

These are the minutes from the Accessibility Town Hall. These are the topics that were discussed and the discussion points that arose from various participants about them.

Updates to follow!

Date: Jan 16th 2025

Total attendees: ~25

Facilitators: Joy and Zieve, Accessibility Co-Leads 2024 and 2025

Goals: Share information, farm ideas, recruit volunteers

1. Topic: Parking
 - a. Joy and Zieve asked for parking spots reserved in the upper lot, but were faced with concerns about how managing parking burns out volunteers. We settled for “try to send people to offsite as much as possible, so when someone says ‘offsite was really hard for my body last year, are there any spots left in Lower/Upper?’ we're more likely to have a spot in Lower/Upper to give them, but don't make guarantees or advertise it
 - b. We probably got 5 or 6 emails from participants about accessible parking
 - c. Some people shared that for them lower parking is closer to their camp and that's what they would want
 - d. For many people getting back from off site parking is very difficult
 - i. The UTVs aren't allowed to cross the road
 - ii. Idea: Use a car to pick up people from offsite, similar to how a minivan used to shuttle people from the very offsite parking (at a school nearby, as opposed to at Frank's property across the street)
 - e. A parking volunteer shared that when people were specifically requesting accessibility parking this volunteer would try to park them near ice hole
 - f. Some of the competition for upper parking spots comes from the box trucks, ice hole, and people who get granted permission to come for just one day (this was nice for example for a community member who was pregnant one year)
2. Topic: All UTV rides, including Accessibility, stopping after dark
 - a. This has been the community consensus for a while for several reasons:
 - i. Noise
 - ii. Higher potential for accidents
 - iii. Wear on the land
 - b. Someone shared that it caused them and several of their friends a lot of anxiety not knowing if they'd get there in time to get UTV help, and they ended up calling friends who were already at the event to get them to find out if the UTV rides were still going
 - i. Idea: Include the fact that UTV rides end at dusk in more places (it was already on the [Accessibility page](#) but it could be in some emails or newsletters)

- c. Could an electric UTV run after dark?
 - i. Electric would mean low noise
 - ii. Other efforts could be made to make it not disruptive like driving it incredibly slow and covering it in pretty lights and giving it low soothing Ice Cream Truck music
 - iii. Main issue might be cost: Boardwalk found one for \$5k, but Iva (DPW lead) suspects that was more of a Golf Cart than a UTV, aka it wouldn't handle the terrain, Iva had seen things closer to \$40k
 - iv. People have not had luck finding rentals
 - d. Size is also an issue: The smaller the better for squeezing by participants at night
 - e. Some dreamed of it being a Train art car like at fairs!
 - f. This feels like a subcommittee should get together to look into these challenges
3. Topic: Pavilion style big tent on upper field
- a. Proposer: Narwhal!
 - b. Purposes:
 - i. Shade
 - ii. Bringing more events to the Upper Field, which is more accessible for many participants
 - c. Setup:
 - i. These are really really hard to set up, DPW definitely wouldn't want to take that on
 - ii. Because of the ring road, people could be hired to bring it in and set it up
 - d. Proposed events and services:
 - i. Shows, like what happens at Stage currently (would need to be low sound, or approved by sound core)
 - ii. Silent disco
 - iii. Community kitchen space (like Center Camp at some burns!)
 - e. Concern: The shade and high foot traffic might kill all the grass and other plants under the tent. We'd have to run it by the land owners.
4. Topic: Portos
- a. In the past, the "Accessibility" Portos were pit toilets in the middle of the event, most recently behind Lions, and could not be serviced, so they were locked to limit use, with the combo only shared with those in need. Lions did not enjoy the smell.
 - b. This past year, there were three portos (not pit toilets), also locked, also not serviced, also with unhappy neighbors (Potato Support People).
 - c. We're not sure what Kirk (land owner) fields about more pit toilets
 - d. Idea: Coordinating who will have a camp toilet set up who could share it, and coordinating getting those emptied/cleaned
 - i. Squatting safely and balancing without harm can be an issue
 - ii. We have to make sure the porto companies don't get their hoses clogged up with bags of waste from camp toilets

- e. Some places do a “Pooper scooter” to move portos to where they can be serviced, but no one wants that job, and biohazard spills are gross and dangerous
 - f. Quinn has taken on working with the porto contractor this year, and believes from her initial research that with the ring road we can now put portos anywhere along the ring path! Her hope is to not only have more portos overall (she says for example PDF has 20% more portos per capita than Firefly) , but also portos much more distributed around the event, and serviced throughout the event, so they don’t need to be locked
 - g. Ideally Accessibility Portos new location are announced well before placement:
 - i. It affects where people camp, both to avoid camping near portos that aren’t serviced, and to be close enough to portos if they need them
5. Topic: Charging batteries for CPAP machines and other devices
 - a. Idea: Share in Accessibility materials where people can charger their batteries (phone charging stations often don’t have enough power)
 - b. Some people charge behind the Medical Tent today
 - c. Iva said we can get power from the barn now so a station could be set up at upper parking. We would just need to know how much these batteries need to draw.
 - d. Idea: Volunteers to bring peoples batteries too and from the charging station.
 6. Shawn, the 2024 participant in the motor chair, shared that he identified some trail spots during work weekends and was able to work with DPW to address some of them:
 - a. Traction Mats helped some of them
 - b. Some were loose gravel that would come out under wheels
 - c. Iva said she’s very interested in working with him on that more, and hopes he can come to more Work Weekends
 7. People have shared that we’re one of the most physically challenging Burns!
 8. Other ideas
 - a. At the point that someone buys a ticket, have them mark accessibility needs, such as parking, camping, rides, etc
 - b. There is some interest in people being able to schedule their UTV ride ahead of time
 - c. There is interest in a follow up, as a meeting or email, people want to get updates on all these ideas/topics

Next, below are the notes Accessibility Leads Joy and Zieve made right after Firefly 2024 so they wouldn’t forget all the ideas and lessons learned. There is a lot of overlap with what was discussed in the Town Hall, but also some different things!

1. UTV map issues
 - a. Probably just given all the uncertainty caused by the last minute newness of the ring road, many drivers were confused by where they could go, on which UTV, and when
 - b. Questions:

- i. Can some UTVs go on some paths others cannot
 - 1. Different size UTVs**
 - ii. When should UTVs follow the direction of the ring road “go all the way around”
 - iii. How do you get from Upper Parking to the field when cars are coming up the hill to Upper Parking
 - iv. Can we drive past Sanctuary to Steam Bath
 - c. Other thoughts:
 - i. **A color map would be great**
 - ii. **If we have a color map, it should be tested for colorblindness**
- 2. Difficult to navigate spots
 - a. Can we ever drive up the Wild West?
 - b. UTVs hit the Nuthatch fence at the entrance to Paddock Pike
- 3. For GTFO should we try to send brutes ahead of when the UTV gets there, to help get peoples’ stuff to the ring road or a loading zone (for Arrival should the Brute stay with the person after their stuff is dropped off)
 - a. **Roaming Brute Squads**
- 4. Are the IDs for people to keep?
 - a. **Yes**
- 5. The form people filled out for UTV rides
 - a. Some participants had trouble reading the text size:
 - i. Some copies with bigger text, or
 - ii. A blown up version on the wall
 - b. It was unclear which field was for pickup location and which was for dropoff location, the mix of Arrival and GTFO language was confusing
- 6. The UTVs need the regular map on board too, not just the UTV map, to help find camps and participants
- 7. The loading zones weren’t labeled on the UTV map by number**
- 8. Last minute crunch getting people to the bus:
 - a. From 2:15pm to 2:30pm we got four different requests from participants needing a ride to the bus before 3pm. We delayed all other accessibility rides to have both UTVs do a loop sweeping these people up, but by the time they got to the loading zones the bus people had figured out a different way to get down the hill, presumably because they were worried about missing a bus. We hope no one injured themselves getting down the hill without help, especially since they were then stuck on the bus for hours
 - b. Possible solutions next year:
 - i. Have a bus sweep of the UTVs scheduled and advertised for half an hour before the bus leaves
 - ii. Let people know that the UTV pickup sometimes gets 45min behind, so 2:15pm is too late to ask for a ride to catch a 3pm bus
 - iii. **1 UTV is bus only Sunday Morning**

9. The “armored truck” UTV rental from Sunbelt was very jumpy, had low visibility, had a small truck bed, and no one knew how to use the parking brake (we weren’t even sure there was a parking brake).
10. It was scary to the drivers that they hadn’t been trained on the model of UTVs they used.
11. Dispatch wanted more scripts:
 - a. “Do I qualify?” “Yes, it’s self identified.” etc
 - b. “Here’s the porto code, you can self identify that you need it, but here’s why we hope you’ll lock it, not share the code, and make it to the main bank of portos when you can...”
 - c. **Script Binder including radio use and codes and things**
12. People didn’t know where Satellite Outpost was, it was labeled on the map as “Emergency Call Box”
 - a. **Maybe someone should reach out to Maps about it**
13. Volunteers didn’t know how to use the radios, although they usually picked it up pretty fast
14. Volunteers didn’t know they should sign in
15. Let’s write down what we can from UTV training, for people to read ahead of the in person training. For starters:
 - a. Pinch points
 - b. Bring snack and water
 - c. Don’t turn when not accelerating
 - d. Stay under 5mph
 - e. Have everyone sat
16. Possible delegations if we want more co-leads:
 - a. Portos and buckets
 - b. UTV training
 - c. People focused on figuring out if a particular ambitious idea could work: “Night bus” electric UTV, Accessibility Parking, Big Tent on the field
17. Do we want 3 people per shift next year, even though there are only two UTVs?
 - a. **Only if we initiate Roaming Brute Squad**
18. Before next year maybe could go back through all the emails we sent and consolidate our answers into a document we could copy paste to speed up email responding next year (and some things can go in the Accessibility page on fireflyartscollective.org)
 - a. **Updating the Accessibility page should be done every year**
 - i. **Merge in the [old accessibility guide](#), but make sure camps that are mentioned on it are aware that they are on it**
19. Let’s make it easier to automatically see the emails the other co-lead has sent without us manually having to CC
20. Can we do a UTV strategy training, where we give people a map and a difficult scenario
 - a. Difficult scenario examples (we can take submissions):
 - i. You didn’t realize it was past 8 but really want to finish the second load for some people who really need to get out with a bunch of stuff, but you need to cross the field and Temple burn is starting

- ii. The bus gets stuck in your way
 - iii. The ring road traffic is about to start, but it would take you forever to go all the way around
 - iv. Someone is up Wild West but you don't feel safe driving the UTV up there
 - b. Could we make a video game?
21. Is it okay that so many people were radioing in their requests, or do we want to insist that people send someone to Upper Parking to talk to Dispatcher in person?
- a. **What is the 'no names on the radio' policy?**
 - i. **When it's mentioning intoxication, health, etc or NONE AT ALL?**
22. We pay for portos for everyone, could we also pay for a couple of nice bucket setups to lend to people who need them, and have a volunteer (maybe even a paid volunteer or vendor) clean them after?
23. Volunteer shift accessibility brainstorm:
- a. Could the website accommodate people requesting a shift from someone who already filled it "Hey are you open to doing a different shift, this one meets my accessibility needs"
 - b. Manual version: Could a volunteer receive requests "I want to volunteer but none of the remaining shifts match my requirements" and then email people to see if they'd be willing to do a different shift? Maybe when people sign up for a shift they say why it works well for them, so we don't keep asking *other* people with accessibility needs to leave the shift?
 - c. When you're signing up for shifts could you see them in order of hard they are to fill usually
24. Let's get better locks:
- a. Easier to attach to the door
 - b. Light up ones
 - c. Letters instead of numbers
 - d. Big letters or numbers, to be easier to read
 - e. Ones harder to accidentally leave unlocked
25. Were we supposed to park our UTVs on the field during the Burn so they could be used in an emergency?
- a. **Zieve to reach out to Narwhal to see what the experience was - do they think, this is an ongoing request**
26. Starting the to-do list for next year:
- a. Budget
 - i. **Maybe a couple or three really good camp toilets**
 - b. Secure UTVs for training weekends that match the UTVs at the event
 - c. Possibly train some UTV drivers during the event?
 - i. **What would that look like?**
 - ii. **We should talk to Skittlez**
 - d. Decide whether someone's UTV training can expire, and create the "Polaris Trained 2025" requirement/qualification in the volunteer system

- i. **Arbitrary threshold?**
 - ii. **Lets ask Skittlez?**
 - e. Send out the volunteer roles doc earlier
- 27. Ticket codes: Did we get them? Did we use them?
 - a. **We do not remember getting them**
 - b. Email text from Presly:
 - i. Since you want to recruit more volunteers next year, I have a proposal for you that involves sowing seeds now and hopefully reaping them next year.
 - ii. 1. Email the people who volunteered with your core this year thanking them and asking for feedback. [Here's a sample email](#) if that helps, but you may have your own way of doing it!
 - iii. 2. Anyone who writes you back is demonstrating interest, so make them feel heard, and if it feels right, gauge their interest in leveling up next year into a shift lead-type role or, if they're already experienced, even a core co-lead. You don't have to get a firm commitment, we're just planting seeds.
 - iv. 3. Relax! Forget about Firefly for a while!
 - v. 4. If you opt in below, I'll reach out around September to scheme with your core individually about next moves.
- 28. Creating an accessibility team to discuss and lobby for community improvements?
- 29. Electric Bus
 - a. **The Idea:**
 - i. **Electric UTV purchased by Firefly and/or crowd funding**
 - ii. **Cover with LEDs and and some kind of sound**
 - iii. **Possibly dim the headlights to be less overwhelming but still headlight enough**
 - iv. **It becomes a night bus, running all night**
- 30. Accessibility Porto Placement
 - a. Not across from Potato Support
 - b. **Can we surround them with a strong smelling plant?**
 - c. **Can we get them a little more off the road?**
 - d. **Would a physical boundary wall (like a privacy fence) help block the smell**
- 31. Can we have an off-season meeting about Accessibility? Have people submit their ideas ahead of time. Hopefully we can have a good mix of people with needs and people who volunteer (and people who are both!) to ground the discussion in what is possible, but also dream big ← DONE 😊
 - a. **End of January**
 - b. **Virtually for accessibility reasons**