

City of St. Catharines

Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, November 28, 2012

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, November 28, 2012 in Committee Room #1 at City Hall at 1:00 p.m.

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

Regrets: Councillor Matthew Harris
Tony DiPaola
Kevin Vallier

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office
Erin O'Hoski, Corporate Planning Officer, CAO's Office
Patrice Wearne, Administrative Assistant, CAO's Office
Departmental representatives for accessibility:

Present:

- CSS, Sue Dods (Clerk's, Information Systems)
- CSS, Chantal Switzer (Human Resources)
- FMS, Joanne Tessier
- EDTS, Marco Marino
- PDS, Britney Williamson for Amanda Knutson (Planning)
- TES, Steve Bittner (Traffic)

Regrets:

- PDS, Sam Carrera (Building), report submitted
- RCS, Jennifer Douglas
- FEMS, Chris Leonard

1. Call to order:

Diane Foster, co-chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. following MACOA's holiday luncheon.

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 October 24, 2012 were approved.

Minutes for this meeting will be presented at the next MACOA meeting. The meeting content was reviewed by Diane Foster. This included the Housing/Homelessness questionnaire and discussion by the Region, along with discussion/preparation for a long-term accessibility plan.

4. Business Arising from Minutes:

a. Accessibility Plan / AODA

Diana Lecinski thanked each member of MACOA for their ongoing input and expertise that support the removal and prevention of barriers to the City's services, good and facilities. She also thanked staff reps for their continued support to improve accessibility in the City, and introduced Erin O'Hoski as a facilitator for the long-term accessibility planning discussions.

An overview is attached of the discussions along with MACOA's draft of suggested departmental micro-objectives over the next 3 year period. Additionally it was noted that this is in conjunction with the AODA Standards which were viewed as macro-objectives. Currently the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11) contains various compliance requirements over the next 3 years in the areas of Employment, Information & Communication, General and Transportation.

Erin O'Hoski summarized several key areas of focus from the discussion. Firstly, **accessible customer service** is of primary importance along with continued staff training. This is an area that not only recognizes good customer service, but also accessible technology, documents and communication. Secondly, **engagement in the private sector** is significant to creating an inclusive and accessible community. Much can be promoted in

this area through indirect dialogue by various interactions with the City. Thirdly, was termed **Ease & Movement**, relating to parking, outdoor elements and sidewalks being viable mode of transportation throughout City – service obstructions should be taken into further advanced planning. Other highlights included a corporate commitment to carry-through on long-term objectives by departments, the importance of including MACOA for its accessibility expertise for all City parks and facility builds/renovations and most importantly that Council proactively addresses accessibility in its budgeting process.

Diane Foster also thanked Erin O'Hoski for facilitating the discussions along with each staff rep for their support of accessibility and keeping a proactive dialogue between the departments and MACOA.

b. 2013 meeting schedule

MACOA endorsed its 2013 meeting schedule. Meetings will continue to be held monthly on the 4th Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. at City Hall in Committee Room #1 unless otherwise noted.

5. Updates:

a. Site Plan Review;

Accessibility staff noted that Planning & Development Services are arranging a meeting/discussion opportunity between the Spectator Facility development team and MACOA. If this meeting is before MACOA's next scheduled meeting of January 23, staff will canvas members for best dates/times.

6. Next Meeting:

Wednesday, January 23, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. in Committee Room #1.

7. 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

**City of St. Catharines
Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility
City Hall, Committee Room #1
Wednesday, November 28, 2012 at 1:00 p.m.**

Agenda:

4. Business Arising from Minutes:

a. Accessibility Plan / AODA

- Integrated Accessibility Standard
 - 3 year accessibility plan preparation,
 - Nov. meeting; staff reps will comment add/edit framework

Introduction of Erin O'Hoski, facilitator for long-term accessibility planning session

Goal; to reflect on successes, create a comprehensive 3 year program to address access (micro-objectives) and comply with legislation (macro-objectives)

Brittany Williamson – PDS

- Successes
 - Deficiencies noted at 2 new developments were fixed
 - Some deficiencies are being currently being renovated
 - Fairview Mall pedestrian sidewalk from Geneva up to Mall has been added for accessibility
- Moving forward
 - Draft site plan manual being finalized due to Citizen First initiative
 - 2013 roll out
 - Pre-qualification process being amended
 - Public Meetings – attempting to have larger audience by communicating on FaceBook and other media outlets – trying to target wider variety of citizens through social media

Marco Marino – EDTS

- Promotional materials:
 - Still attempting to re-work fonts (issue from previous years) – cost factor still proves not feasible hardcopy, however electronic versions are convertible. Access formats (e.g. large font) available upon request
 - Interactive media
 - Promoting benefits of accessible goods
 - SUMMARY: Electronic methods have been upgraded / print methods have not due to feasibility.
- Successes
 - New buildings to newcomers / investors are being upgraded with accessibility standards and word is getting out there
 - Promoting awareness: meets with 5 – 6 companies per week:
 - Makes them aware of AODA policies and standards
 - Benefits businesses
- **INPUT:**
 - Member: the work MACOA does on the site plans surpasses the provincial mandate – wants the City aware of the accessibility standards vs. .building code's bare minimum
 - Marco: in dealing with potential investors, EDTS promotes the benefits of being more accessible; however, investors are still learning the financial benefits of becoming accessible outweigh cost
 - Aerial fonts more precise – MACOA member – also take into consideration size of information packages – some people have downsized internet costs; therefore only receive smaller packages (Winzip)
 - ACTION: More corporate issue – E. O'Hoski will speak to this matter further at the end of this portion of the meeting

Joanne Tessier -- FMS

- 2012 was on-going regarding access
- 2011: On-line forms in accessible format (forms are being reviewed via a technology solution for corporate continuity)
- Ongoing training for front-line staff in providing service in accessible manner
- Purchasing (Procurement policy) document will come out for approval in the near future and accessible compliance is addressed clearly in this document

- Budget document: global issue for municipalities with obtaining accessible format (facing barriers with software provider) – staff will manually extract/convert on a by request basis
- Readable email is on the Billing Department's wish list – enhancement request list
 - Backend of accounting system does not allow for electronic billing / payment as of yet
 - Manually accepting payments
- **INPUT:**
 - MACOA: Difference between accessible and being user friendly – some companies have moved forward with electronic billing systems however are not easy to use (i.e. Horizon)

Chantal Switzer– CSS (HR)

- Successes:
 - Orientation Program; customer service & accessibility customer service policy
 - Talk to me
 - Workplace emergency plans for emergency – includes assistance
 - Posted language – Browse Aloud (on ads, website, etc.)
 - BrowseAloud has introduced a new BrowseAloud Plus which introduces a mobile app version of the software allowing users to have your website read aloud on iPads.
 - Goal for Integrated Accessibility Std, Employment section compliance for 2014; ahead of the game however formal policy and procedures have/will be developed in 2013
 - Employment emergency information to continue to be available to employees upon request. Individual safety plans have been developed with staff who have requested this

Steve Bittner – TES

- One on street – accessible space now available
 - Excellent feedback, more to be budgeted annual and MACOA suggested priority areas (per MACOA meeting January and April 2012)
- Zoning compliance is ongoing
- Ontario Street sidewalk – awaiting Regional work at the present time (between GM & QEW)

- Curb-ramp design (Engineering designs endorsed by MACOA (per MACOA meeting January 2012). Moving forward the City engineering has the standards reviewed and endorsed by MACOA.
- City parking lots – ongoing – no formal review – ad hoc basis
 - MACOA asked transportation to prioritize all City facility parking lots that all accessible parking spaces be updated to current size and ratio under the zoning by-law
- Painting accessible spaces: only control certain facilities / they paint every two years – TES has no authority over RCS services
- Exterior plaza of Central Library @ James St –TES has recognized this deficiency and placed in the annual the budget
- City parking info on web: Transportation should recognize all areas (lots, garages and on-street) for locations of accessible parking and have info on website.
- Accessible Built Environment AODA pending Standard, outdoor elements have been recently recognized and separated from the ABE to become part of a future addition to the Integrated Accessibility Std.
- **INPUT:**
 - Sidewalk closure/disruption should be revisited annually as part of Operations staff training e.g. signage should be posted well in advance of site of closure
 - Garden City Arena has additional one or two accessible spaces (based on ratio that is presently there), MACOA has advocated for more accessible parking at CGA
 - 30 out of 86 on-site parking spots allocated for Spectator Facility were reported to be designated accessible at the Site Plan stage

Sue Dods -- CSS (Clerks Dept & Technology Services)

- Departmental staff have re-set computer defaults to corporate access std.
- BrowseAloud continues to be offered on the City's website as a print to voice (or MP3) service for people who have minor vision, cognitive issues, or English as a second language. It has introduced a new BrowseAloud Plus which introduces a mobile app version of the software allowing users to have your website read aloud on iPads.
- Council chamber renovation included a motorized podium up/down, lighting, IT, contrast carpeting w. stair nosing and removal of first bench for added area for mobility devices – COMPLETED – mechanical podium, lighting has been enhanced with dimming options, microphone sound improvement including a lapel microphone. – contrast carpeting for visual assistance/ still have portable listening devices

- Research options for closed captioning (CC) for Council meetings – MACOA suggested this within CSS's 3-year plan
- Prepare to meet the requirements and various compliance deadlines associated with the IASR relating to; website, communication, information, employment
- Employment and facility emergency safety information to continue to be available to employees upon request
- Customer Service:
 - Easel at Reception/Service Kiosk to identify where meetings are being held without anyone having to attend third floor including acceptance of bids / tenders on 2nd floor
- iCompass: new format for Council agendas/minutes is more accessible to reports / agendas / minutes – html or pdf document options (paper copies are available upon request)
- Crossing Guards – annual orientation meetings, receive acc training – staff does periodic inspections with regards to crossing guard locations
- Early planning stages for 2014 elections: Accessibility checklist will be brought forward to MACOA for review prior to implementation
- **INPUT:**
 - MACOA re elections: ensure accessibility is accessible observation: Laura Secord on Niagara: Back entrance / entrance for polling to gym – steps to entry way / no acc parking spots – very frustrating – witnessed some not being able to access bldg. to vote

Transit (Diana)

- Policy and long-term acc plan partner
- IASR transportation std = compliance
 - Accessibility Plan is part of City plan – this is a long term plan this time around
 - Comprehensive transportation long-term plan drafted
 - Draft – Dec 13 will be presented to Transit Commission.
 - Dec 14 will be sent to Diana to move forward with Corporate Plan
 - DL has drafted Policy being brought forward to City Council Dec. 17

Library – 5 year strategy was presented to MACOA January 2012

- 2012, 5-year strategy for access improvements.
- Participant in policy and long-term acc plan

Update from S. Carrera: Planning & Development Services

- Site plan
 - Multi-format circulation for review (e.g. pdf)
 - Advocate for access to community (e.g. builders, developers, owners, businesses, general public, CIP, etc.)
 - Guiding documents to offer clear and succinct leadership for an accessible community (Official Plan, Urban Design Guidelines, CIP Guidelines, etc.)
 - Staff start to take on accessibility commenting, or consider MACOA for first set of SP's and staff to enforce from first comment onwards, unless plans change significantly
- CIP to be researched as to J. Riddell concerns about Planning Act
 - CIP to offer opportunity/reward for access (e.g. PDO)
- Public meetings to continue to be held at accessible venues and upon request provide accessible formatted information
- Status of Design Guidelines and an updated Site Plan Manual, and how access is addressed
-

Fire Services regrets, submission TBA in December

RCS great successes as outlined on document, regrets, submission TBA in December

- Kiwanis exceeded # of accessible parking spaces; however, still may not offer sufficient number, will be monitored
- Kiwanis – July MACOA meeting was held on site and a tour was provided of the pool and the library
- **INPUT:**
 - MACOA: listed comments, kudos and a few minor deficiencies; have they been met? Diana to investigate and advise

Diana Lecinski: CAO Access and Administration/ Legal

- Organized and conducted accessible information and communications training; continue to update and re-engage w. future staff training
- Support AODA standards and provide training/awareness throughout corporation
- Accessibility policy and statement of commitment for Integrated Accessibility Std.

- Continue AODA awareness and compliance through staff orientation, and continued training
- Inform and engage Boards and Commissions
- Acc. Coord is go-to for ASL, captioning services and audio file format requests
- City has a large number of successes; however, departments are not highlighting accessibility accomplishments, because they see it as their due diligence. This is the benchmark that defines true corporate endorsement and recognition for accessibility in the City's goods, services and facilities

Erin's Summary:

Three themes:

1. *Customer Service*

- Font size
- Alternate formats
- Online accessibility for bill payment
- Erin gave outline of Citizen First initiative and their online survey – easily accessible city services

2. *Outreach to Private Sector*

- Business operators relationships with their customers
- Their interactions with customers / FADS document and acceptance
- Aging populations and their needs
- Building Code and change – outreach

3. *Ease & Movement*

- Parking
- Outdoor elements
- Sidewalks are viable mode of transportation throughout City – service obstructions should be taken into further advanced planning.

INPUT:

- Integrate process into Acc Plan and move forward throughout the corporation
- Highlight and follow-up
- Customer Service could always be improved – should be ongoing not become complacent
- Public Awareness is an important issue

- Always encourage staff to do and be better
- Always need improvements to parking / number of allotted acc spots – Shelley S
- Members are ambassadors to be the voice for the community
- Do not have mandate over private sector

ACTION:

- themes to bring forward – add to the Drafted Plan

MACOA

- Continues to promote access with the community
 - Fairview Mall, pedestrian link
 - Shelley Stewart interview with ADO's office picked up by Ellen Waxman, Municipal News regarding access awareness and improvements
- Reviews site plans
- Undertakes park access audits
- Participates with corporate training opportunities
- Participates as access advocates with other committees
- Continues to meet monthly and actively promotes access expertise throughout the City