

# **City of St. Catharines**

## **Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, May 22, 2013**

**A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, May 22, 2013 in Committee Room #1 at City Hall at 1:30 p.m.**

Present: Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson  
Diane Foster, Co-chairperson (until 3:30 p.m.)  
Bob Asham  
Steve Kurtic-Lentinello (until 3:30 p.m.)  
Julie Morris  
David Reed (until 3:30 p.m.)  
Linda Marie O'Hagan  
Mary Jane Waszynski (at 2:35 p.m.)

Regrets: Councillor Matthew Harris  
Chantal Barrette  
Ian Crawford  
Tony DiPaola

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CSS  
Ellen Savoia, Planner I, PDS  
Bruce Bellows, Planner I, PDS  
Kevin Blozowski, Planner I, PDS  
Erin O'Hoski, Corporate Planning Officer, EDCS  
Kristen Sullivan, Project & Development Planner, RCS  
Mauro Becchetti, Horticulture Foreman, RCS

### **Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS):**

The FADS guideline was approved by the Region of Niagara in September 2005 and adopted by the City of St. Catharines Council on April 24, 2006 for use in municipal facilities.

**1. Call to order:**

Shelley Stewart, co-chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

**2. Introductions:**

Everyone was welcomed and round table introductions were made.

**3. Approval of Previous Minutes:**

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for April 24, 2013 were approved.

That the minutes of April 24, 2013 be approved.

Motion by: Diane Foster

Seconded by: Linda Marie O'Hagan

CARRIED

**4. Presentations/Discussions:**

a. **Draft Zoning By-law**, Ellen Savoia, Bruce Bellows, Kevin Blozowski, PDS. Shelley Stewart welcomed the presentation team from PDS. Planning staff provided a comprehensive review of the draft zoning by-law. Each Planning staff provided detail through PowerPoint and discussion. Hand-outs were provided and MACOA was given the link to the City's webpage for further detail and review. It is a consolidation of numerous zones that provides a new approach, new format and uniformity to the City's zoning. The existing by-law is approximately 5000 pages but has been streamlined into approximately 150 pages and provides a balance between flexibility and certainty.

Of particular interest were any items relating to accessibility. It was noted that ratios have changed slightly for accessible parking, by having no requirement for accessible parking when sites have less than 5 parking spaces. There is no signed accessible parking in areas such as townhouse developments. There were a number of questions relating to accessible parking space size and signage that haven't changed from existing requirements. Accessible pedestrian connectivity was also noted as being a priority to MACOA.

Parallels were drawn between the sequencing and level of guiding documents for City planning from the Official Plan, to the Urban Design Guidelines, the draft zoning by-law and onto the Site Plan Manual that was discussed in detail

at MACOA's previous meeting in April 2013. Planning staff noted that MACOA's input is appreciated by the end of June. Shelley Stewart thanked Planning staff and suggested that this item be placed on the June agenda in order to follow up with more final and comprehensive access comments after members have had another opportunity to review the presentation and new zoning information on the City's website.

**b. Community Improvement Plan (CIP),** Erin O'Hoski provided a backgrounder on CIP, defining its purpose and its establishment in 2003 under the Planning Act. This subsidy program has supported revitalization and renewed facades throughout the community. The CIP program is being reviewed on its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. MACOA has long advocated for accessibility to be a part of this program. This was previously discussed at MACOA's meeting in March 2012 and notes Planning's annual budget submission for an accessible component to the CIP which has never been successful.

Members noted concern that funding is being provided for businesses to visually improve their facades, but not to provide an accessible entry. Accessibility has to begin somewhere and starting at the front entry is recommended.

Identified and discussed:

- 2013-2015 Accessibility Plan identified access as missing and needed within CIP programs
- CIP funding to improve facades but not provide accessibility at the entrance is detrimental to an inclusive community
- Accessibility must start at the entrance; although interiors of buildings may not currently be accessible, that is a next step.
- Acknowledgement that interiors are assumed to be Ontario Building Code (OBC) compliant of that time and only upon interior renovation is there any requirement to implement newer OBC design (FADS continues to be recommended as a best practice for accessible design over and above OBC requirements)
- Building owners may come to recognize the value of becoming more accessible to their customers
- Accessibility is the new normal in Ontario
- Education helps support accessibility
- Is CIP to be city-wide or within established boundaries?
- Local neighbourhood convenience stores are generally very inaccessible

- Access needs to be prioritized, starting with on-grade wider doors with power door operators (PDO)
- CIP currently centered on downtown facades, but ramps may have encroachment issues (look at solutions, including raising stretches of sidewalk)
- Entering a businesses is the starting point
- Niagara is an aging population, therefore barrier-free access is essential
- Some areas become more inaccessible without public transit
- Sometimes landscaping encroaches onto accessible pedestrian pathways (e.g. hanging tree branches impede people with visual disabilities)

Erin O'Hoski noted the importance of all stakeholder input and asked for any final input by the end of June. Shelley Stewart asked that this item also be revisited on MACOA's June agenda.

Moved by: Diane Foster  
Seconded by: Linda Marie O'Hagan

That MACOA continues to support an accessibility component as a priority part of CIP; and

That MACOA advocates for façade improvements to include an accessible entry; and

That MACOA's detailed comments in these minutes of this date accompany this motion.

CARRIED

c. Park access audit and maintenance, Kristen Sullivan, Mauro Becchetti. Kristen Sullivan reviewed all park access audits made by MACOA reps during the summer of 2012. There were a number of recurring themes that increased awareness. A list of themes based on these audits was distributed and are attached as an appendix to these minutes. A number of issues were identified along with opportunities to improve and plan for necessary resources.

THEME – parking;

THEME – washrooms;

THEME – site furnishings;

THEME – trails;

THEME – way-finding and signage;

Mauro Becchetti noted that parks and trail access will benefit with maintenance taking a greater focus on accessibility elements.

Shelley Stewart thanked Kristen Sullivan and Mauro Becchetti for their review of barriers in parks and trails, and to actively continue to address access issues through maintenance and renovation improvements.

Meeting Note:

Shelley Stewart, co-chairperson, adjourned the meeting as the time was 3:40 p.m. and quorum was lost at 3:30 due to the long discussions. It was decided that all remaining agenda items would be carried forward to the June agenda. Shelley Stewart asked that Diana Lecinski provide any further time-sensitive information to MACOA via email including a reminder about the March of Dimes, Breaking the Barriers Awards event on May 29<sup>th</sup> as MACOA reps will attend and host an information table at this event.

**5. Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, June 26, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. in Committee Room #1.

**6. Adjournment:**

The meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned.

Quorum had been lost at 3:30 p.m. therefore the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m. by Shelley Stewart, MACOA co-chairperson.

Attachment: re Item 4.c.

Attachment - Agenda Item 4.c.

Main Themes from Park Audits  
MACOA Meeting - May 22, 2013

1. Parking

- Spot and sign are FADS compliant
- Spot is FADS compliant but sign is not
- Spot is FADS compliant but there is no sign
- Spot is not FADS compliant and there is a sign
- Spot is not FADS compliant and there is no sign

2. Washrooms/Change rooms

- Permanent
- Portables

3. Site Furnishings

- Access to and accessibility of: benches, picnic tables, garbage cans

4. Trails

- Erosion and material at edges
- Trip Hazards

5. Way-finding and Signage