

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, July 27, 2011

A non-quorum meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, July 27, 2011 at St. Catharines City Hall in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Diane Foster, Co-chairperson
Ian Crawford
Julie Morris
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets: Councillor Matthew Harris
Bob Asham
Tony DiPaola
Jennifer Noble
David Reed
Kevin Vallier
Andy Waldron

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office

Guests: Linda Crabtree, Accessible Niagara

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 non-quorum meeting to order at 1:40 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 June 22, 2011 were not approved due to lack of formal quorum.

4) Presentations / Discussions:

- a) Shelley Stewart welcomed Linda Crabtree. It was noted that further to her many advocacy roles for access Linda Crabtree is also a former MACOA member and chairperson.

Linda Crabtree showed her video "Access is More than an Open Door" to MACOA and followed up by reiterating the need for universal access. Niagara tourism can easily increase if businesses and builders would create good basic access to their goods, services and facilities. Linda Crabtree also runs Accessible Niagara which provides information on accessibility in Niagara to visitors through www.accessibleniagara.com. Accessible Niagara brochures were also provided to MACOA.

Linda Crabtree has long been an advocate for a more barrier-free downtown in St. Catharines. In November 2010 she approached the Mayor and key staff with respect to supporting downtown revitalization by improving facility access downtown. A visual audit of barriers along St. Paul Street has been conducted. Many businesses have 1 step and hence the project has been dubbed "Step Out". Ultimately key staff and stakeholders will present plans to improve access as a pilot project for funding. This project is still in draft stages, however MACOA noted its fundamental importance and suggested a letter of support from MACOA endorsing this project. Staff was asked to draft a letter for MACOA's next meeting.

Shelley Stewart thanked Linda Crabtree for her tireless advocacy for accessibility and thanked her for attending the meeting to promote Accessible Niagara and the Steps Out project.

5) Business Arising from Minutes:

a) Performing Arts Centre (PAC):

Staff noted that designs are progressing well and that staff teams have reviewed and provided much input that includes many changes. Updated drafts were not available as at this date, however Jim Enright and Michael Treacy will ensure that they and/or staff get further MACOA input in early August. Staff asked MAOCA for design review volunteers to be available early in August to review updated plans once available. Ian Crawford, Diane Foster, Mary Jane Waszynski and David Reed (volunteered previously) volunteered to do so. Previously staff review meetings did look at FADS application and sizes within the design and referred to MACOA previous input as noted in the Minutes of April 25 and May 22. Additionally, Michael Treacy noted being in contact with Bob Topping, creator of FADS for specific issues and to review the overall application for universal design principles.

b) Accessibility Plan / AODA:

i. Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS);

Staff noted that this AODA Standard has been enacted as Ontario Regulation 191/11 effective July 1, 2011. The IAS is comprised of 3 distinct sections; employment, transportation and information / communication. Staff noted that some requirements were also effective July 1st involving the Transportation section. David Sherlock, General Manager of St. Catharines Transit Commission confirmed compliance with the requirements dated July 1st. Staff also thanked Shelley Stewart and Julie Morris for their time and expertise during conference calls with I.T. staff regarding assistive technology. Further to the Accessible Communications Guide endorsed by MACOA at their June 22 meeting, staff are developing corporate training specific to the IAS. Ultimately, corporate training will be specific hands-on learning for staff who produce documents and populate the City's website. Other requirements that are due for January 1st revolve around emergency procedures and public safety plans and staff is currently reviewing the alternative format and availability requirements with each facility staff designate. Another IAS mandate is for longer-term accessibility plans. This will take more detailed planning to achieve and further discussion will be sought between MACOA and staff reps at a future meeting.

c) Updates:

i. Site Plan Review;

A Lincoln Mall representative is tentatively scheduled for the next meeting to discuss MACOA's previous input on accessible pedestrian access.

Follow up was asked for with respect to similar input provided to Fairview Mall. An update on the Pen Centre renovations was requested. Members also asked for a status update on implementing accessible on-street parking spaces. Staff will ask Planning Services and TES to provide input at the next meeting.

ii. DDRC; no meeting currently scheduled, no report.

iii. Niagara Inter-Municipal Specialized Transit advisory committee; no meeting until fall, no report.

6) Information Items:

a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package.

b) Staff have a Braille labeller and an audio-pen labeller. Both were reviewed and discussed. Julie Morris will test the audio-pen for various applications, specifically it might work well for independent way-finding in a facility.

7) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, September 28, 2011 in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

Members agreed that no meeting would take place in August as per MACOA's usual practice. Staff will send an email confirmation to members not in attendance at today's meeting.

8) Adjournment:

The non-quorum meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned at 3:20 p.m.