

City of St. Catharines

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

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

Present: Councillor Matthew Harris
Diane Foster, Co-chairperson
Bob Asham
Tony DiPaola
Jennifer Noble
Andy Waldron

Regrets: Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Ian Crawford
Julie Morris
David Reed
Kevin Vallier
Mary Jane Waszynski

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office
Britney Williamson, Planning Services
Ellen Savoia, Planning Services
Steve Bittner, Transportation & Environmental Services
Stuart Green, Recreation & Community Services
Maggie Riopelle, Mayor's Office

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 approval of minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for September 28, 2011 was deferred to the next meeting due lack of quorum.

4) Presentations / Discussions:

a) Happy Rolph's petting farm improvements; Stuart Green

Stuart Green provided MACOA with an overview of the project and reviewed several design concepts. The primary focus of this project is to create ideal environments for the animals. All projects however do incorporate accessibility into a renovation. Although there was some discussion of elevated viewing areas the overall consensus was that these areas provided more barriers or hazards than benefits as the elevation was approximately 4". The roller-coast effect from one paddock to the next might also limit the number of visitors in the viewing area and be a hazard to strollers rolling off as well. Discussion of fencing materials and sight-lines was of importance and all agreed that an unimpeded view was most important. This included requests that no plank fencing be incorporated along sight-lines and that chain link or gridded mesh is virtually invisible by comparison. Existing trees and other barriers should have tactile demarcations around the area and thought should be given to overall visual contrast throughout the project site. The petting paddock should have a hard surface section inside of the entrance area so that people who use mobility devices can access this area and gates should be accessible (width, hardware, etc.) as well. There are rubberized paver products that are designed for animal environment that would accommodate mobility devices safely and animal comfort as well. The pedestrian pathways throughout the petting farm will be asphalt and members commented that this is ideal instead of extensive joints with pavers or concrete. Benches should be relocated to less busy pedestrian

areas and be FADS compliant. The schematics indicated FADS awareness and the final design must be FADS compliant. MACOA thanked Stuart Green for bringing this project forward. Previous accessible upgrades to Happy Rolph's include a major slope re-grading from the animal area and barn to the pond and repainting of the accessible parking spaces. Additional comment was made on the reconstruction of Happy Rolph's washrooms to FADS accessibility criteria being scheduled for next spring. Diane Foster thanked Stuart Green for leading this discussion and receiving input with respect to accessibility.

b) Draft Urban Design Guidelines; Ellen Savoia

Ellen Savoia provided a number of conceptual renderings that outline the current draft framework of the downtown urban design. Details were provided on these concepts as well as goals for future development of the downtown area. MACOA members were provided with the draft document beforehand. Given the lack of quorum Diane Foster suggested that providing accessibility input on this initiative would be more comprehensive at a subsequent meeting. Staff noted that public input has been sought since September and that comments will be reflected into the more finalized guidelines in early December. Diana Lecinski suggested that each MACOA member should review the 34 page draft in detail by the November 23 meeting. Accessibility is integral to urban design and clarity with respect to barrier-free access related to the multiple concepts in the draft should be addressed. Diane Foster thanked Ellen Savoia for providing the background, outline and goals of this document to MACOA.

5) Business Arising from Minutes:

a) Accessibility Plan / AODA:

- i. Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS);
 - The next annual Accessibility Plan will create the basis for future longer-term plans. Departmental staff reps will be asked as part of the 2012 to develop long-term goals to be reflected in the next Accessibility Plan as a basis for a more specific framework and goals by the following year. All staff reps will be invited to the next meeting to discuss this in more detail and set the framework for January's meeting

when staff reps will provide their annual departmental report of future access objectives along with an updated from the previous year.

- ii. - Staff reviewed an exciting Accessible Information and Communication training partnership with Brock University. The City has developed an Accessible Communications Guide (reviewed and endorsed by MACOA June 22, 2011) along with a hands-on computer training module for its staff to take place at Brock University. This training will take place over 4 sessions in early December 2011. Diana Lecinski is working with Cindy Upshall, Corporate Communications and Helen Perron Information Technology to finalize plans. The CNIB will provide a demonstration of JAWS, Kurzweil and Zoomtext during each session to raise awareness and understanding in areas that staff may not have experience with.

b) Performing Arts Centre (PAC); review of plans by 5 MACOA reps

On October 11th the following MACOA reps met with the PAC design team; Diane, Foster, David Reed, Jennifer Noble, Julie Morris (Ian Crawford previously commented). The PAC reps were Michael Treacy, Architect DSAI, Jim Enright, Project Manager, Prism Partners, Dan Dillon, P. Eng., TES staff, Steve Solski, Exec Director of PAC and Bob Topping of Designable Environment who is also the co-author of the original City of London FADS. The plans were reviewed in detail and the scope of accessibility designed into PAC is evident almost everywhere. There are family accessible washrooms (with adult changing tables) throughout as well as FADS accessible stalls within other washrooms. Each level is accessible via various elevators (with enunciators). There is a limited choice of accessible seating throughout the various performance theatres. There are accessible dressing rooms for performers. Doorways are FADS compliant and have power door operators (PDO's). Counters are accessible height e.g. coat check, bar, etc. Lighting, way-finding, signage and other details were also discussed. MACOA members commented that not so long ago it would have been difficult to advocate for this amount of access and the design team have supported access from the beginning and have been diligent in meeting the FADS requirements. Additionally they have retained Bob Topping to review the plans for FADS accessibility and to offer detailed interpretation of FADS where application may not be clear. Additionally, community access advocate Linda Crabtree provided

input on the detailed plans with Steve Solski and Diana Lecinski.

c) Accessible Parking:

i. On-street;

MACOA continues to advocate for more on-street designated spaces, particularly in the downtown area. Steve Bittner noted that the City is amenable to this however the locations selected must be safe and offer immediate curb-ramp access to an adjacent sidewalk, allow for side or rear disembarking from a vehicle and receive specific snow removal. Currently there are several accessible on-street spaces on Carlisle beside the MTO building and one on King Street (west of Queen St.) in front of the Bank of Montreal. MACOA has suggested more throughout downtown; some along St. Paul and that the indented parking sections have curb ramps cut into the existing curbing, another on King at Core Block/CIBC, Church St. at James St. at the court house, Church St. or Wellington St. beside the passport office, and some beside Montebello Park. In front of the General Hospital on Queenston Road has also been suggested. Councillor Harris asked Steve Bittner to look into addressing this work as it has been under discussion for some time.

ii. Curb-ramp design; overview

This discussion was deferred to a future meeting due to lack of quorum.

d) Updates:

i. Site Plan Review; no report.

ii. DDRC; no report.

6) Information Items:

a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package.

- b) Rick Hansen Relay – Sunday, November 13 at Seymour Hannah:
Maggie Riopelle informed MACOA of details about this cross-Canada event arriving in St. Catharines. An invitation from the Mayor with details of this event is included in the agenda package and circulated via email. Congratulations to our end-of-day participant Bob Asham and thank you to back-up volunteers Andy Waldron and Diane Foster. MACOA will host an information table during this event and all members are invited to help out.

7) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, November 23, 2011 in Committee Room #1 at 12:30 p.m.

NOTE – this meeting starts early for an annual holiday luncheon followed by the regular meeting.

8) Adjournment:

The non-quorum meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was adjourned by co-chairperson Diane Foster at 3:35 p.m.