

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, January 26, 2011

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, January 26, 2011 at St. Catharines City Hall in the Ante Room at 1:30 p.m.

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor Matthew Harris Sheryl Stewart, Co-chairperson Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson Bob Asham Ian Crawford Diane Foster David Reed Andy Waldron Mary Jane Waszynski	<u>Regrets:</u>	Julie Morris Jennifer Noble
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Staff:

Administration: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator

Corporate Support Services:

Susan Dods, Deputy Clerk, Acting; Victoria Woolridge, HR Officer

Economic Development & Tourism Services:

Marco Marino, Economic Development Officer

Financial Management Services:

Joanne Tessier, Deputy Treasurer/Assistant Director

Planning Services:

Amanda Knutson, Development Agreement Coordinator; Britney Williamson, Development Agreement Coordinator, Acting

Recreation & Community Services:

Jennifer McQuillan, Recreation Supervisor, Special Needs, Older Adults

Transportation & Environmental Services:

Steve Bittner, Transportation Technologist; Sam Carrera, Building Plans Examiner; Henry Colyn, Manager of Physical Plant

Regrets: Chris Leonard, Fire & Emergency Management Services
Representative, St. Catharines Public Library

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility
January 26, 2011

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:

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

2) Introductions:

Members and staff were welcomed and round table introductions were made. Sheryl Stewart welcomed Councillor Harris as the Council representative for MACOA.

Shelley Stewart asked the chairperson for an opportunity to update MACOA on passing of several former members. She also noted that condolence cards were sent on behalf of MACOA.

3) Approval of Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for November 24, 2010 were approved.

Moved by: Diane Foster

Seconded by: Ian Crawford

That the minutes of November 24, 2010 be approved.

CARRIED

4) Business Arising from Minutes:

a) AODA / Accessibility Plan:

AODA Standard ~ Status:

- Accessible Customer Service Standard (O.Reg.429/07)
- pending Accessible Built Environment Standard (in final draft stage)
- pending Integrated Accessible Standard (compilation of three pending standards; Information & Communication, Employment and Transportation)
- ODA is still in affect therefore annual Accessibility Plans are required of the broader public sector by the Province

i. 2011 Accessibility Plan – Staff update synopsis

Staff noted that the St. Catharines Transit Commission Board will be reviewing Transit's submission for the Accessibility Plan at its meeting on January 27th and will then submit it to accessibility staff for inclusion in the final draft Plan being reviewed by MACOA at their next meeting.

V. Woolridge, HR~CSS:

Human Resources practices ensure that staff recruitment and accommodation includes accessibility components. The HR office has an accessible counter and a widened door with an auto-open button. Many of the requirements outlined in the pending Integrated Standard (employment section) are generally in place, however practices and procedures may have to become formalized into policy. Once the Integrated Standard becomes finalized there will be clearer objectives to meet. HR staff continue accessible customer service compliance through orientation training. The Accessibility Coordinator continues to provide the material and training videos for the orientation sessions and also attends HR training sessions for larger groups such as annual student, election worker and crossing guard orientation.

S. Dods, Clerk's~CSS:

The City Clerk's Department ensures that corporate documents are available in alternative format upon request. They also administer the corporate TTY and this number is included on corporate documents, emails and business cards.

During the 2010 municipal elections, elections staff along with the Accessibility Coordinator developed an “Accessible Elections” brochure that was provided to all election workers during their training. This brochure was brought forward to MACOA in 2010. The election also ensured the greatest degree of facility accessibility possible, and for independent voting opportunities to people with a disability the advance polls provided the accessible voting tabulator located at facilities with ideal public access.

A new customer service kiosk was installed at City Hall along with an area that provides courtesy wheelchairs to visitors in City Hall. Additionally, the Clerk’s Department will have their main reception counter renovated for better accessibility and customer service in 2011.

In 2010 the City launched its new website. This website has better accessibility, higher level of compliance and offers Browse Aloud. This program is downloadable free of charge to users and speaks text aloud, including pdf’s. In 2011 the Information Systems section of CSS has requested a budget for the Adobe Lifecycle Enterprise Suite to ensure that staff are trained and that all pdf’s are accessible. It is anticipated that this will better prepare for technology requirements under the pending Integrated Standard (information and communication section).

J. Tessier, FMS:

The Finance Dept. had an objective for an updated Procurement Policy to be in place in 2010, however the final document is scheduled to be put forward to Council in 2011. Within this policy is an accessibility statement for procurement along with the formalization of the City’s third party requirement under the customer service legislation. In short, this declaration is required for all third party contractors that they have read, understood and are compliant with the O.Reg. 429/07. Lease-holds will be reviewed for facility access as leases come due. As with 2010, the 2011 budget document has been posted on the website in a more accessible pdf format.

J. McQillan, RCS:

The Recreation and Community Services Department has a high level of public interaction and visitation. MACOA placed seniors centres, community centres, arenas and parks as high priority for accessible

renovations through a prioritization exercise with TES. Staff noted several accomplishments in 2010; auto-open door buttons were relocated and opening sequence and timing reset at West St. Catharines Seniors Centre. At Dunlop Seniors Centre suggestions are being reviewed to consolidate secondary male and female washrooms into one family (unisex) washroom that would be designed to FADS and fully accessible. An access ramp was built at Lancaster Pool to create access from the sidewalk level into the main entrance. This ramp will be replaced by a permanent concrete ramp in 2011. Landscape architects are now designing a mobility device area beside park benches (recent examples: City Hall both entrance areas and Port Dalhousie Cenotaph). MACOA met with RCS staff in 2010 to discuss accessibility at the Catherine Street Dog Park. This included sidewalks, gates, latches, and interior concrete pads to allow mobility devices to avoid soft ground or mud during inclement weather.

H. Colyn, TES~facilities:

MACOA welcomed Henry Colyn as the new liaison for City facilities and thank him for joining this annual update meeting. He reported that staff continue to apply FADS to all renovations and projects. A visual fire alarm was added when the alarms at Merritton arena were updated. City Hall's first floor washroom renovation has been carried over to 2011. Further to the 2008 facility accessibility audit, in 2010 MACOA provided TES staff with suggested priorities. This advice was to assist staff in determining priorities and ensure accessibility deficiencies are addressed in conjunction with other renovations.

David Reed noted that website information on facility attributes for accessibility are important to people with disabilities who want to visit various facilities. Whether this be a technical application or simply input, the City should ensure that visitors have enough information themselves to confirm if they can visit a particular facility. This technology was applied to the website's e-play service. It should also include all public facilities, including the library, parks, etc.

The application of FADS has become common place for staff to apply to all facility upgrades. MACOA reps reminded staff that the plans should come to them as it's helpful to review for functional access that may not always be clearly addressed in FADS.

Britney Williamson on behalf of Amanda Knutson ~ Planning Services: MACOA was informed that Amanda Knutson would be on leave shortly and therefore she introduced Britney as Planning's rep as well as the liaison for site plan comments. Staff noted that the Official Plan was approved by Council in 2010 and that has addressed pedestrian friendly requirements that also supports the City's Sustainability Strategy. As well a new comprehensive zoning by-law is expected to be drafted by the Fall and that MACOA is encouraged to comment. The pending Urban Development & Design Manual (UDDM) continues to come forward to Council in stages and the downtown section should be drafted in early 2011. The Site Plan (SP) Manual was to be a part of this, however it has now been separated into its own document. MACOA reps noted that without specific access requirements, developers will continue to be unclear and lapse in ensuring access using the old SP Manual. Currently the SP reps have a commenting template that forms the basis of the comments on various site plans. This template, along with FADS, the relevant AODA Standards, and various by-laws (zoning, parking) should be used as a basis in drafting a SP Manual which ensures developments are part of an inclusive and more accessible community. In the meantime staff provide and promote FADS to developers when they apply for site plans. The stronger this document is on accessibility the more inclusive the community as a whole will become. MACOA congratulated Amanda and welcomed Britney.

Sam Carrera, TES ~ Building:

Staff advised that there are plans for new updated Ontario Building Code (OBC). No date has been established. The Province noted in a news release in August 2010 that the technical component of the AODA's pending Accessible Built Environment Standard will be reflected in the next OBC and that the remaining components will be reflected in the pending Integrated Accessibility Standard. At this time however municipalities can only require that Section 3.8 of the OBC be applied. The City's building plans examination staff does review and require that 3.8 is enforced. Additionally, FADS is an excellent guideline and the City does promote FADS as a best practice guideline.

Steve Bittner, TES ~ Traffic

Traffic continues to ensure accessibility through corporate documents such as the zoning by-law (accessible parking spaces, size and ratios), the Official Plan (sidewalk requirements) and the parking by-law (permits and signage). MACOA noted that the City's facility parking should all be re-lined to meet the most current requirements as their 2011 initiative. Staff suggested that this can be undertaken during the next scheduled painting for all City facilities. Among other responsibilities, staff also continue to comment on site plan accessibility relating to parking spaces. On-street accessible parking is an initiative that can be increased however there must be immediate access from parking to sidewalks and winter maintenance must be in place to address snow clearing. There are still a few areas around the core where there is interest for accessible on-street parking; King Street in front of the RBC, Montebello Park side-streets, St. Paul has also been discussed. Currently, there are spaces on King Street in front of BMO and on Carlisle near the MTO building.

Marco Marino, EDTS

Staff noted that there were several areas that MACOA could promote accessibility, particularly through its e-newsletter as that has a large audience. Information on the Province's AODA Standards as well as the benefits of applying FADS concepts resulting in more customers for businesses. Additionally, staff noted that the Tourism Committee may benefit from information sharing and the rep Rebecca Alfieri will be contacted. It was also noted that plans for the performing arts centre include FADS and an independent audit for universal design as part of the architect's mandate, however the final architect selection will be made shortly.

Diana Lecinski, Administration:

Further to the comprehensive staff updates on accessibility it was noted how effective this conduit of information between MACOA, staff and Council has come to be. The original ODA is still in effect and the broader public sector is still required to produce an annual accessibility plan. This will likely continue for 2012 as well, however there is discussion that multi-year Plans may be acceptable and even required shortly as the Province's preference. This Plan has been a very effective tool for keeping access initiatives moving forward. In 2010

MACOA presented the previous Plan to Council with an effective presentation, as well as reviewed and commented on the AODA's proposed Built Environment Standard and proposed Integrated Standard. Staff officially filed these documents with the Province. Staff also filed its first compliance report with Province in February of 2010 for meeting the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard. Additionally accessibility staff continue to support staff and volunteer orientation for accessible customer service with materials and presentations, including groups for student and cross guard training. Accessibility staff provide on-going support to MACOA and ensure membership turn-over is addressed. Accessibility undertakings include access input on projects, facilities, programs. One large success with respect to MACOA's ongoing sidewalk advocacy was Council's endorsement of MACOA's Sidewalk Action Statement, along with its inclusion with all relevant staff reports. This has been effective in educating all involved about the importance of connected and barrier-free pedestrian links, primarily sidewalks. Outreach includes promoting FADS to the community (churches, medical offices, etc.) as well as presentation opportunities (meeting of Ontario Association of Emergency Managers) to support knowledge and understanding at other levels. The initial Sustainability Strategy concept was presented to MACOA and accessibility will be one portion of a theme. Plans for 2011 include developing an accessible communications guide in conjunction with communications staff. Accessibility staff continue to arrange the organization, presentation and follow through of the 2011 Accessibility Plan, along with exploring other community access opportunities and researching funding opportunities.

As follow up to this agenda item and the input / comments received from MACOA and staff reps, accessibility staff will bring a final draft forward for MACOA's February meeting. MACOA noted that after approval, several reps would like to present the 2011 Plan to Council in March.

ii. 2011 MACOA citizen appointments

At its meeting of January 24, 2011 Council reviewed and appointed citizen applicants to various boards and committees. Staff noted that all existing members who reapplied were reappointed for another term. Several new members were appointed; welcome to Bob Asham, Tony DiPaola and Kevin Vallier. All other applicants to MACOA will be kept on file and resourced should any future vacancies occur.

Ian Crawford noted that the on-line application wasn't user-friendly and offered no verification of being "sent" or "received". Staff noted that a few members of the public noted the same issues. Susan Dods will look into these problems and avoid in the future.

iii. 2011 MACOA co-chairperson election

Chairperson elections will be held at February's meeting.

b) Updates:

i. Site Plan Review; ongoing.

ii. DDRC; no report.

Staff noted that Julie Morris has agreed to be the MACOA rep for DDRC.

5) Information Items:

a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package.

6) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, February 23, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. in the Ante Room.

7) Adjournment:

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

Moved by: Andy Walron

Seconded by: Diane Foster

That this meeting adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

CARRIED

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility

January 26, 2011

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