



CITY OF  
ST. CATHARINES

## Minutes

**Meeting:** Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility  
**Location:** Committee Room #1  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 25, 2014  
**Time:** 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

### Meeting Attendees:

**Invited Name**

Present Diane Foster, Co-chairperson  
Steve Byers  
Chantal Barrette  
Ian Crawford  
Steve Kurtic-Lentinello  
Julie Morris  
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets Councillor Harris  
Bob Asham  
Linda Marie O'Hagan  
David Reed  
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson

Staff Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CSS  
Jim Riddell, Director Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Judy Pihach, Manager of Planning Services, PDS  
Margaret Josipovic, Development Agreement Coordinator, PDS  
Scott Ritchie, Urban Design Planner, PDS  
Brad Johnson, Development Technologist, PDS  
Christine Adams, Manager of Engineering & Construction, TES  
Steve Bittner, Transportation Technologist, TES

## Agenda Items and Deliverables

1. Welcome from the Chair: **Diane Foster at 1:40 p.m.**

2. Roundtable introductions were made.

**3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting:**

Wednesday, April 23, 2014

Moved by: Julie Morris

Seconded by: Chantal Barrette

That the Minutes of the April 23, 2014 be approved.

CARRIED

Diana Lecinski noted that the City's Council Chamber podium was discussed and demonstrated to Steve Murphy, Regional Accessibility Coordinator, as MACOA suggested at their April meeting relating to recent renovations to the Regional Council Chambers.

**4. Discussion:**  
**Site plan and accessibility**

- MACOA put together a list of locations and site plan concerns as well as providing photos that demonstrated those concerns.
- Most concerns were similar in nature and included; site grade at accessible parking locations, lack of proper space size, location, cross-hatching, signage, and curb ramp access missing or not adequately located
- Jim Riddell and Judy Pihach led the discussion and framework of the site plan process.
- It was noted that PDS staff had reviewed each property that was noted by MACOA and has developed an approach to addressing these concerns
- Each site concern and photo was reviewed and comments/solutions were discussed
- PDS noted that inspection of sites that are deficient from the "agreement" results in holdback of deposited funds until the issues are addressed
- MACOA noted concern for the time it takes for developers to resolve deficiencies as in the meantime there often remains a barrier to people with a disability

## Agenda Items and Deliverables

- PDS management will address the list of concerns with various levels of compliance requirement letters, letters of notification, and/or follow up
- PDS thanked MACOA for their detailed review and noted a greater focus to be put on site accessibility during inspections

### **Community Improvement Plan (CIP);**

- MACOA restated their commitment to the CIP recognizing accessibility as an important consideration when CIP funds are provided to applicants
- PDS noted their previous report to Council (Aug. 1, 2013) did not address accessibility and that Council requested that accessibility perspective be included in the upcoming report
- MACOA asked that their previous support for an accessibility component to the CIP be put forward again to reconfirm their position (attached as Appendix A)
- Support for accessibility within the CIP is also outlined in the 2013-2015 Accessibility Plan (attached as Appendix B)
- Diane Foster thanked PDS staff for attending and supporting accessibility

## **5. Business Arising from Minutes:**

### **a. Accessibility Plan**

- On-street accessible parking locations were discussed with Steve Bittner who noted the downtown is being revitalized by many major projects
- MACOA had previously suggested some areas that may be impacted by this downtown growth, however continue to note the Montebello Park would be ideal
- Future discussion with TES is needed to determine location choices
- Shauna Park was audited for accessibility at the request of RCS after they received a request for improvements
- Thank you to Diane Foster and Julie Morris for auditing and providing feedback that staff could use to move forward
- RCS found the audit information helpful and noted that some access concerns are currently being addressed, although paving the pedestrian pathway around the park is a budget item that will be requested in the next budget

### **b. Elections**

- At MACOA's suggestion the City Clerk has confirmed Transit service to Lock 3 on polling dates at the Museum

## Agenda Items and Deliverables

### 6. Updates:

a. **Site Plan**

- Discussed under item 4.a.

b. **DDRC**

- No report

c. **Niagara AAC**- No report

d. **Other**

- MACOA was well represented at the March of Dimes, Breaking the Barriers Awards and hosted a public information table that was highly visited

- Council of June 9<sup>th</sup> produced a motion asking Transit to assess the accessibility of its bus stops and shelters

- Councillor Harris advocated for this concern and Diane Foster spoke to Council as an individual who is a frequent Transit user

- The motion also noted resourcing MACOA for its accessibility expertise

- Transit will review its stops and shelters and seek input from MACOA at a future meeting

- Diane Foster congratulated Julie Morris on receiving a well-deserved award from the United Way and also on hosting a “Dining in the Dark” awareness experience on behalf of the CNIB.

### 7. Information Items

a. Signage for service animals;

Staff noted that some facilities may have signs indicating ‘no pets allowed’.

MACOA suggested that signs should include ‘service animals welcome’.

Several examples were provided with the agenda package which MACOA supported.

Moved by: Steve Beyers

Seconded by: Ian Crawford

That signs used to notify patrons of “no pets allowed” should also include “service animals welcome”; and

That signs using images are preferable to just text signs.

CARRIED

## Agenda Items and Deliverables

b. Urban Braille;

Julie Morris noted that she provided photos examples from Port Colborne of street names imprinted on the sidewalk that she found very visually helpful. Staff noted a similar approach for Urban Braille in Hamilton. Staff has shared this information with PDS previously, but was asked to do so again. TES is undertaking a streetscape project along St. Paul Street and was also interested in receiving Hamilton's Urban Braille information.

### 8. Next Meeting

1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 24, 2014 in Committee Room #1

Chair: Shelley Stewart.

MACOA's August meeting was excluded from the 2014 meeting schedule.

MACOA determined that quorum would be an issue for July 23, 2014 and moved to cancel this meeting.

Moved by: Steve Byers

Seconded by: Steve K-Lentinello

That MACOA's July 23, 2014 meeting be cancelled.

CARRIED

### 9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Moved by: Mary Jane Waszynski

Seconded by: Julie Morris

That this meeting do now adjourn.

CARRIED

## Attachments:

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## Appendix A

### MAOCA, May 22, 2013 Minutes excerpt;

**4.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

#### **MACOA, March 28, 2012 Minutes excerpt;**

##### **4. Discussions/Presentations:**

a. Community Improvement Plan (CIP);  
Staff reviewed the history of an accessibility component with the CIP. From a community inclusion perspective MACOA has advocated with Planning & Development Services (PDS) to have a budget amount allotted to inclusion and access whenever possible in conjunction with façade improvements of the CIP.

Over the past several years PDS has requested an accessibility budget for CIP however it continues to be un-accommodated through the budget process. Jim Riddell updated MACOA on the sequence of CIP reports to Council with the latest report being March 26, 2012 that also outlined a concern regarding an accessibility component. Bryan Morris noted the ongoing nature of budget requests for this. Jim Riddell noted further clarification under the Planning Act is being sought as the CIP is outlined under this Act and that general obligations are aligned to the Ontario Building Code (OBC). Staff noted that FADS is a best practices guideline and it is not enforceable.

MACOA members noted concern for inclusive improvements to the downtown core. Often storefront access is 1 or 2 steps and a barrier to people with a mobility disability. MACOA is very supportive of PDS continuing to advocate for greater clarity and inclusiveness in both the CIP and any interpretations of the parameters under the Planning Act. Jim Riddell also noted that a CIP budget request for accessibility would be put forward again in 2013.

Diane Foster thanked Jim Riddell and Bryan Morris for attending and reiterated MACOA's support of access being a very important component of façade improvements.

## **Appendix A, continued**

### **MACOA, January 25, 2006 Minutes excerpt;**

#### **6.a.(9) Downtown store grants program**

The Committee feels that the C.I.P. program should contain accessibility considerations as a component of grant eligibility, as previously discussed at MACOA's meeting of July 27, 2005, Item 5, review and discussion.

Moved by: Linda Crabtree  
Seconded by: Shelley Stewart

That a request be made for the C.I.P. grant program to contain accessibility considerations as an additional component of grant eligibility and consideration.  
CARRIED



**Council meeting of April 10, 2006:**

**ITEM NO. 160 Report from the Accessibility Coordinator, Dated March 6, 2006  
Re: MACOA Request Regarding Community Improvement Program (C.I.P.) Grants  
File: 10.3.17, 60.32.99**

The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) makes recommendations to maximize the partnership and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the City of St. Catharines.

The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility has reviewed the Community Improvement Programs (C.I.P.) grants at its meetings of July 27, 2005 and January 25, 2006. The Planning Department recommends C.I.P. grants based on an applicant meeting eligibility criteria. The current criteria does not address accessibility considerations as a component of grant eligibility.

Accessible considerations would be any range of improvements to provide a barrier-free environment for all patrons. Improvements such as replacing step entrances with sloped entrances, ensuring accessible doorway width, providing automatic or press-button entrances, or as a minimum, providing levered door handles and providing adequate task lighting at entryways are all examples of accessible considerations for the provision of barrier-free environments.

The MACOA passed a motion at its meeting of January 25, 2006, requesting that the C.I.P. grants contain accessibility considerations as an additional component of grant eligibility and consideration.

Prior to Council dealing with the Committee's motion, staff believe it would be advisable that a report be prepared addressing the implications and options available and follow up with an appropriate recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the request for Community Improvement Program (C.I.P.) grants to take into account accessibility considerations as a component of grant eligibility, be received;

and that this matter be referred to the Planning Department staff for a report. FORTHWITH

## Appendix B

Excerpt of the 2013-2015 Accessibility Plan, page 27:

### Planning & Development Services (PDS)

- Promote accessibility components and benefits relating to Site Plan
  - Review draft site plan manual, January 2013
  - Recognize 2016 implementation requirements of public and outdoor spaces, as amended in the IASR, December 2012
  - Advocate for access to community (e.g. builders, developers, owners, businesses, CIP, etc.)
  - Offer clear and succinct leadership for a more accessible community through guiding documents (Official Plan, Urban Design Guidelines, CIP Guidelines, etc.) and continue to update with further details to enhance community accessibility
  - Ongoing promotion of FADS as a best practices guideline
- Investigate opportunities for the Community Improvement Program (CIP) under the Planning Act and/or other opportunities to become more proactive for inclusion of accessibility
  - Encourage CIP, under the Planning Act, to offer opportunity and reward for focus on access (e.g. more accessible entrances)
- Continue to hold public meetings at accessible venues and upon request provide information in accessible formats
- Continue to scrutinize building plan applications for barrier-free compliance
  - Supportive of accessible components being put forward for future updated version of the Ontario Build Code