

# **City of St. Catharines**

## **Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, March 28, 2012**

**A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at St. Catharines City Hall in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.**

Present: Diane Foster, Co-chairperson  
Bob Asham  
Chantal Barrette  
Linda Marie O'Hagan  
Julie Morris  
David Reed  
Kevin Vallier  
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets: Councillor Matthew Harris  
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson  
Ian Crawford  
Tony DiPaola

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office  
Jim Riddell, Director of Planning & Development Services  
Bryan Morris, Planning & Development Services  
Kristen Young, Recreation & Community Services

Guest: Ben Hannon, Walker's Creek Neighbourhood Association

### **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 1:30 p.m.

### **2. Introductions:**

Everyone was welcomed and round table introductions were made.

Diane Foster noted with regret that Andy Waldron has resigned from MACOA. She also confirmed that Chantal Barrette will become a full voting member. It was also noted that Shelley Stewart just arrived home with her new guide dog Reese, but sent her regrets as she wants to allow Reese to get familiar with her new home setting before setting out for City Hall.

### **3. Approval of Previous Minutes:**

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for February 22, 2012 were approved.

Moved by: Linda Marie O'Hagan  
Seconded by: Chantal Barrette

That the minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for February 22, 2012 be approved.

CARRIED

### **4. Discussions/Presentations:**

#### **a. Community Improvement Plan (CIP);**

Staff reviewed the history of an accessibility component with the CIP. From a community inclusion perspective MACOA has advocated with Planning & Development Services (PDS) to have a budget amount allotted to inclusion and access whenever possible in conjunction with façade improvements of the CIP. Over the past several years PDS has requested an accessibility budget for CIP however it continues to be un-accommodated through the budget process. Jim Riddell updated MACOA on the sequence of CIP reports to Council with the latest report being March 26, 2012 that also outlined a concern regarding an accessibility component. Bryan Morris noted the ongoing nature of budget requests for this. Jim Riddell noted further clarification under the Planning Act is being sought as the CIP is outlined under this Act and that general obligations are aligned to the Ontario Building Code (OBC). Staff noted that FADS is a best practices guideline and it is not enforceable.

MACOA members noted concern for inclusive improvements to the downtown core. Often storefront access is 1 or 2 steps and a barrier to people with a mobility disability. MACOA is very supportive of PDS continuing to advocate for greater clarity and inclusiveness in both the CIP and any interpretations of the parameters under the Planning Act. Jim Riddell also noted that a CIP budget request for accessibility would be put forward again in 2013.

Diane Foster thanked Jim Riddell and Bryan Morris for attending and reiterated MACOA's support for access being a very important component within façade improvements.

## **5. New Business:**

### **a. Parks and Trails, Access Audit;**

Staff reviewed MACOA's proactive request to RCS regarding an informal access audit (November 2011 minutes). Jennifer McQuillan, RCS rep to MACOA provided feedback at that time that RCS supported MACOA request. RCS staff, Kristen Young provided a comprehensive list of parks and trails. She also advised that the larger parks receive more budget allocation and starting with several of the larger parks might be a good approach. Staff will canvas for interest via email to ensure members who were regrets at this meeting could also participate if interested. Mary Jane Waszynski suggested that 1 park be chosen as a training opportunity to be done as a group. Park auditing should be done in teams for safety and to gain different access perspectives. Teams can audit whenever they prefer, however only during daylight hours and that staff should be made aware of who is doing what park when. Additionally, members have flagged some local or smaller parks that they feel are important. These parks can also be added to the audit list.

Guest Ben Hannon of the Walker's Creek Neighborhood Association (WCNA) was offered an opportunity to provide his perspective on park/trail accessibility. He noted that the WCNA area is mainly residential and includes seniors' residences. Many area residents enjoy pedestrian activities however the Walker's Creek Trail doesn't offer ideal accessibility and the packed stone dust surface often gets washed out on grades. On behalf of WCNA Ben Hannon is advocating for this trail to become accessible and asked MACOA to include it when they audit City parks and trails. Diane Foster thanked Ben Hannon for his input.

Staff suggested there could be good common ground for MACOA and neighborhood associations to work together in determining accessibility

improvements. Members suggested that Walker's Creek would be a good starting point along with some of the City's major parks. Further discussion will take place at MACOA's next meeting.

## **6. Business Arising from Minutes:**

### **Accessibility Plan / AODA**

#### **a. 2012 Accessibility Plan;**

The 2012 Accessibility Plan was presented to Council on March 19. Diane Foster, Bob Asham and Julie Morris were thanked for making these presentations.

Diane Foster introduced the 2012 Accessibility Plan, reviewed MACOA's undertakings over the past year and noted MACOA's continuing advocacy and support for an accessibility budget under the CIP. Julie Morris' presentation included pedestrian connectivity and listed multiple highlights within the Accessibility Plan. Bob Asham focused on the importance of facility access and highlighted MACOA's input on designs for the new aquatics/library facility, fire station, as well as the implementation of access in plans for the future performing arts centre and spectator facility. His presentation included St. Catharines being selected as an end-of-day event location for the across Canada Rick Hansen Relay last November and spoke about their global accessibility map, noting that City Hall has been placed on that database. Subsequently Councillors asked City administration to include other City facilities.

Deputy Mayor Secord thanked MACOA's representatives for their presentations, and later in the meeting Council did approve the 2012 Accessibility Plan that will be forwarded to the Accessibility Directorate's Office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

## **7. Updates:**

#### **a. Site Plan Review; On-going.**

#### **b. DDRC;**

Julie Morris reported that DDRC has started meeting again. An upcoming Charrette is planned for April 11<sup>th</sup> and it will be an important opportunity to provide input about various aspects of the downtown core. It was suggested that several accessible public

amenities be flagged; accessible improvements at Montebello Park (pathway, washroom) and City Hall (exterior public washrooms) as well as promotion of accessible and universal design.

**8. Information Items:**

- a. Rick Hansen Foundation, Global Accessibility Map;  
Deferred to April 25<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Staff noted that the City is partnering with the Region of Niagara to provide accessibility training (customer service, service disruption, etc.) to construction contractors. Thank you to Diane Foster and Julie Morris who will participate in this training.
- c. Further to the discussion regarding auditing parks and trails for access, City staff were asked to provide feedback on an accessible pathway design for Malcolmson Eco Park (MEP). Diana Lecinski and RCS staff met with representatives of the Friends of MEP to advise on their draft plans for an accessible pathway near the front of the park. Friends of MEP finalized a design based on FADS and staff input and submitted it to MACOA. The plan was reviewed and supported by MACOA. There is an earth day / pathway construction event planned for April 21. The pathway will be under construction by the MEP volunteers during the event, however the Mayor and Councillor Harris have been invited to speak at this ground-break / tree planting ceremony.

**9. Next Meeting:**

- a. Wednesday, April 25, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. in Committee Room #1

**10. Adjournment:**

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

Moved by: Mary Jane Waszynski  
Seconded by: Bob Asham

That this meeting do now adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

**CARRIED**