

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA)

- MINUTES -

Wednesday, July 28, 2010

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, July 28, 2010 at St. Catharines City Hall in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Sheryl Stewart, Co-chairperson
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Ian Crawford
Diane Foster
Julie Morris
Jennifer Noble
Frances Tanner
Andy Waldron
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets: Mary McKay
David Reed

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator
Bob Cornelius, Human Resources, CSS
Steve Bittner, Transportation & Environmental Services
Amanda Knutson, Planning Services

<p>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.</p>
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1) Call to order:

Sheryl Stewart, co-chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2) Introductions:

Members were welcomed and round table introductions were made.

3) Approval of Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for June 23, 2010 were approved.

Moved by: Andy Waldron

Seconded by: Diane Foster

That the minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for June 23, 2010 be approved.

CARRIED

4) Presentation:

- a) Emergency Procedures, Bob Cornelius, Human Resources Coordinator; Bob Cornelius reviewed the emergency procedures for City Hall and noted that emergency procedure documents were contained within the hardcopy agenda package and the electronic agenda package circulation the previous week. The documents included City Hall Emergency Procedures – All Occupants, Emergency Procedures – Meeting Occupants Requiring Assistance, and the NFPA checklist. Also discussed was the ongoing opportunity for MACOA members to submit a completed NFPA checklist if they wanted to be identified as a meeting occupant requiring assistance during emergencies. This confidential document can be submitted through Diana Lecinski to Bob Cornelius or directly to his office to be secured in the locked Fire Safety Plan box for use in an emergency. He also reviewed his role as City Hall's chief fire warden along with the roles of staff who volunteer for floor wardens and department warden. Several staff have been trained in the use of the evacuation chairs and have received training from Fire Services on transfer techniques.

- b) The evacuation chair video was played for MACOA and it was noted that City Hall has 2 evac chairs located at the James Street stairway, 1 on the 2nd floor and 1 outside Committee Room #1 on the 3rd floor.

Sheryl Stewart thanked Bob Cornelius for his presentation and materials. She noted to MACOA that individuals may want to complete the NFPA forms and review their home evacuation plans as well.

5) Business Arising from Minutes:

- a) Accessibility Plan / AODA

Staff noted that there has been no further update regarding the status of any pending Standards, or any further information on the Province's plans to consolidate 3 pending Standards (Employment, Information & Communication, Transportation) into 1 Standard.

- b) Sidewalk Action Statement:

The Sidewalk Action Statement continues to be included in reports to Council since MACOA's last meeting and it was again recognized and successful in another sidewalk decision made.

A concern about bicycles being ridden on sidewalks was raised as a safety concern for all pedestrians, particularly people with a disability. Julie Morris noted that cyclists are often travelling at a fast rate of speed and seem to expect the pedestrian to concede their right of way. This is especially dangerous when a person with a vision impairment cannot see cyclists approaching. Other members had experienced similar issues when using their mobility devices on sidewalks. Overall most experiences sited disrespectful or aggressive cyclists. Steve Bittner noted that the City does have a by-law that prohibits bicycles being ridden on sidewalks that is enforced by the police. Discussion revolved around addressing this issue as calling the NRPS for fast moving bicycle is not generally productive. Additionally, there are many considerate cyclists yet pedestrian access safety may still get compromised. To address this proactively it was suggested that staff invite a rep from the NRPS to a future meeting to support police understanding of this issue more globally and to discuss remedies to safety concerns of pedestrians with a disability. An MTO document regarding new and alternative vehicles was noted by staff and will be circulated electronically to MACOA.

c) Pedestrian Routes with Fairview Mall

Steve Bittner confirmed that a letter was sent to Fairview Mall, which addressed a number of items including MACOA's concerns regarding connectivity for pedestrians, particularly with a disability, within the parking lot. Steven Bittner and Amanda Knutson noted further opportunities to make additional site plan comments when existing sites make changes and using those opportunities to comment on existing barriers.

d) Updates:

- i. Site Plan Review; further to the discussion relating to Fairview Mall, MACOA continues to have concern with respect to the Smart Centre sites on Fourth Avenue. Firstly the curb ramps and pedestrian connectivity within the expanded Walmart site and secondly the retaining wall / sidewalk between the Wendy's / Shoppers Drug Mart site across the street. The City is in agreement with MACOA's concerns and has sent letters to the developer requiring that these deficiencies be addressed. MACOA noted that the deficient sidewalk repair beside the Wendy's location was acknowledged by the developer last fall and again this spring however it has still not been addressed. MACOA was disappointed at the lack of action to address the barriers built into these new developments. It was also noted that the continued documentation by Planning and TES departments is appreciated and should continue to be actively followed up on.
- ii. DDRC; Frances Tanner noted that again DDRC meetings are being cancelled due to lack of quorum. However she continues to advocate for accessibility and inclusion within the discussion of the DDRC.

6) Information Items:

- a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package. As well Diana Lecinski reviewed several recent highlights;
 - Montebello Park washroom renovations have been completed. Several members visited the site and were please with the FADS access. MACOA reviewed / commented on the design last year.
 - A revised City policy based on Bill 168 regarding Respect in the Workplace Policy - Harassment and Violence, applies to staff and committee members, it will be circulated to MACOA as FYI.
 - A reminder that Colin Briggs CAO will be attending the September meeting for a short roundtable discussion with members for their input and overview regarding accessibility at the City.

- Shelley Stewart reviewed the many highlights and achievements MACOA has made over the years. She noted MACOA's proactive and positive approach has gained it much respect over the years.
- Frances Tanner revisited her suggestion regarding a MACOA float in the Grape & Wine Festival parade. The minutes approved earlier in this meeting were restated. Several members still noted a concern about this being an appropriate event, safety and especially dignity. Sheryl Stewart thanked Frances Tanner and suggested she put any background info on this suggestion into a document. As the previous minutes noted, this and other awareness and access promotion opportunities can be discussed by MACOA in the future and members need to be prepared to undertake with more input if further projects are undertaken. Staff reminded members that they continue to provide core outreach at events such as the March of Dimes, Breaking the Barriers Awards and in their various presentations to Council. However MACOA's main focus remains advising Council and acting as a resource.

b) Communications demonstration video; a streaming video available on www.accpc.ca was played for MACOA. Staff training will include information and tools on communication with people who are non-verbal. MACOA noted that this type of information needs to be shared with staff in order that they are comfortable and effective in multiple forms of communication. Diana Lecinski is preparing a resource package for front counter staff throughout the City.

7) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, September 22 at 1:30 in the Atrium (across the hall from Comm. Room #1). MACOA determined that no meeting will be held in August.

8) Adjournment:

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

Moved by: Julie Morris
Seconded by: Mary Jane Waszynski

That this meeting adjourn.
The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

CARRIED