

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, June 28, 2017

City Hall, Burgoyne Woods Room at 1:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Diane Foster, Co-chairperson
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Melissa Abrams
Steve Byers
Ian Crawford
Tracey Hrick
Bob Mahony
David Reed
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets:

Bob Asham
Linda Marie O'Hagan

Staff Representatives:

Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, Office of the CAO
Christine Adams, Transportation & Environmental Services
Mike DiPaola, Transportation & Environmental Services
Sandy Burrows, Planning & Building Services
Brian Thiessen, Planning & Building Services

1. **Call meeting to order and Plans Review:**

Diane Foster called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Round-table introductions were made.

Mike DiPaola, TES Design & Construction Engineer, was welcomed and provided an overview of the trail renovations being planning for Centennial Gardens. A sun shelter will be installed near the main entry and parking on Oakdale Avenue. The trail will be re-graded and resurfaced with a granular base and topped with compacted stone screenings to provide a firm and stable surface as required under the AODA's Design of Public Spaces Standard (DOPSS). The existing wooden stairway connecting the trail with Gale Crescent will be replaced with a stone stairway, and staff noted that mobility access to the trails is at the main parking and entrance area off Oakdale which is also the bus route and community access point as well. Both Oakdale and Gale have sidewalks. After discussion and clarifications various AAC members provided the following:

- install railings with the stairway and ensure consistent rise/run of steps
- stone stair construction is sturdy, looks natural for the setting and longer-lasting
- request that any steeper natural slopes are considered for any possible re-grading to lessen slope
- ensure that cross-slope does not exceed 2% for drainage
- request that rest benches be placed periodically along the trail
- ensure the trail width provides wider areas for people using mobility devices to pass
- review DOPSS to ensure compliance

Further to the previous meeting inquiry about drop-off areas around the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, staff provided downtown streetscape drawings that clearly delineated the drop-off on St. Paul on the westerly side of the building as well as a signalized pedestrian crossing across St. Paul St. to Garden Park. The bus layby area on Carlisle will have 1, possibly 2, curb ramps installed as part of this project.

Diane Foster thanked Mike DePaola for attending.

2. AAC Housekeeping:

Diane Foster noted she and Shelley Stewart discussed several opportunities to improve and streamline AAC processes and meetings.

- Similar to today, when there are plans to review, the AAC meetings will start at 1:00 p.m.
- Speaking order will be determined by the chairperson
- Members should seek speaking opportunities through the chair
- Members can make or second any motion but it is often more meaningful if a member with a relevant expertise or passion has an opportunity to make a motion for the record.
- Although it's fine to contact the Accessibility Coordinator, members should send complaints or suggestions directly to Citizen First, the City's formal customer service point. The main phone number is 905-688-5600 or email citizensfirst@stcatharines.ca . This will help to more accurately record accessibility issues and redirect them to the department responsible and/or create work orders as needed.

3. Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

Moved by: Bob Mahony
Seconded by: Shelley Stewart

That the Minutes of May 24, 2017 be approved.
CARRIED

The next Social Sustainability Pillar (SSP) meeting will be August 3, 2017.

4. Presentation/Discussion:

Sandy Burrows of PBS, Brian Thiessen, PBS, Christine Adams, TES
Further to questions from the AAC's previous meeting, the above staff were invited and welcomed.

In review the questions included;

- How can businesses and restaurants be allowed to place public washrooms downstairs or upstairs as is the case in several recently renovated downtown locations
- How does the Ontario Building Code (OBC) interpret access and/or existing conditions
- How might steps into businesses become more accessible (e.g. StopGap)
- Who inspects accessible parking as required under a site plan

Staff responded that although they may suggest at least one accessible washroom be provided on the main level, they often cannot compel this under OBC due to existing conditions, use, etc. A number of examples were discussed and it became apparent that if it is not a requirement many businesses opt for the cheapest alternative without understanding how much business they have missed by not being accessible. The main issues in the downtown are steps into business, and lack of washroom access. It was suggested that the AAC consider an educational approach. This will be discussed further under 5.d. E-newsletter opportunity.

Recently, the Rick Mercer Report highlighted StopGap. This video was viewed by all in attendance. StopGap is a temporary movable ramp that businesses can use (e.g. The Danforth in Toronto). Accessibility staff noted that some Ontario municipalities and businesses have supported the use of StopGap and others have some concern regarding use and responsibility. Accessibility staff will inquire with colleagues as well as stakeholder staff for their input.

AAC members noted that often accessible parking spaces lack required signage and proper layout. Sandy Burrows noted that inspection of site plan related accessible parking is often on a complaint basis and that developers are responsible to meet all details of their site plan agreement. Several previous examples were noted where although plaza islands or curb ramps were shown on the site plan, the end result was not accessible due to steep ramps, cross-slopes, narrow paths of travel, no turn-around at

dead-ending sidewalks, etc. Sometimes developers did remediate issues or provide alternative access.

The AAC requested that accessible parking review and compliance monitoring become a more specific requirement during construction phases to avoid issues. Diane Foster thanked staff for their input.

5. Business arising:

a) Accessibility Plan;

The 2016 annual report on the 2016-2020 Accessibility Plan was endorsed by Council on May 29. Shelley Stewart and Diane Foster made the presentation.

TES staff are assisting with review and edits on an updated FADS version.

The AAC submission to the Museum's one-five-oh time capsule was circulated electronically to the members and was requested to be included with these Minutes (Appendix A). Thank you to Melissa Abrams for flagging this initiative, to Shelley Stewart and Diane Foster for deciding that sidewalk access on the new Burgoyne Bridge was a legacy of access achievement, to Fred Stevens former AAC member who posed for photos with Diane Foster to demonstrate the bridge's improved access, and to Christine Adams who advocated throughout the design phase to provide wide, safe and accessible sidewalks on both sides of the bridge.

b) AAC inquiry;

As requested, accessibility staff asked Fire & Emergency Management Department rep Frank Donati about the status of City Hall's fire safety plan and procedure updates. He noted that the existing plan and procedures remain in place until a new plan is approved. Approval of a number of facility fire safety plans is expected very shortly. Frank Donati will be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss updated plans and procedures.

c) Rick Hansen Foundation grant;

The AAC will host and participate in the organization of the event once an event date has been determined.

A third organizing "team meeting" will take place tomorrow, June 29 and AAC reps, Diane Foster, Tracey Hrick (regrets), Linda Marie O'Hagan (regrets) and Abby Green plan to attend. High water levels continue to be

of concern and dates in July or early August seem unlikely. If no date can be determined at tomorrow's meeting, the team will likely reconvene in early August to set a date. Site visits will take place prior to the event for all involved for orientation. With the input of the access reps, a general framework for the event has been discussed. Accessibility staff will email the AAC with updates over the summer.

d) E-newsletter article opportunity;

As discussed earlier on the agenda, the AAC welcomes opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of accessibility throughout the community. Accessibility staff has discussed opportunities with Economic Development and various BIA's. Articles will provide opportunity to educate and increase awareness in key accessibility areas. AAC members had numerous ideas and asked about areas of focuses and if articles would be group and/or individual. Details will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

6. AAC Updates:

a) Community access and media;

It was requested by the AAC that media updates from Linda Marie O'Hagan be sent to staff prior to meeting dates and circulated with the emailed agenda package. Following up on a suggestion, members were canvassed if they wanted to send/receive information through a closed Facebook group and the consensus was a preference for information to remain via email communication.

b) City Projects, Christine Adams, TES;

Several construction projects are underway or in the tendering stage. The Ontario Street westerly sidewalk connectivity (QEW to Carlton) initiative needs further budgeting before moving forward. Surveys have been completed.

The AAC flagged their ongoing concern relating to hydro poles being placed within sidewalks by Alectra (formerly Horizon). Although there may be priority requirements in place by utilities with respect to City property easements, this often diminishes sidewalk access to people with disabilities. Staff will revisit this issue.

5. **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday, September 27, 2017 at 1:30 p.m.,
City Hall, Burgoyne Woods Room.

Any interim meeting needed prior to this date will be at the call of the chairpersons.

6. **Motion to Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Moved by: Bob Mahony

Seconded by: Steve Byers

That this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

Also attached: Appendix A

Appendix A

Originally known as the St. Paul Street High Level Bridge, and later as the Burgoyne Bridge, this structure spans more than 333m and officially opened December 18, 1915. The vision was to connect the community and the railway station over the original Welland Canal route.

Having a total width of 9.2m with narrow sidewalks on each sides, this prevented people who use wheelchairs to pass each other, or easily turn around, and one would inevitably have to back up for the next 100 years.

In 2014 construction of the new Burgoyne Bridge began, and in 2017 it was officially opened. This new structure boasts 2.4m sidewalks on both sides which provides for greater pedestrian safety, the opportunity for pedestrians who push a baby stroller, who use a wheelchair or scooter to pass each other, and temporary snow accumulation does not effectively stop travel for pedestrians.

This represents a new era of better access for everyone.

Written by Diane Foster,
Accessibility Advisory Committee co-chairperson

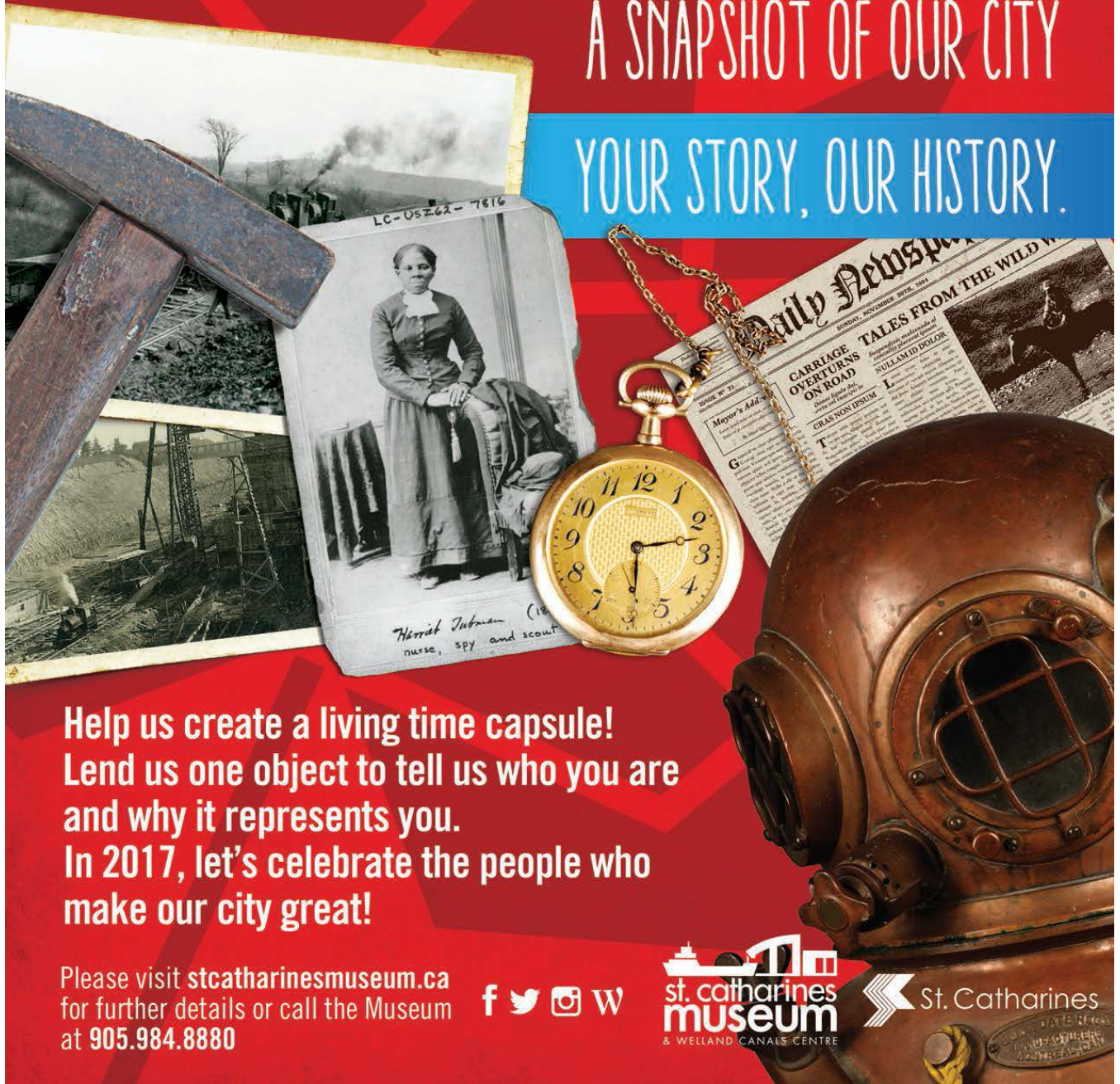


ST. CATHARINES MUSEUM & WELLAND CANALS CENTRE PRESENTS

ONE-FIVE-OH!

A SNAPSHOT OF OUR CITY

YOUR STORY, OUR HISTORY.



Help us create a living time capsule!
Lend us one object to tell us who you are
and why it represents you.
In 2017, let's celebrate the people who
make our city great!

Please visit stcatharinesmuseum.ca
for further details or call the Museum
at 905.984.8880




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