

## **City of St. Catharines**

### **Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA)**

#### **- MINUTES -**

**Wednesday, September 22, 2010**

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, September 22, 2010 at St. Catharines City Hall in the Atrium at 1:30 p.m.

**Present:** Mayor McMullan  
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson  
Diane Foster  
Julie Morris  
David Reed  
Andy Waldron  
Mary Jane Waszynski

**Regrets:** Sheryl Stewart, Co-chairperson  
Ian Crawford  
Mary McKay  
Jennifer Noble  
Frances Tanner

**Staff:** Colin Briggs, CAO  
Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator  
Erin O'Hoski, Corporate Planning Officer  
Steve Bittner, Transportation & Environmental Services

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 1:30 p.m.

2) Introductions:

Members were welcomed and round table introductions were made.

Noting that there were not enough members in attendance to attain quorum Shelley Stewart motioned that quorum be temporarily lessen by 1.

Seconded by Diane Foster. Carried. Regular quorum was attained shortly after the meeting commenced.

3) Approval of Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for July 28, 2010 were approved.

Moved by: Andy Waldron

Seconded by: Diane Foster

That the minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for July 28, 2010 be approved.

CARRIED

4) Presentation:

St. Catharines Sustainability Strategy ~ Erin O'Hoski, Corporate Planning Officer, CAO's office

Erin O'Hoski reviewed the purpose and undertakings of the Sustainability Strategy with MACOA as asked the membership to provide input. She noted the unique approach and four major themes have been identified as the basis of Tending our Garden City being:

LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS: It's a common phrase when discussing our financial future, but living within our means also refers to having respect for our natural resources and their limitations now and in the future.

**BUILDING RESILIENCE:** A sustainable community is able to withstand shocks and strains, such as increased energy prices, the decline of a major industry and natural disaster. Building our ability to deal with adversity will make us more resilient as a community and more sustainable.

**STRENGTHENING IDENTITY:** When competing for resources, talent and investment, we must celebrate the unique local attributes that set our community apart from the rest. Community pride, social interaction, sense of place, cultural vitality and quality community amenities are important factors in building a sustainable community.

**MAKING INTEGRATED DECISIONS :** A decision made without considering all positions is not sustainable. Working together and seeking input from across organizations, neighbourhoods and community boundaries will provide different perspectives, ensuring that decisions are representative of the entire community and sustainable in the future.

Erin O'Hoski noted that in co-operation with community members, organizations, businesses and institutions, the next step in building a sustainability strategy is to better understand community priorities related to the proposed framework. The City is conducting a series of stakeholder consultations, focus groups, surveys and other community engagement strategies. The information obtained through these means will be analyzed over the next few months and recommended policy and program solutions will be available for public comment early in 2011. She encouraged MACOA to participate by providing comments through the on-line survey (link is an icon on the right side of the City's homepage and was attached with agenda package) or to contact her directly at 905-688-5601, ext 1703.

Shelley Stewart thanked Erin O'Hoski for her comprehensive overview of the Sustainability Strategy and encouraged everyone to participate.

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

### **a) Discussion with Colin Briggs, CAO**

Co-chairperson Shelley Stewart welcomed Colin Briggs, City CAO. Colin Briggs noted a number of accomplishments that have taken place due to the proactive advice offered by MACOA over the years. All members were asked to take this opportunity to discuss areas that are opportunities for the City to create a greater degree of accessibility.

Shelley Stewart noted, as the longest-serving member, the great strides that have been made through MACOA's advocacy and advice to the City. She was pleased that staff understanding and application of accessibility continues to create improved access throughout City facilities and services. As a person who is blind she was particularly pleased with the voting technology offered at the 2006 municipal elections and suggested that all voters should strongly consider attending the advanced polls to ensure more barrier-free voting. She noted the City elections staff who attended MACOA's February meeting and provided details of improved voting technology continue to move forward in ensuring accessible elections.

Andy Waldron noted that the completely renovated exterior washrooms at City Hall and Montebello Park offer excellent accessibility as well as offer bright clean amenities as part of the downtown revitalization. He suggested that hours of operation at both these washroom be increased in evenings and on weekends. It was noted that the Carlisle Street bus station is opened later than the City facilities, so in conjunction with that, it was suggested that staff consider prioritizing those washrooms for accessibility renovations as well.

Julie Morris suggested that tourist areas such as Port Dalhousie should have more accessible and longer operating hours of basic amenities such as washrooms. Extended Sunday bus service was also suggested and it was noted that the desire currently exists but not the necessary resources. Transit connectivity to the new hospital was noted as fundamental in connecting the City and routes are being reviewing along with becoming more accessible overall.

David Reed suggested that standardizing sidewalks (e.g. curb ramps and widths) would benefit all pedestrians and viewing our pedestrian linkages throughout the City from a wheelchair perspective would ensure repair lists don't miss deficiencies and cross-slopes that others might step over. The City should create specific construction details within its pending Urban Design and Development Manual (UDDM) among other access components. Viewing accessible parking within the context of related features such as curb-faced sidewalks ensures better access. He also offered kudos to the City, Council and staff for being opened to new methods and ideas and applauded the communication that continues to

improve through all levels and departments.

Diane Foster concurred with all the above comments and noted being an active transit user and pedestrian throughout the City and has had to occasionally re-route due to sidewalk barriers. Additionally snow windrows at intersections that are not cleared by adjacent property owners create additional barriers to people who use mobility devices.

Mary Jane Waszynski agreed that lots of good improvements have taken place relating to access. She noted that considering universal design (general term used to describe a system that is usable by everyone without modification) within all retrofitting would be beneficial. She suggested that evacuation chairs should be installed at Garden City Arena, as has been done at City Hall. Staff was asked to contact Recreation & Community Services staff about installing this type of device.

Diana Lecinski noted on behalf of several members who were unable to attend today's meeting:

- Recommend creating a service animal section within the leash-free dog park at Catherine Street Park. Due to the training and value of these animals integration is not possible, as well owners/handlers with disabilities are trained and capable in the handling of their own animals not coping with other dogs.
- The lack of an updated Site Plan Manual (UDDM) requires repetitious comments relating to accessibility which are sometimes not met due to the lack of corporate clarity through official documents. Some elements lack communication between planning and construction stages, as was the case with the developments on Fourth at Martindale and within the massive parking at the super centre across the road. Therefore enforcement between Planning (site plan) and Building (inspection) could be enhanced with an inspection checklist. Accessible pedestrian connectivity within these large vehicle areas should be a design priority. Thank you to Planning and TES for requiring the developers to fix deficiencies however lack of developer action has been discouraging.

Diana Lecinski noted to MACOA that Colin Briggs, CAO and Mayor McMullan always receive the MACOA agenda package so are up-to-date on the information and activities of MACOA from the Minutes.

b) Accessibility Plan / AODA

Staff noted that a Proposed Integrated Standard (consolidating 3 pending Standards being Employment, Information & Communication, Transportation into 1 Standard) was released by the Province for public feedback on September 2. This document was circulated to MACOA members at that time. The feedback deadline is October 16, 2010 and staff asked for any comments on this document. Upon review the draft Integrated Standard, although not being overly perspective, contains clear requirements that need to be met. Overall the feedback was positive and staff was requested to put forward to Council a report outlining this Standard along with an update on the AODA.

Staff noted that the Final Proposed Accessible Built Environment Standard has been released and is now with the Minister of Community & Social Services. In a Provincial news released on August 2<sup>nd</sup> it was noted that the bulk of this Standard will align clearly with the Ontario Building Code and the remainder will become part of the pending Integrated Standard. Additionally that upon its next review in 2013 the Customer Service Standard (O.Reg 429/07) will be consolidated into the pending Integrated Standard as well.

- c) The AODA review made by Charles Beer resulted in a report was submitted to the Province titled "Charting a Path Forward". Among its recommendations was the consolidation of Standards as noted above and the continued requirement for the broader public sector to continue to submit an annual accessibility plan in 2011 and likely 2012 before the ODA is repealed.

d) Updates:

- i. Site Plan Review; ongoing.
- ii. DDRC; no report.

**6) Information Items:**

a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package. As well Diana Lecinski reviewed several recent highlights;

- TES has received MACOA's input with respect to priorities from the facility accessibility audit and will reflect them in the 2011 and future budgets
- The Accessibility Coordinator along with several staff undertook an accessibility audit of the outdoor pools
- The Accessibility Coordinator hosted an Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) meeting in St. Catharines in early September. It was well attended by municipal accessibility staff from across Ontario; 25 in person and approximately 30 via conference call.
- CSS installed a new welcome kiosk and the courtesy wheelchairs have been placed in that location
- MACOA's July meeting suggested that NRPS staff be invited to discuss sidewalk pedestrian safety relating to other users such as cyclists. NRPS noted Fall being a busy period with school programs but will review future scheduling opportunities.
- No update from the Province on the St. Catharines City Hall accessibility video that was filmed in the summer

b) MACOA terms of appointment

Diana Lecinski reviewed the citizen appointment process for all advisory boards and committees of Council

- All advisory board and committee appointment terms run concurrent with the term of Council and expire in January 2011, shortly after Council's inauguration.
- The City Clerk's Department will notify all citizen appointments, including MACOA that their term of appointment is ending and provide information relating to reapplication (staff will ensure the information is provided to MACOA through the accessibility coordinator as well).
- All MACOA members are encouraged to reapply, as MACOA's diverse membership is informed, engaged and dynamic.
- Applications are compiled by the City Clerk and submitted to Council for their determination. Although input is provided, the appointments are determined by Council
- MACOA members are encouraged to share this citizen opportunity with their contacts as having good applicants on-file has been helpful during the previous 4 year term as a resource pool in filling vacancies.

7) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, October 27 at 1:30 in the Ante Room (before Council Chambers on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor).

8) Adjournment:

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

Moved by: Andy Waldron

Seconded by: Julie Morris

That this meeting adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

CARRIED