

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, September 26, 2012

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, September 26, 2012 in Committee Room #1 at City Hall at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Matthew Harris
Diane Foster, Co-chairperson
Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Bob Asham
Chantal Barrette
Ian Crawford
Tony DiPaola
Julie Morris
Linda Marie O'Hagan
David Reed
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets: Kevin Vallier

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office
Christine Adams, Manager of Engineering/Construction TES
Bonnie Nistico-Dunk, City Clerk

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.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for July 25, 2012 were approved.

Moved by: Julie Morris
Seconded by: Bob Asham

That the minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for July 25, 2012 be approved.

CARRIED

4. Business Arising from Minutes:

- a. Sidewalk width and new bridge reconstruction;
Christine Adams of TES discussed increasing standard sidewalk widths on bridges. The Burgoyne bridge reconstruction proposes a sidewalk width of 2.4 metres. This would allow for added safety separation and turn-around opportunities for people who use mobility devices. MACOA members supported this approach as a best practice for this and future bridge applications.

Moved by: Linda Marie O'Hagan
Seconded by: Shelley Stewart

That the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) endorses a wider reconstruction sidewalk width of 2.4 metres on both sides of the Burgoyne Bridge;

- to provide turn-around opportunities to people who use a mobility device
- to provide extra width in consideration winter snow accumulation
- to provide safer separation space between traffic and all pedestrians; and

That 2.4 metres be the standard width for new bridges and where possible on rehabilitation of existing bridge structures.

CARRIED

b. Accessibility Plan / AODA

Staff noted the next major undertaking for the end of 2012 and beginning of 2013 will be to develop objectives for long-term accessibility planning. Staff is suggesting a 3-year term Accessibility Plan and all departmental staff will be invited to an upcoming meeting for input on long-term objectives.

Under the AODA's Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation the City along with other broader public sector organizations must have a policy and statement of commitment in place by January 1, 2013. Accessibility staff provided MACOA with a draft policy and noted that the policy and staff report will be submitted to Council before the end of the year. Staff also noted that Library related requirements are minimal and noted, however Transportation is a large section within the standard and that staff will seek Transit's interest in consolidating their policy with this submission to Council.

Moved by: Bob Asham
Seconded by: Julie Morris

That MACOA endorses the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation policy for the City of St. Catharines; and

That the policy be forwarded to Council for approval.

CARRIED

c. Parks and Trails – Access Audit update

Diane Foster provided a status update on parks/trails audited. She thanked Ian and Mieke Crawford, Julie and Kelly Morris, Shelley Stewart for participating in the park access audits. The audits are finished for this year. Once the audit information has been transferred to an electronic document, they will be reviewed by the audit team and then forwarded to Kristen Sullivan of RCS for inclusion with future park/trail upgrades.

Access audits included the following parks and trails;

- Lancaster Park
- Lester B. Pearson Park
- Walker's Creek Trail (various sections)
- Montebello Park
- Malcolmson Eco Park and Trail
- Burgoyne Woods Park

- Catherine Street Park (and dog park)
- St. Patrick's Park
- Jaycee Park
- Rennie Park
- Lakeside Park

d. Council Chamber – tour of renovations

MACOA members took a break during the meeting to visit the newly renovated Council Chambers. City Clerk, Bonnie Nistico-Dunk provided an overview of the various renovations that included; new and improved lighting, contrasts, sound-system and video capabilities. The new carpet provides improved contrast along with high contrast stair-nosing. The benches were reupholstered and an entire front bench was removed to allow more room for mobility devices. The highlight renovation was the self-adjustable podium height that also provides better clearance between the dais and the speaker. Each speaker can adjust the podium to individually desired heights. The mechanism buttons are large and operate with minimal dexterity. The podium does not move if the button is not being pressed, even if one of two pre-sets was being pressed. The City Clerk also noted that the listening assistive devices continue to be available at all Council meetings along with other meetings that take place in the Chambers. Members approved of the improved access. Councillor Harris noted concern that the gate between the gallery and elected officials remains manual and is only opened by the Sargent at Arms when allowing citizens to approach the podium to speak. Staff will ask that the chamber's auto-open door mechanism be checked for opening and timing. Diane Foster thanked Bonnie Nistico-Dunk for providing an informative tour to MACOA.

5. Updates:

a. Site Plan Review;

Before today's meeting, Ian Crawford and David Reed met with staff Diana Lecinski and Mike Wilson on-site to review the test design of the City's first accessible on-street parking space. Kris Jacobson had discussed this type of design with MACOA in the spring of 2012 and agreed with the members that a test site should first be constructed and audited before subsequent spaces are constructed. David Reed pulled up in a vehicle and disembarked to test. Ian Crawford also tested the area and both agreed that it's design is highly accessible. Given the scope of the design they are more expensive to build but provides much better and safer access from a parked vehicle to the sidewalk than placing an accessible parking sign at a

basic on-street parking space. Ian Crawford and David Reed both provided feedback and their endorsement of this design. MACOA members fully endorsed the design and asked that future spaces employ this design. Everyone was encouraged to review the location right across Church Street from City Hall in front of the Knox Church.

Moved by: Linda Marie O'Hagan
Seconded by: Ian Crawford

That MACOA endorses the on-street accessible parking space design by the Transportation & Environmental Services Department for all future on-street accessible parking spaces.

CARRIED

Staff was also asked to follow up with Transportation staff on the number of accessible spaces installed in the City parking lot at the corner of Westchester and St. Paul as well as on Gale at the Garden City Arena.

Other site plan related discussions included MACOA's recent inquiry about the lack of changes to the curb ramps and islands in the Smart Centre parking lots within the Wal-Mart site on Fourth Avenue. It has been more than a year since the islands were installed and it was at that time that MACOA flagged this design as inaccessible and a tipping danger for people who use a mobility device. City development staff had required upgrades to this construction at that time. City staff have notified the developer that it's not satisfactory.

It was also noted that the Smart Centre site across Fourth Avenue recently had a sidewalk installed as part of a new strip of stores that was recently built. The original sidewalk on the site plan agreement several years ago was never built as the area was used instead as a grade separation.

MACOA members noted concern that developers do not remedy their deficiencies in a timely manner and that the years and years it takes to motivate the required changes impacts pedestrians of all abilities at these large multi-store properties.

On a very positive note the Fairview Mall management acted upon their concerns for pedestrian safety and access, and is currently constructing a connective sidewalk from Geneva Street to the Mall entrance. The design is very similar to the one offered by MACOA. It was suggested that a media/communications promotion of this be made and staff will investigate.

b. DDRC;

Julie Morris, MACOA's DDRC rep, reported that an upcoming meeting will include MACOA's action statement to support the importance of accessible pedestrian connectivity for all pedestrians in the DDRC's undertakings.

6. Information Update:

- a. Kiwanis Pool and Library – an article from the St. Catharines Standard was circulated. Written by former MACOA member Linda Crabtree, it highlighted the excellent accessibility of this new recreation facility. One issue that was highlighted was a concern for transfer opportunities.

MACOA was adamant that the pool design include dignified pool ramps to avoid lift transfers on-deck with Hoyer type mechanisms. A transfer lift is available in the pool's accessible family change-room. This lift provides connectivity between the adult-changeable, deck wheelchairs as well as the toilet/shower area. The manual deck wheelchairs can go into the pool and are available in various sizes.

b. Updates -

Staff noted that parking lot at the Dunlop Seniors Centre has been completed and offers on-grade parking beside and in front of the facility. Plans are underway to redesign the washrooms to FADS standards. Staff will provide the drawings to MACOA when they become available.

7. Next Meeting:

Wednesday, October 24, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. in Committee Room #1.

8. Adjournment:

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

Moved by: Linda Marie O'Hagan

Seconded by: Bob Asham

That this meeting do now adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

CARRIED