

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA)

- MINUTES -

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at St. Catharines City Hall in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Fred Stevens, Co-chairperson
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Ian Crawford
Diane Foster
David Reed
Sheryl Stewart
Frances Tanner
Mary Jane Waszynski (at 2:30 p.m.)

Regrets: John McKay
Mary McKay
Andy Waldron

Staff/Guests: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office
Sarah Shurr, Corporate Planner, Acting, CAO's Office
Joanne Tessier, Assistant Director, Financial Mgmt Services
Sue Dods, Acting Deputy Clerk, Corporate Support Services
Judy Pihach, Manager, Planning Services
Amanda Knutson, Dev. Agreement Coord., Planning Services
Steve Bittner, Transportation Technologist, Transportation &
Environmental Services
Jennifer McQuillan, Acting Recreation Supervisor (Seniors),
Recreation & Community Services
Chris Leonard, Senior Inspector, Fire & Emergency
Management Services

Guest: Greg Redden, Macdonald, Zuberec & Ensslen Architects Inc.

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:

MACOA members and staff reps were welcomed and round table introductions were made.

3) Approval of Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for November 25, 2009, were approved.

Moved by: Diane Foster

Seconded by: Sheryl Stewart

That the minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for November 25, 2009 be approved.

CARRIED

4) Business Arising from Minutes:

a) Accessibility Plan

i. 2010 Accessibility Plan:

Staff attended to provide their departmental input on the 2010 Accessibility Plan. These updates included 2009 successes/highlights and 2010 initiatives.

Joanne Tessier provided the FMS update noting that this department has frequent interaction with the public (billing, taxes, parking tickets, etc.) and staff have been well prepared in providing excellent accessible customer service. There is an accessible service counter in FMS. The City's Procurement Policy has been drafted and is expected to go forward to Council in early 2010. This includes an accessible policy statement, and that contracts and tenders include an accessibility clause and a declaration of understanding and compliance to be signed by third party contractors as required under the AODA's Customer Service Standard. FADS is used in determining accessibility as property leases are made or come due.

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility

January 27, 2010

2 of 9

Sue Dods noted that Corporate Support Service report includes the Information Systems (IS) and Human Resources (HR) as well as the Clerk's Office. IS has continued to improve technology throughout the corporation with 'smart boards' being installed in several key meeting rooms at various locations, planned website improvements for early 2010 include large font options and speaking technology with a new website format. A facility attributes list is being rolled out for some recreation facilities which is based on the key information that may be sought by visitors with a disability, based on the criteria provided to staff by MACOA earlier in 2009. Listening assistive devices were installed in Council Chambers. All CSS sections continue to offer alternative formats. HR provides comprehensive orientation training to new hires which includes a detailed portion on customer service to people with a disability. The staff training was also provided to all crossing guards before the 2009 school year started.

Sarah Shurr noted that the role of the Corporate Planner within the CAO's office ensures a global corporate overview on initiatives such as the downtown revitalization, new facilities such as the performing arts centre, the aquatics centre, etc. A mandate to update the community strategic planning document known now as the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan will be undertaken in 2010.

Jennifer McQuillan was welcomed as RCS's new staff rep to MACOA. She reported that all staff attended the customer service training and as RCS is highly interactive with the public noted that this training was beneficial in ensure that all RCS is knowledgeable and prepared to provide accessible customer service. The initiatives noted for RCS are on-going in nature and as she is newly appointed to this role, she will follow up on details. Jennifer McQuillan noted that MACOA's input on facility accessibility regarding the new aquatics centre has resulted in a more accessible final design. RCS has audited its website pages to ensure that the word 'handicapped' is not used.

Judy Pihach noted that Planning Services is undertaking a number of projects where accessibility is a key component. Downtown revitalization includes successes such as new accessible washroom designed to FADS standards at City Hall's exterior washrooms, the new Carlisle Street Parking Garage will receive MACOA's direct input

later on this meeting's agenda, the City and Brock University (both use FADS) are partnering on a new Performing Arts Centre. All these project require good urban design. The new Urban Design & Development Manual (UDDM) is partially complete and will be used to ensure good community design including a connective and accessible community. MACOA noted that FADS and universal design need to be clearly included in the final UDDM and Judy Pihach noted that MACOA should receive a draft to review. The UDDM will integrate the Urban Design Manual and the Site Plan Manual. Amanda Knutson noted that Planning Services continues to send all site plans to MACOA for comment and that MACOA reps David Reed and Ian Crawford continue to respond with accessibility related comments. Further, the draft Official Plan will be going forward to Council on February 1st and public meetings will be held throughout February and early March. These dates will be posted publicly and MACOA is encouraged to participate with input. The City's review of the zoning by-laws to a more comprehensive structure is on-going and will continue to update and include items such as the FADS accessible parking spaces that will be revised based on a MACOA recommendation to further increase the size of each individual accessible parking space to be 5.2 m. based on Council approval. Items such as increasing the widths of sidewalks, etc. are part of the zoning by-laws. In closing Judy Pihach noted that both developers and the City benefit from a common set of technical manuals or standards that are clearly set out as minimum requirements.

Chris Leonard of Fire Services reviewed the scope of fire safety and plans examination throughout the City's facilities. Fire safety and emergency procedures continue to be implemented and upgraded at the City. There have been several facilities where pull stations have been lowered to FADS guidelines. Visual strobe alarms have been installed at several locations to enhance the audible fire alarm system. Fire Services has also worked with the local school boards on evacuation planning in the schools. The same evacuation chairs as are used at City Hall are also being provided at schools with more than one floor.

Steve Bittner of TES reported that as part of the new downtown 2-way traffic repaving and relining, that several on-street accessible parking spaces have been installed. There are several more locations that are being recommended. The parking signage program continues to an on-going project and parking officers have audited various sites for compliance. Sidewalk improvements will continue to be made and there is discussion of reviewing the Transportation Master Plan which would receive comprehensive updates including accessibility related components such as sidewalks. MACOA members continued to point out that steep slopes and radius slope at curb ramps needs to be addressed. Judy Pihach noted that inspection staff need to be included in the requirements of accessible sidewalk plans, as there is potential for plans being submitted and approved that provide excellent accessibility and that the finished product may be the issue.

Diana Lecinski noted that on behalf of the CAO's Department that corporate compliance with the AODA's Customer Service Standard was one of 2009's biggest projects. The details of the City's accessible customer service program has been recorded in previous MACOA minutes. Supportive training brochures were developed by staff in partnership with other municipalities throughout Ontario. Diana Lecinski continues to liaison with all departments throughout the corporation to promote accessibility, prevent barriers and to prepare or ensure compliance with the AODA Standards as they become legislated. MACOA continues to be a key resource to Council and staff and the Accessibility Coordinator will continue to provide support to MACOA and ensure membership complies with the Committee's Terms of Reference. Further to administering the Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) Diana Lecinski noted that all accessible improvements listed have been completed (Listening Assistive Devices were installed in Council Chambers as at this date), or as updated in previous minutes. This annual Accessibility Plan continues to be promoted and updated until otherwise repealed by the Province. Events such as the AODA review with the provincially appointed Charles Beer, was attended by staff and several MACOA members at the Ball's Falls Conservation Area. The Accessibility Coordinator continues to ensure that the City meets or exceeds the Provincial accessibility standards and creates liaisons and partnerships with other departments, boards and commissions to ensure proactive compliance.

On behalf of Transit, Diana Lecinski noted that the Transit portion of the Accessibility Plan is forthcoming as soon as their Board reviews and approves it at their February meeting. David Sherlock, Transit General Manager, provided a summary of Transit's 2009 highlights and 2010 initiatives. In 2009 Transit added 2 more accessible conventional routes (18 or 20 routes are now services by accessible buses), 4 new low-floor buses were added (55 of 63 buses are now accessible), 1 new paravan was added to the Para Transit service and 8 new buses shelters were installed. In 2010, 10 new bus stop benches are planned to be installed, 3 new accessible buses are planned to be purchased (subject to Provincial funding) and it is hoped that 1 new Para Transit vehicle can be purchased.

That the 2010 Accessibility Plan be approved and presented to Council at their meeting of March 1, 2010.

Moved by: Frances Tanner
Seconded by: David Reed

CARRIED

Diana Lecinski noted that the 2010 Accessibility Plan is scheduled for Council on March 1, 2010 and that a presentation opportunity has been booked for MACOA to formally present the Plan to Council. Over the last few years MACOA has made a very effective and educational presentation at Council. Presentation ideas and volunteers to participate will be discussed later in the meeting to allow for a presentation regarding the new Carlisle Street parking garage to take place momentarily.

ii. Facility audit priorities:

This item was deferred to February's meeting. MACOA members are asked to be prepared to provide input on priorities relating to the facility accessibility audit at an upcoming meeting.

b) Updates: (discussed in different sequence than listed on agenda)

i. Site Plan Review (agenda item ii)

Greg Redden of Macdonald, Zuberec & Ensslen Architects Inc. was introduced and he reviewed the designs for the Carlisle Street parking garage. He provided detailed drawings and comprehensive information to the Committee. Discussion followed noting that FADS was used in the design as criteria for accessibility. Further to the comments made during this opportunity, MACOA reps were provided with the Site Plans for this project and MACOA's comments will be submitted to Amanda Knutson. As this is a City project comments can be made further than on just the site plan and MACOA welcomes the opportunity to review the interior plans within the plans submitted to the Building Services in TES. Shelley Stewart, co-chairperson, thanked Greg Redden for attending MACOA's meeting and for his overview of the new parking garage.

ii. EAF Progress (agenda item i)

Diana Lecinski noted that all accessible improvements listed have been completed, with the Listening Assistive Devices being installed and working in Council as of today's date. Staff involved in arranging these renovations and improvements have met with Finance staff to ensure that the proper documentation is included with the final report to the government of Canada by the Accessibility Coordinator. This project started on February 1, 2009 and was completed prior to January 31, 2010. Before and after photos will be submitted with final report that is required by the end of February.

iii. DDRC

Frances Tanner continues to attend DDRC meetings and the most recent meeting focused on the design of the Carlisle Street parking garage as well.

5) Annual MACOA Elections:

Shelley Stewart passed the chair to Diana Lecinski for the purpose of holding MACOA's annual election for the role of co-chairpersons. The role of the members and the role of the chairpersons were reviewed in detail. MACOA continues to prefer the shared role of co-chairpersons instead of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and therefore this will stay status quo.

Diana Lecinski called for nominations:

Ian Crawford nominated Sheryl Stewart and Sheryl Stewart accepted the nomination.

Ian Crawford nominated Fred Stevens and Fred Stevens accepted the nomination.

Diana Lecinski asked if there were any more nominations:

Mary Jane Waszynski nominated Shelley Stewart and Shelley Stewart accepted the nomination.

Diana Lecinski passed out ballots for members to vote for the role of 2 co-chairpersons. The ballots were completed by the members and collected. Diana Lecinski recessed the meeting for 5 minutes to count the ballots. Diana Lecinski called the meeting back to order and announced that Shelley Stewart and Sheryl Stewart were voted in as the 2010 co-chairpersons of MACOA until the next election to be held in January 2011.

The chair was handed back to Shelley Stewart to continue the meeting.

6) Information Items:

- a) 2010 Accessibility Plan presentation to Council on March 1, 2010.
Shelley Stewart reviewed presentation options and suggested that interested members volunteer to meet with the Accessibility Coordinator to prepared a presentation. Shelley Stewart noted her regrets for that date due to her participation with Brock University's Accessibility Advisory Committee, however new co-chairperson Sheryl Stewart along with Diane Foster and Frances Tanner volunteered to organize this presentation, along with Diana Lecinski. This group will meet to discuss and develop.

- b) Sidewalk discussion – to be arranged (tentatively February) to discuss with key staff the realities and concerns relating to the removal of sidewalks from plans in new developments due to residents approaching Council with requests.

7) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, February 24, 2010 in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

8) Adjournment:

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

Moved by: Sheryl Stewart
Seconded by: Frances Tanner

That this meeting adjourn.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.