

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, May 25, 2011

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, May 25, 2011 at St. Catharines City Hall in the Council Chambers at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Matthew Harris
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Diane Foster, Co-chairperson
Bob Asham
Ian Crawford
Tony DiPaola
Julie Morris
Jennifer Noble
David Reed
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets: Sheryl Stewart
Kevin Vallier
Andy Waldron

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office
Britney Williamson, Planning Services
Sam Carrera, Transportation and Environmental Services

Guests: Constable Evan Lindsay ~ NRPS
James Enright, Prism Partners ~ Performing Arts Centre
Michael Treacy, Diamond and Schmitt Architects ~ Performing Arts Centre

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:

Diane Foster, co-chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2) Introductions:

Everyone was welcomed and round table introductions were made.

3) Approval of Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for April 27, 2011 were reviewed and approved.

Moved by: Julie Morris

Seconded by: Bob Asham

That the minutes of April 27, 2011 be approved.

CARRIED

4) Presentations / Discussions:

- a) Diane Foster welcomed Constable Evan Lindsay of the NRPS and asked Julie Morris to provide a backgrounder on previous MACOA discussions and the resulting invitation to Constable Lindsay. Julie Morris noted that people with disabilities are often active pedestrians but that the sidewalks are frequently used by cyclist or other pedestrians and sometimes in an aggressive and dangerous manner. People with low vision cannot see oncoming sidewalk users yet those other sidewalk users often assume that the person will get out of their way, when in reality they are not aware of a cyclist approaching. Additionally, people who use mobility devices should not have to move off the sidewalk to avoid oncoming pedestrians, cyclists or other physical barriers such as garbage containers left on the sidewalk. Constable Lindsay was invited to discuss proactive approaches on educating other pedestrian and cyclists. MACOA members noted that most had experienced sidewalk incidents whereby they felt endangered. They also noted the approach to education should not be punitive but a proactive opportunity to increase awareness. Constable Lindsay reviewed the community policing model and how the NRPS works with residents and community groups to reduce issues. Enforcement of infractions can also help raise awareness. Several ideas were discussed; PSA on the City's website, partnering with cycling groups for education, requesting the

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school boards to add this perspective to their safety rules and awareness building in the junior grades and sharing this awareness with community policing officers. Often accidents happen on sidewalks with pedestrians exiting stores onto sidewalks who get hit by cyclists. Key problem areas have been identified and MACOA requested that Port Dalhousie be highlighted by the community policing as an area with high volumes of both pedestrians and cyclists. It was noted that infractions are difficult to enforce but that officers being in the right places at the right time will help raise pedestrian safety awareness. Local by-laws and the Highway Traffic Act have sections that address some of these issues however proactive education was seen as a best practice. Bike lanes have proven to offer a safe alternative to cyclists. Constable Lindsay will take these concerns back to the NRPS briefing sessions to help support the programs that are already in place with a renewed perspective of the vulnerability of pedestrians with a disability. Diane Foster thanked Constable Lindsay for participating in this discussion.

- b) Diane Foster welcomed James Enright of Prism Partners and Michael Treacy of Diamond and Schmitt Architects to MACOA's meeting noting that a continued opportunity to discuss key elements for access helps ensure an accessible Performing Arts Centre (PAC).

Staff noted that the April 27 minutes provided a synopsis of the previous discussion. Michael Treacy has met with many of the stakeholder groups and noted that a general public meeting would be held later this evening to gain further public input. He noted experience using FADS in previous design work. He reviewed a number of very basic layouts and concepts in a PowerPoint presentation. This was helpful with envisioning the building, inside and out. There was active discussion and input; mostly clarifying the intentions from the previous discussions and more specifically;

- multiple elevators offset desired minimal ramping, however this does not support the concepts of universal design
- all areas need to be accessible as well (dressing rooms, ticket /service counters, etc)
- individual family washrooms would be helpful in addressing space issues and would allow care-givers of the opposite sex (often a spouse) in the same washroom but ensure that there are enough stalls in various areas around the facilities
- senior patrons benefit from railings on both sides of all stairs
- way-finding should be intuitive, and clearly delineated

- ensure barrier-free interior connectivity
- ensure barrier-free external connectivity
- create year-round winterized paths of travel
- address grade separations with soft slopes and switchbacks if necessary

Michael Treacy noted that the PAC design will project a sense of happening and a Visitable destination. It will support a variety of events and serve multiple purposes and it will invigorate other downtown businesses. Diane Foster thanked Michael Treacy and Jim Enright for attending MACOA and that the committee looks forward to receiving design drawings and site plans as this project moves forward.

5) Business Arising from Minutes:

a) Accessibility Plan / AODA

- i. Provincial AAC forum in Burlington – discussion deferred to next meeting.

b) March of Dimes

- i. Breaking the Barriers Awards – June 1st at Market Square; MACOA will host an information / display table again this year. All members are invited to take turns at the MACOA table and staff will arrange lunch tickets for all members who attend. Please RSVP by May 30 if you are attending and please advise if transportation is needed. It was suggested that the MCSS video of City Hall's access related improvements be shown or have a slide show of promo photos running. Staff will arrange set up of tables, chairs and the display. Members are asked to be at MACOA's display table a bit before the event starts. The event runs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

c) Updates:

- i. Site Plan Review;
 - Lincoln Mall ~ MACOA members were asked for their input on creating pedestrian paths of travel throughout the Lincoln Mall site. The site plan drawings were forwarded for review and a plan of the

site was brought to the meeting. Planning Services staff led the discussion and marked MACOA's input on the plan. This will be used as the foundation in discussions with Lincoln Mall. Staff will keep MACOA updated on the discussions.

- Ian Crawford and David Reed provided a detailed tutorial on how to review and comment on site plans. This opportunity provided other members with the concepts of site plan review. There were a number of plans provided that specifically demonstrated issues related to access that might be found on site plans. It was noted that comments are often repetitive therefore a site plan commenting template was developed with a 'general comments' section for these repetitive comments (e.g. accessible parking space sizes, ratios, ramps, signage) and a 'detailed comments' section for comments relating to that specific site plan. Ian Crawford and David Reed were thanked for their continued dedication to providing access comments on behalf of MACOA. This presentation was helpful in creating a better understanding for other MACOA members. Thank you!
 - Seymour Hannah, sports field update
Staff noted that the sports field has been completed and that the public washrooms and bleachers slated for future completion will be completed this year. Plans for both were available at this meeting and forwarded to MACOA's site plan reps for input. As with the change-rooms, FADS was applied throughout the design. Additionally, tactile concrete markings have been installed in front of sports field at the drop off area, adjacent parking and pedestrian crossing. Julie Morris and Diana Lecinski visited the site to determine the way-finding and noted a few small low-hanging branches that RCS staff have since trimmed.
- ii. DDRC; deferred / no report.
- iii. Niagara Inter-Municipal Specialized Transit advisory committee; deferred / no report

6) Information Items:

- a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package. Received.
- b) MACOA's sidewalk action statement; no further comment was added regarding the previous minutes, Item 5,a,ii.

7) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, June 22, 2011 in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

8) Adjournment:

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

Moved by: Ian Crawford

Seconded by: Mary Jane Waszynski

That this meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

CARRIED