

**REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES**



**Meeting of Thursday, February 12, 2004
Committee Room #3
7:00 p.m.**

Present:

Dave Hunt	- Public at Large (Acting Chair)
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Tim Whittle	- Regional Niagara Police Service
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Rob Gabriel	- Regional Councillor

1. Adoption of Agenda

With the addition of the agenda items listed below, the agenda was adopted as revised.

- Discussion on Dorchester Road Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Update on the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge EA
- Waterfront Trail Program in Niagara
- Pro Walk/Pro Bike Conference in Victoria

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

2. Review of Meeting Notes of January 8, 2004

J. Somerwil said that on page six, Government Road in Thorold is now called Welland Canal Road. There was some discussion amongst Committee members as to the correct name of the road. Eric Flora said that he would check with the Properties and Facility Management Section of Public Works as to the correct name. **(Action Item)**

Motion:

To adopt the RNBC Meeting Notes of January 8, 2004.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

3. Business Arising

Mr. Flora reported to the Committee on a question that had arisen at a previous meeting regarding Colbeck Drive in Welland. It was reported that Colbeck Drive would be closed off as part of the City of Welland's Transportation Master Plan. Clare Avenue will be extended to Webber Road and traffic signals will be installed at that intersection and roadway. The intersection will have provisions for bike lanes. T. Whittle said that the normal practice for a rural cross section is to have a 1.5 metre shoulder and questioned why this location only has a 0.5 metre shoulder. Mr. Flora said that he would check with the Engineering Section as to why the shoulder is 0.5 metres and will also inquire as to whether there is a time line for the completion of work on Colbeck Drive. **(Action Item)**

Ken Forgeron reported to the Committee, as requested, that notification for Environmental Assessments would be sent out via e-mail to RNBC members and to a contact at the Freewheelers.

Tim Whittle distributed to the Committee a revised Year 2003 Bicycle Collision Statistics Final Report (see attached). The total collisions for 2003 are revised and now stand at 77.

Mr. Forgeron told the Committee that further discussions on updating the bike display would be held once 2004 RNBC funding has been finalized. Mr. Forgeron suggested hiring a summer student to assist in updating the display amongst other things. Dave Hunt reported to the Committee that he had received two complaints regarding our current display. The first complaint was that the pictures on the display are mostly of St. Catharines and the complainant felt that the display should feature more region-wide pictures. The second complaint was in regards to a picture labeled "River Road," however, the picture was not of River Road. Mr. Forgeron explained that the picture may have been inadvertently attached to the wrong label.

Mr. Flora reported to the Committee that as of mid-January there was, approximately, \$4,000 remaining in the 2003 RNBC funds. He will advise the Committee whether the remaining \$4,000 includes money collected for the bike map reprinting, which should not be the case. **(Action item)** Mr. Flora advised the Committee that Joe Cousins, Director Transportation Services, had requested that the RNBC provide an approximate amount of funds that the Committee would be requesting for 2004. The Committee suggested a minimum request of \$10,000 for 2004 to assist in several projects like map enhancements, outreach and display improvements.

4. Welcome and Introductions – New Members of Regional Council

Mr. Forgeron announced that Regional Councillor Rob Gabriel has agreed to represent the Planning Committee on the RNBC. Also, Councillor Ron Leavens is the new RNBC Chair. He is the mayor of Pelham and represents the Public Works Committee.

Councillor Timms is currently in the process of obtaining RNBC representation from the Public Health Committee.

5. Volunteers for RNBC Task Forces

Eric Flora will check with Ralph Scholz of the Public Works Department to see if he will continue on as a member of the Engineering Task Force. **(Action Item)**

Jan Somerwil volunteered to sit on the Engineering Task Force.

Peter Davies volunteered to sit on the Education and Enforcement Task Force.

Paul Pattison asked if the Task Force Committee names would be changed as per Marshall Macklin Monaghan's recommendation in the Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Forgeron responded that Public Work's staff is waiting to see if the Regional Committees structure is reorganized before implementing the suggested Task Force name changes.

Policy Task Force

Dave Hunt asked if there will be a requirement to update the mapping and policies in the Regional Policy Plan with respect to recommendations made in the Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Flora responded that John Barr had recently been hired on a temporary basis and one of his tasks is to try to facilitate a Policy Plan Amendment. Mr. Forgeron suggested having the Policy Task Force involved in reviewing any policy changes.

Mr. Forgeron said that he would keep the Committee informed on various local Official Plan changes. It was his understanding that ten local municipalities are in the process of updating their Official Plans.

Education and Enforcement Task Force

It was reported that no special projects are currently planned, however, a review of all the RNBC's pamphlets is in order.

It was reported that Frank Pravitz had suggested that perhaps the Education and Enforcement Task Force could develop a poster, including photos, on cycling within Niagara. He suggested that it could be tourism or utilitarian related and have tips on proper cycling techniques.

Encouragement Task Force

The Bicycle Friendly Awards Program will continue under the Encouragement Task Force as well as RNBC participation at bike shows/events. Mr. Romanuk reported that Marian Landry is trying to schedule as many events as possible into May, which is Bike month.

K. Forgeron volunteered to compile a tentative list of the suggested Task Force projects for 2004 and distribute the list to RNBC members for further discussion. **(Action Item)**

6. Volunteers for Toronto International Bicycle Show

Mr. Forgeron circulated a volunteer schedule for the Toronto International Bike Show. The RNBC needs volunteers to staff the booth during each of the scheduled shift times. Mr. Romanuk will post the schedule to our website and send out a url to the Freewheelers so they can access the schedule and sign-up.

7. Educating Bicyclists

Mr. Forgeron distributed an article titled "Drivers Want Road Test for Cyclists." The article originated in Britain and suggests that cyclists should receive the same punishment as drivers when they break the law and that cyclists should receive training before they ride on the road. Mr. Forgeron suggested to the Committee that perhaps a request could be sent to VeloOntario and the CAA about training requirements for cyclists here in Ontario. Also, VELO Ontario and the CAA may have some influence in lobbying the Ministries of Health and Education to include educating cyclists in the school curriculum. Mr. Forgeron suggested asking Petar Vujic, the Public Works representative on the Regional Road Safety Committee (formerly called the Traffic Fatality Task Force) to raise the issue of bicycle safety and education with that Committee in order to get them thinking of how we can better educate cyclists.

Mr. Whittle recalled that a few years ago a computer game was developed for children which focused on bicycle safety. The game's creator has offered to modernize the program (add more graphics, music, etc.) and make it available to us free of charge. Mr. Whittle suggested putting CD copies of the game in school libraries and Mr. Forgeron also suggested that we could have a computer set-up for people to play the game at the various venues where we have the RNBC display. **(Action Item)**

8. Update on Regional Police Service Safety Task Force

Mr. Flora reported that sub-committees may be formed from the Regional Police Service Safety Task force and at that point, other organizations may be asked to join the sub-committees. He will provide another update at the March RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**

9. Update on RNBC Financial Reserves - 2003

As reported earlier in the meeting there is, approximately, \$4,000 in the 2003 RNBC Financial Reserves. This amount does not include the cost of printing the Bicycle Friendly Award brochures or the Multi-Use Trail and Lighten Up! brochures.

10. VeloOntario Annual General Meeting (February 21, 2004)

Dave Hunt reported that the Annual General meeting will be held February 21, 2004 from 9:30 to 4:30 in Toronto. Election of the new board will be held. Also, reports on ongoing projects will be provided. Mr. Hunt also told the Committee that there may be a delay in establishing the 2004 the membership fee.

11. Bicycle Safety of Off-Shore Workers

Mr. Whittle reported to the Committee that a meeting had been held with Community Policing Chairs regarding bicycle safety of off-shore workers. Mr. Whittle reported to the RNBC that the Chairs were told that reflective tape to be provided by the Police Service should be affixed to the bicycles in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act. The tape will be supplied free of charge (old stock from Fleet Police), however, Community Policing will need to work out a distribution system. Another meeting will be held on February 23rd. Mr. Whittle will provide an update to the RNBC at the March meeting (**Action Item**).

12. Possible Change in November 11, 2004 RNBC Meeting to Tuesday, November 9th

As the November 11th RNBC meeting falls on Remembrance Day, the Committee agreed to change the meeting date to Tuesday, November 9th.

13. Task Force Reports

Engineering

Queenston-Lewiston Bridge

In letters received by the RNBC from the consultants, it was reported that the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge EA would be reviewed to address the accommodation of cyclists by means of a "secured" access portal.

Mr. Flora said that he would provide a copy of the Environmental Assessment to the RNBC for review (a copy was left with Paul Pattison). He also reported that while truck lane changes are part of the Environmental Assessment, the plaza enhancements are a separate project.

Portage Road

Mr. Flora reported that due to the changes at the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge and along Highway 405, the Niagara Parks Commission has indicated to the Region that Portage Road would function like a service road. Therefore, the Region may eventually be

transferred Portage Road. If this transfer happens, any upgrade to the road would include an accommodation of bicycle facilities.

Glendale Avenue, St. Catharines

Mr. Flora reported that the Glendale Avenue Environmental Assessment study area has been extended west of Hartzel Road to include the Domtar lands. The Region is working jointly with the consortium who owns the property to possibly straighten out the 'curve'. Further to the east, it is proposed that the roadway be widened to four lanes with bike lanes.

Lakeshore Road, St. Catharines

Mr. Flora provided a report on the Lakeshore Road Environmental Assessment. One alternative is to have two lanes with a bike lane on each side with the intersections flaring out. Each lane will have turning lanes at the intersections. Mr. Forgeron reported that the limits are Lakeport Road to Niagara St.

Regional Road 81 @ Fifteen Mile Creek

P. Pattison reported that he has reviewed the designs for the changes to Regional Road 81 at Fifteen Mile Creek. He reported that multi-use trails are being proposed, but the trails may be outside of the road area as you go into the valley where the road curves. This is due to concerns regarding both site lines and drainage going over the embankment. Mr. Pattison said that he had spoken to John Rizzo from the Engineering section who showed him a photo of Campbellville and indicated that the Regional Road 81 @ Fifteen Mile Creek area could be designed in a similar fashion. Mr. Flora said he would ask John Rizzo for a copy of the photo and provide an update at the next meeting (**Action Item**). A concern was raised about the ability to keep the multi-use trail clear of debris and snow. This could be a major safety issue since it involves a steep slope.

West St. Catharines Transportation Study

Mr. Flora reported that there is a proposal to build the new hospital at First Street and Fourth Avenue in West St. Catharines. A West St. Catharines Transportation Study will be completed. Depending on what, if any, changes are made to the surrounding road network, the bicycling network may need to be revised.

Education and Enforcement

As reported earlier in the meeting, the 2003 Bicycle Collision Statistics have been revised.

Policy

The Task Force has been working on the RNBC Terms of Reference. A draft version of the Terms of Reference was distributed previously incorporating the suggested changes by Marshall Macklin Monaghan.

14. Dorchester Road

Bob Romanuk presented to the Committee two copies of the design alternatives, prepared by Delcan, for Dorchester Road in Niagara Falls. Mr. Romanuk asked the Committee to consider at Alternative and the rating assigned to it. When Alternative 13 (i.e. wide curb lanes) was rated for user safety for cyclists, it was given the lowest rating, which is puzzling. It also received low points on a number of different scales and Mr. Romanuk is of the opinion that Alternative 13 was incorrectly evaluated. If it were to be re-evaluated it would outrank the preferred alternative (#12) that provides no space for cyclists.

Mr. Romanuk distributed a draft letter addressed to the Mayor and Council of the City of Niagara on behalf of the RNBC. Mr. Forgeron explained to the Committee that the letter sets out a preference for a dedicated bicycle lane, or alternatively, a wide shared use lane. The Committee was asked for their input on the wording on the letter. Mr. Flora suggested changing the wording in the fourth paragraph from "AATO Standards" to "by geometric design standards." He also suggested adding that Dorchester Road is identified as part of Loop #2 in the "*Cycling Niagara*" bicycling route map guide. Mr. Flora told the Committee that by sending the letter we are officially on record as saying that the RNBC feel that there are better ways of accommodating cyclists. The Committee agreed to the suggested changes and to have Interim Chair Dave Hunt sign the letter. Mr. Forgeron will revise, finalize and fax the letter to the City on Friday, February 13th. **(Action Item)**

15. Bicycle Master Plan

Mr. Flora told the Committee that he had received a letter from the Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture at the City of Niagara Falls. Attached to the letter were recommendations from the Trails & Bikeway Committee. They are requesting that the Region carry out improvements to Montrose Road, north of McLeod Road, including bike lanes, and that the Region add the Millennium Trail as part of the Greater Niagara Circle Route. The Trails & Bikeway Committee also asked for consideration to be given to add bike lanes on River Road from the Whirlpool Bridge to Michael's Inn.

Mr. Flora also reported that a letter from the City of Thorold had been received. The letter indicates that the City supports the Bikeways Master Plan. The City also requested that "Consideration of the development of the Fonthill Spur, development of bicycling lanes on existing and new roadways be considered with applicable road redevelopment projects during the 2004 budget deliberations."

The Transportation Strategy Steering Committee had previously requested that the area municipal costs be broken down for each municipality in terms of the Bikeways Master Plan. Mr. Flora displayed a map to the RNBC which detailed the proposed costs by municipality. The map will be provided to the Engineering Task Force to provide comments. After reviewed by the RNBC, revised copies will be provided to both the local Public Works Officials and Planning Directors. The cost information will be put together into a financial report and become an addendum to the original final report. ***Regional staff will seek local municipal support prior to re-submission to Regional Council.** (*Revised)

16. Waterfront Trail

There were three SuperBuild trail projects scheduled for 2003 for which the Region provided 60% of the funding. The Waterfront Trust provided 40% (via SuperBuild). All three projects have been completed. Currently, there is a capital budget proposal for funds to add paved shoulders between Victoria Avenue at Prudhommes and the Grimsby/Lincoln border. This new initiative is Phase II of a three year Waterfront Trail building project for Niagara.

17. Pro Walk/Pro Bike Conference, September 2004, Victoria

Regional Councillor Bruce Timms has requested that the RNBC submit a presentation proposal to the Pro Walk/Pro Bike Conference scheduled in the fall of 2004.

Bob Romanuk offered to attend the Conference on behalf of Committee as he will be in British Columbia during this time frame. Mr. Forgeron said that he would discuss Mr. Romanuk's offer with Councillor Bruce Timms. He will also speak to him regarding whether he intends to attend the conference himself or if he is looking for a member of the RNBC to go.

Mr. Hunt reported that Tom Bailey had technical corrections to be included in the next printing of the Bikeways map. The RNBC decided that any corrections to be included in the next printing should be forwarded to Phil Bergen in Transportation Services of the Public Works Department. However, corrections to the map may not be made until a discussion has been made to reprint the map after the current supplies are depleted. Electronic edits could be considered as part of a summer student project in 2004.

18. Information Items for Distribution

- *Cycling Advocacy – Making Roads Better for Bicyclists*. Article written by Frank Pravitz for the Freewheelers newsletter (February/March edition)
- Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail News. On page two there is reference to the Waterfront Trust's submission to the consultants regarding cyclists on the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge EA.

- An updated list of RNBC reference material. Reference materials are located in the Planning Department library.
- Newspaper article from the February 5th edition of The Standard discussing RNBC member Marian Landry's upcoming trip to Costa Rica to educate people about diabetes.

Mr. Forgeron passed around the ESRI Canada 2004 calendar that shows the RNBC bike map which received an honourable mention in a recent GIS contest.

19. Suggested Agenda Items for March 11, 2004

- Debriefing from the Toronto International Bike Show
- Offshore Workers Bicycle Safety
- VeloOntario General Meeting debriefing
- Discussion on the joint meeting with Hamilton-Burlington (May 15, 2004)
- Update on the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge EA

20. Next Meeting – March 11, 2004

The next RNBC meeting will take place on Thursday, March 11th **Committee Room #4** at Regional Headquarters beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:

Julie Bittner

Reviewed by Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner