

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, November 23, 2011

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, November 23, 2011 at St. Catharines City Hall in Committee Room #1 at 12:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Brian McMullan
Councillor Matthew Harris
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Diane Foster, Co-chairperson
Bob Asham
Ian Crawford
Tony DiPaola
Julie Morris
David Reed
Kevin Vallier
Andy Waldron
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets: Jennifer Noble

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office
Britney Williamson, Planning Services
Kris Jacobson, Transportation & Environmental Services
Sam Carrera, Transportation & Environmental Services
Sue Dods, Corporate Support Services
Joanne Tessier, Financial Management Services
Jennifer McQuillan, Recreation & Community Services
Chris Leonard, Fire & Emergency Management Services

<p>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.</p>
--

1) Call to order:

Shelley Stewart, co-chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. The meeting was called to order following MACOA's annual holiday luncheon that commenced earlier at 12:30 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 September 28, 2011 and October 26, 2011 were approved.

Moved by: Julie Morris

Seconded by: Bob Asham

That the minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for September 28, 2011 be approved.

CARRIED

Moved by: Andy Waldron

Seconded by: Diane Foster

That the non-quorum minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for October 26, 2011 be approved.

CARRIED

4) Business Arising from Minutes:

a) Accessibility Plan / AODA

i. Integrated Accessibility Standard, O. Reg. 191/11

Staff reviewed the requirements for longer-term accessibility planning. The 2012 Accessibility Plan will be the last annual plan and starting in 2013 a 3-year plan is suggested. Staff reps are pivotal liaisons to their departments and annually provide updates and input relating to accessibility planning in their department. In addition to staff rep input at the January 2012 MACOA meeting relating to 2011 successes and 2012 plans, staff were requested to look at long range access planning in preparation for the 2013 Accessibility Plan. Shelley Stewart asked that all staff reps attend January's meeting.

ii. 2012 Accessibility Plan

Shelley Stewart reviewed the general accessibility plan process; staff rep input in January to develop basis for draft Accessibility Plan in February. MACOA will then review and if satisfactory will pass a motion of support and forward it to Council. MACOA asked again to provide Council with a presentation in conjunction with the Annual Accessibility Plan.

b) 2012 MACOA meeting schedule

Shelley Stewart noted that the meeting schedule remains on the same schedule as previous years being the 4th Wednesday of each month. The 2012 schedule was circulated to the committee electronically and is included on the inside cover of all hardcopy agendas.

Moved by: Diane Foster
Seconded by: Andy Waldron

That MACOA's 2012 meeting schedule be approved.

CARRIED

c) Accessible Parking; Kris Jacobson

i. On-Street Accessible Parking:

Further to MACOA Minutes of October 26, 2011, MACOA continues to advocate for accessible on-street parking. Kris Jacobson, Manager of Transportation Services attended to provide a status update. Per the previous minutes a need for safe, accessible and year-round access between accessible on-street parking spaces and sidewalks or pedestrian routes was reiterated. Councillor Harris outlined several areas that MACOA suggested as ideal locations and asked if staff would confirm installation. Staff noted that concrete work needs to be done in warmer weather and these sites would be added to the concrete contractor's list for the Spring of 2012 and will bring confirmation to the next meeting. MACOA thanked Kris Jacobson and his staff for ensuring that this initiative is completed in early 2012.

ii. Curb-ramp design criteria:

During 2011 there were a number of pedestrian access issues throughout the City stemming either from construction related barriers (interruption to pedestrian paths and connectivity) and/or from design barriers of constructed curb ramps. MACOA would like the City to have a more detailed and comprehensive requirement for contractors to follow in sidewalk construction design. In general contract guidelines relate to the Ontario Provincial Standard Drawings (OPSD 310.xxx) and not FADS or the pending AODA standard for the Accessible Built Environment (ABE) Sections 5, 7, 8. Ian Crawford provided a drawing to use as a basis for discussion. The predominant issue on curb ramps relate to steepness, cross-slope and grade differential between the roadway asphalt and the sidewalk ramp. These all create a tipping danger to people who use mobility devices. Access staff met with Kris Jacobson and TES construction managers to discuss a more comprehensive approach to ensuring that final construction meets design requirements. This becomes more of an issue with third party contracts and adequate designs need to be clearly delineated prior to construction.

Further consultation will take place and more specific designs will be brought back to MACOA by TES construction staff. Kris Jacobson noted that the Region will need to be engaged and aware of any new detailed standard. As well, the new standard will need be added to related tender packages and that contract wording should be stronger. It was suggested that specific drawings be submitted and approved by the City prior to the construction stage. Staff were asked to bring a design back to MACOA for endorsement before it is finalized. This design will also be used when preparing for on-street accessible parking and should be criteria within planning documents such as Urban Designs, Site Plan manual, etc.

d) Community Improvement Plan (CIP); accessibility input

Staff noted that a recent report went to Council regarding the CIP. It included updates and suggested that staff consult with stakeholders. Council further recommended that staff also review accessibility as a component of the CIP. Staff noted that in the past, Planning Services has annually submitted an Accessible CIP budget and it has been un-accommodated in the budget process in all previous years requested.

MACOA has historically advocated for an accessibility component within the CIP. Opportunities to prevent or remove barriers to people with a disability are being missed. Given that the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) obligates both the public and private sector, businesses will need to be more engaged in becoming more accessible to their customers. Business owners should focus on the value of a refreshed exterior as well as basic access into their business, therefore this should become an equal focus of the CIP. Although there are various types of disabilities; vision, hearing, invisible, mobility ~ it is the mobility barrier that is most common throughout the downtown area. Even a small step up into a business can be a complete barrier to access, yet pivotal to the revitalization of the downtown.

MACOA recognizes that an occasional issue may exist that may not be easy to solve in context with the Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements. While clarification is currently being sought for specific situations, this should not preclude an overarching recognition for the need of greater inclusion and access to goods, services and facilities.

MACOA asks that Planning Services continue to submit an annual budget for CIP accessibility, and that the budget committee be made aware of MACOA's position and the barriers that are common in businesses that apply for the CIP. It was also noted that access into business must be created in conjunction with other CIP renovations. Knowing that esthetic renovations are undertaken in priority of functional accessible renovations negates the concept of an inclusive community.

e) Draft Urban Design Guidelines;

Further to Planning Services staff's presentation and overview of the draft Urban Design guidelines in October, MACOA was asked to provide more comprehensive input at this meeting. Overall there was a concern with respect to the lack of accessibility promotion and clarity of barrier-free requirements. Diane Foster and Julie Morris highlighted specific issues on the document. A copy of their notes will be provided to Scott Ritchie of Planning Services. Kevin Vallier had concern with words like "encourage" as being too weak and suggested something more motivating, other members suggested "required". Accessibility staff also had concerns about the overall lack of specifics relating to accessibility. Diana Lecinski also submitted notes on the draft to Planning staff. In general, it was felt that this document provided little clarity to users (builders, developers,

architects) about the importance of implementing accessible designs or endorsement of a barrier-free and accessible community. Clarity of accessibility within this document is pivotal to avoiding a legacy of barriers to people with a disability.

Diana Lecinski noted that existing access issues become difficult to remedy within the requirements of the Ontario Building Code as door swing radius must be over a level surface. This issue is similar to the Steps Out project (see previous MACOA minutes) that prefers to offer ramped access at doorways with grade differences between the sidewalk and an entrance. The question has been raised with TES's building department and their staff are seeking clarification and remedy options from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

5) Updates:

- i. Performing Arts Centre (PAC); no update further to PAC/MACOA meeting on October 11, 2011 (see previous MACOA minutes). Site Plan is expected shortly.
- ii. Site Plan Review; staff brought plans for a new Fire Station #4 which will be a central training office and house the emergency call centre. Specific comments were highlighted on the drawing and returned to TES engineering staff.
- iii. 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:
The Rick Hansen Relay stopped in St. Catharines on November 13th as part of its cross-Canada route. The event was well attended by members of the community and dignitaries. Staff from the Mayor's office and RCS organized a multi-faceted event; public skating, refreshments, face painting and a demonstration sledge hockey game. Congratulations to the selected participants and thank you to our end-of-day participant Bob Asham. MACOA hosted an information table during this event, thank you to Andy Waldron and former MACOA member Fred Stevens for hosting along-side accessibility staff. Various newspaper articles were circulated electronically to MACOA after this event.

- c) Public Service Announcements (PSA's) – PSA's will be requested again this year. MACOA's friendly reminder to the public with respect to snow clearing on their sidewalks has been helpful in the past.
- d) Parks and Trails Access Audit (RCS) – MACOA supports the ideal of an access audit of City parks and trails. The Walker's Creek Neighbourhood Association has contacted the City and supports a more accessible system for its area residents. Jennifer McQuillan noted that RCS welcomes MACOA's interest and expertise in auditing parks and trails for access. It was suggested that the Walker's Creek area would be a good starting place. RCS staff will compile a list of parks and trails. Further discussion of logistics will take place at future meetings with a goal of having interested MACOA members team up and review a park or trail during the summer of 2012. Access staff will organize an outdoor access audit checklist and package for MACOA auditing teams.
- e) 2020 Culture Plan – RCS culture is canvassing for input on a 2020 Culture Plan. The information and details were circulated electronically to MACOA on November 18th.
- f) MACOA members were reminded that in January 2012;
 - i. annual elections for co-chairpersons will take place
 - ii. that the 2012 accessibility plan will be drafted from January's discussions

7) Next Meeting:

Wednesday, January 25, 2012 in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

8) Adjournment:

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

Moved by: Andy Waldron

Seconded by: Mary Jane Waszynski

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

CARRIED