

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA)

- MINUTES -

Wednesday, October 27, 2010

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

Present: Ian Crawford
Diane Foster
Julie Morris
Andy Waldron
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets: Sheryl Stewart, Co-chairperson
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Mary McKay
Jennifer Noble
David Reed
Frances Tanner

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator
Steve Bittner, Transportation & Environmental Services
Chris Leonard, Fire & Emergency Management 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:

Andy Waldron volunteered to chair the non-quorum meeting and called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

It was duly noted that several notice of regrets were received in advance of the meeting but not by everyone. Regrets should be provided with as much notice as possible before the meeting date.

2) Introductions:

Members and staff were welcomed and round table introductions were made.

3) Approval of Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for September 22, 2010 were not approved due to lack of quorum. These minutes will be added to the next agenda for approval.

4) Business Arising from Minutes:

a) Elections

Sue Dods, Deputy Clerk (Acting) attended to receive feedback with respect to the 4 advance polls and the October 25 elections relating to accessibility. It was noted that the 4 advance polls were hosted at facilities that had the most ideal access and the audio accessible voting tabulator was available at these advanced polls.

Input included:

- Diane Foster noted that the PDO button at Jack Gatecliff Arena is hard to find and very small. She also requested ballot marking assistance from a DRO but felt that booth lacked privacy
- Andy Waldron suggested that it would be helpful if voter's card contained basic accessibility information of the polling location
- Several members noted that there are virtually no accessible parking spaces at any school locations (e.g. Memorial School)
- Julie Morris used the audio accessible voting tabulator and noted it was a great opportunity to vote secretly and independently. She also noted

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility

October 27, 2010

2 of 5

that computerized voices lacked clear annunciation of some names. It was suggested that the audio be checked for clarity prior to elections.

- Mary Jane Waszynski was please that several clients of Niagara Centre for Independent Living were hired to work at the elections.

Sue Dods noted that all comments provided by MACOA will be resourced in planning the next municipal election preparation. Andy Waldron thanked Sue Dods for attending the meeting.

b) Accessibility Plan / AODA

- i. AODA Standards status – MACOA's September comments on the Proposed Integrated Standard were contained in a report to Council and then forwarded to the Ministry of Community and Social Services prior to the feedback deadline of October 16, 2010.

It was noted that the AODA Alliance, an advocacy group for people with a disability, has challenged portions of this pending Standard under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). Further details can be found on their website (previously circulated to MACOA).

- ii. 2011 Accessibility Plan – Diana Lecinski noted that the broader public sector continues to be required to create an annual accessibility plan until the ODA is repealed. It is likely that this will be required for 2011 and 2012.

It was suggested that

- the existing 2010 Accessibility Plan be circulated with MACOA's November agenda package as a refresher
- staff reps from each department be invited to attend the January meeting
- the Accessibility Coordinator draft the 2011 plan based on the discussion and table the draft at the February meeting
- after MACOA's approval the 2011 Accessibility Plan be forwarded to Council
- MACOA reps will make a presentation as has been done for the last several years.

c) Updates:

i. Site Plan Review; ongoing.

Ian Crawford noted that some site plan submissions are poorly scaled to clearly indicate slopes, dimension of accessible components and therefore require amended drawings. The need for an updated Site Plan Manual to clearly outline the objective of accessibility is often demonstrated by the lack of forethought shown in some applications. He also noted that some developers are diligent in amending plans per comments received on behalf of MACOA.

Steve Bittner noted that MACOA's comments regarding safe pedestrian routes within the Fairview Mall site, from Geneva Street into the Mall have been put forward in a letter to the Fairview Mall management.

Adequate accessible parking was discussed as older site plans tend to lack important access items such as parking, curb ramps etc. As those properties submit for alterations the overall site plans requirements for accessibility will be revisited.

ii. DDRC; no report.

iii. CIP; Chris Leonard of Fire Services remarked seeing façade improvements being made and funded by the City however lacking basic accessible components such as ramped entrances. Staff noted that MACOA has advocated for this to be a component of the CIP a number of times previously. Planning Services has requested additional CIP funding to address access within the last several budget submissions which has not been successful. Staff noted a specific report from Planning Services to Council in October 2009 for CIP accessibility funding. Members requested that this discussion be revisited and brought forward to its next meeting.

5) Information Items:

a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package.

Blocking of power-door opener buttons (PDO's) at Market Square by moving items such as newspaper boxes continues to be an issue. Staff have spoken to the vendors again to stop this practice. MACOA suggested to remove the newspaper box altogether. Diana Lecinski noted that she will be attending a future Market Square vendor AGM, further to her previous presentation in 2009.

b) MACOA terms of appointment

The Clerk's Department will be posting ads for citizen appointments to all advisory boards and committees during November and the application deadline is December 15th. Diana Lecinski handed out hardcopy applications to members and will also circulate to MACOA members who were regrets at the meeting. The City's webpage for advisory boards and committees has an existing pdf application form and it will be updated soon with the call for citizen applications.

It is important that members promote MACOA to colleagues to ensure having an excess of good applicants on-file if any vacancies occur over the next 4 year term.

6) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, November 20 at 12:30 in the Ante Room

NOTE: early start time at 12:30 for MACOA's holiday luncheon

The schedule for MACOA's 2011 meetings has been drafted and Committee Room #1 is unavailable from January – April during MACOA's usual timeslot. Staff suggested that the Ante Room can be booked instead or that MACOA could use Committee Room #1 if they wanted to meet on the 3rd Wednesday instead of the 4th Wednesday. Members felt that the Ante Room was adequate, although not as ideal for access as Committee Room #1, therefore MACOA will continue to meet on the 4th Wednesday monthly.

The 2011 MACOA meeting schedule will be circulated at MACOA's November meeting.

Staff asked members for their thoughts on conferencing calling if a winter storm occurred on a meeting date. The overall consensus was that conference calls can be frustrating to participate in and that meetings should be cancelled and/or rescheduled when there is a storm.

7) Adjournment:

The meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was adjourned by the acting chairperson Andy Waldron at 2:35 p.m.