperphantasia.

R Rob Mineault 56:09

So true. Hey, they can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com

R Ryan Fleury 56:20

And Facebook and Instagram

R Rob Mineault 56:25

Yeah, there you go.

R Ryan Fleury 56:26

I think that's it, and Mastodon.

R Rob Mineault 56:36

That is going to do about doing for us this week. Big Thanks. Of course, to Susie Chant for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.

S Steve Barclay 56:49

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