

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, February 13, 2003
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Brian McMullan	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Rob Gabriel	- Regional Councillor
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large
David Hunt	- Public at Large
John Helm	- Public at Large
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Bill Crux	- Public at Large
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Bob Johnson (Transportation)	- Regional Niagara Public Works
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

John Reep - Public at Large

1. Adoption of Agenda

K. Forgeron had two additional items to add to the agenda. One item is a resignation letter, which will be distributed under Items for Distribution and the other is in regards to RNBC representation on the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, which will be discussed under Other Business. J. Somerwil also had two items to discuss under Other Business. The items are traffic lights and traffic circles (i.e. round-a-bouts). D. Hunt would like to discuss Velo Ontario and T. Whittle will discuss the Safety Committee.

2. Review of Meeting Notes of January 9, 2003

J. Somerwil asked that, in the future, PowerPoint presentations be attached to the meeting notes in slide note format as opposed to having each slide on its own page. M. Landry also requested that the background in the presentation not be used as it uses too much ink.

Motion:

In the future when attaching a PowerPoint presentation use slide notes and no background in order to save paper and ink.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended and to accept the meeting notes of the RNBC of January 9, 2003.

Moved by: Various

Seconded: Various

Carried

3. Business Arising

K. Forgeron reported that the Arterial Roads Study was presented to the Transportation Strategy Steering Committee. The group reviewing the draft Study also noted the link between that Study and the Bicycle Study regarding utilitarian cycling. J. Somerwil had made similar comments regarding the link as well as Smart Growth at the last RNBC meeting.

4. Progress on "Backroads Niagara" Bicycling

Regional Councillor McMullan reported that the draft RFP (attached) is completed and will be sent out either Friday or Monday. NETC and Niagara Falls Tourism will have two weeks to provide a response and then the selection will be made the first week of March. Three dates have been arranged with Niagara College to discuss the mapping project and the possible use of virtual reality technology.

5. Final Preparations for the Toronto International Bike Show

K. Forgeron reported that D. Arnott is a possible alternate for volunteering Friday evening at the Bike Show and he would notify the Friday night volunteers of this. Volunteers are to pick up their badges at the main office. As there are only three passes allowed for each exhibitor, one person from each display will have to meet the next group of volunteers at the door to exchange badges so that so they won't have to pay the entrance charge when they come to volunteer for their shift.

NETC is developing 700 to 1000 promotional packages, which will be distributed at the Bike Show. There will be 5,000 copies of the off-road map and copies of the on-road trip tic style map. K. Forgeron showed the RNBC a couple of examples of maps, which will be used to show cyclists how to get to Niagara. Regional Councillor Bruce Timms had asked if we could have space to promote the Greater Niagara Circle Route. K. Forgeron suggested putting the information on an easel for display purposes. Also, there will be information on their fund raising campaign. All material will be delivered and returned by NETC.

D. Hunt reported that Velo Ontario would have their own both this year showing the provincial cycling network; however, he asked if information pamphlets on Velo could be displayed at the Regional Niagara booth. K. Forgeron said that as we had just registered to become a member of Velo that this wouldn't be a problem.

J. Helm asked if brochures for the Pedal 100 Bike Ride could be handed out at the RNBC display. It's a ride being organized through the Freewheelers and the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Councillor McMullan noted that there were no objections to having this information handed out at our booth. B. Johnson reported that he will have E. Flora contact our friends in Buffalo to see if they have anything to be handed out at our display during the Bike Show.

6. Proposals for Bike Week

M. Landry reported that the first meeting was held on February 6 to plan Bike Week. At the meeting activities were reviewed from last year and it was decided to concentrate their energies on developing and promoting the Bicycle Friendly Awards. The application form for the awards will be updated to include a website address for individuals to access support materials.

This year 86 workplaces who already have a relationship with the Public Health Department, through their Occupational Health Nurse, will be accessed. Workplaces as well as the schools were found to be the most successful last year in terms of promoting the awards. Other than focusing attention on these two areas, Bike Week will follow the same format as last year.

D. Hunt said that the main event for Bike Week will be a joint bike ride between Toronto and Niagara cyclists. This idea was proposed at the Velo Ontario meeting in January. A group of cyclists in Toronto will charter a boat and come to St. Catharines. Once in St. Catharines a lunch would be provided and then the cyclists would continue on with a ride. It was suggested that the ride could, perhaps, be added on to the Freewheelers ride on the last weekend of Bike Week. The cyclists could be divided into two groups and the ride would be held in phases to avoid road closures from occurring. All participants would sign a waiver for insurance, which would exempt the Freewheelers. There is an April 1 deadline to schedule the ride onto the Freewheelers schedule. Any questions or concerns should be brought to D. Hunt's attention.

M. Landry said that once organized this event would be added to the Bike Week flyers, media releases and website. M. Landry mentioned that the RNBC Terms of Reference indicate that we do not organize events. D. Hunt said that the RNBC is mostly facilitating rather than organizing the event.

T. Whittle asked if this event would be promoted as a public event or a Toronto Bicycling Network/Freewheeler event. D. Hunt said that he hoped it would be a public event. They were hoping to get other groups involved. P. Davies said that when you have members of the public attending you do not know what their skill level may be and this ride may be beyond some members of the general public. T. Whittle suggested having routes with turn around points.

M. Landry reported that the Greater Niagara Circle Trek will be held on May 3 and 4. The Trek raises funds to help support the Greater Niagara Circle Route. Pledge forms will be printed and water bottles will be distributed. Whatever does not get used will be returned. The St. Catharines Recreation Department is not participating in the campaign; however, Councillor Timms is working having the Rotary Club participate instead. T. Whittle wanted to know if there would be any control on the pledge sheets so that we know that the people who are collecting the money are actually turning it in. M. Landry said that the pledge sheets were not numbered last year and there has been no discussion regarding the issue this year. **(Action Item)**

7. Task Force Reports

Education and Enforcement

T. Whittle handed out the final 2002 collision statistics. The biggest increase in accidents was in the 10 to 19 year old age group. The number of charges laid were up in 2002 and there were three fatalities. T. Whittle noted that a trend in the number of "failed to remain", which had started occurring in 2002, is continuing in 2003. T. Whittle said that he would be monitoring this trend in 2003. B. Romanuk asked if the "unknown" should be increased to 19. T. Whittle said that yes, it should.

B. Johnson said that he was having a meeting with D. Brennan from the Niagara Regional Police in regards to the motor vehicle accident record system.

Engineering

F. Pravitz reported that the Engineering Task Force has not met; however, he did provide additional comments to Marshall Macklin Monaghan in regards to the draft Bicycle Master Plan Study. After the December RNBC meeting, a map had been left with F. Pravitz to critique. F. Pravitz's said his comments focused on specific details and some general comments with approach to signage.

Councillor McMullan inquired as to how the consultant's report was progressing. B. Johnson responded that F. Pravitz's comments were the final comments submitted to the consultants. This information will be added as an appendix to the actual document.

Councillor McMullan also asked if revising the budget numbers in regards to the cost of implementing the Bicycle Master Plan Study were being addressed by the consultants. B. Johnson said that the consultants were looking at this.

8. Information Items Distributed

K. Forgeron distributed the following items:

- E-mail from F. Pravitz. The e-mail contains comments to the consultants on the map that was distributed at the December 2002 RNBC meeting.
- Velo Ontario Cycling Alliance registration form. K. Forgeron announced that we had recently purchased a membership to the Alliance.
- E-mail from P. Warwick to the City of Niagara Falls regarding his concerns over the proposed narrowing of Beaverdams Road for traffic calming purposes. In an e-mailed response from the G. Holman at the City of Niagara Falls, P. Warwick was reassured that when reconstructing Beaverdams Road, the City would reconsider their approach to promoting traffic calming.
- E-mail from D. Bender of Hamilton's Cycling Committee. The e-mail provides a summary of the types of activities that their bikeway strategy deals with and the kinds of projects that they fund.
- Letter from Sherry Sparks, who was a Public-at-Large representative, submitted her resignation from the RNBC.

9. Other Business

Velo Ontario

D. Hunt spoke regarding the Velo Ontario meeting held on January 28. The specific aims of Velo Ontario area:

- To provide a province-wide body for advocacy and lobbying for cyclists and their issues
- To promote and facilitate education of cyclists on safe and effective cycling practices, and of others on awareness of cyclists and their rights
- To monitor the policies and practices of all levels of government, and to make recommendations on their appropriateness for cyclists
- To provide a provincial forum for communication among cyclists, and a mechanism to elevate issues within the organization
- To promote the environment and health benefits of cycling

It was Velo Ontario's first charter meeting with approximately 35 people in attendance. Seven directors were elected with two more positions still to be filled. D. Hunt was elected Vice-President.

Safety Committee

T. Whittle reported that the Chief of Police has created a committee to look at traffic safety in Niagara. T. Whittle said that there should be representation from the cycling community on this committee. It was suggested that a letter be drafted to the Chief indicating our interest in having a cycling representative on the committee.

Councillor McMullan will draft the letter requesting cycling representation on the committee and Paul Pattison volunteered to serve on the committee.

Motion:

To have Paul Pattison serve as the cycling representative on the Chief of Police's committee to look at traffic safety.

Moved by: Bill Crux

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

T. Whittle said that he read about a proposed widening and expansion of Regional Road 20 from South Pelham to Highway 406. Areas of that roadway are being reconstructed to accommodate three to five lanes at various points on the road. This road is not on the bicycling network, but it has been identified as a route used by cyclists heading to Niagara Falls. He asked if the road would receive paved shoulders. B. Johnson said that as far as he knows the road will receive paved shoulders; however, it is not going to be five lanes.

Traffic Lights

J. Somerwil discussed having some of the traffic lights go on flash during the late evening hours. This would prevent having a vehicle sitting for the duration of a traffic light, burning gas, when no other vehicle is approaching the intersection. J. Somerwil feels that a study should be done regarding the use of a more sophisticated traffic light system.

Traffic Circles (Roundabouts)

J. Somerwil indicated that traffic circles are being used throughout Europe and he would like to have a discussion regarding traffic circles being used in the Niagara Region in the near future.

B. Johnson reported that there is a roundabout in Ancaster, which is very successful. The Region is looking for a pilot location to install a roundabout here.

T. Whittle felt that from his experience, when you have pedestrian traffic, roundabouts are not that suitable. In order for pedestrians to cross the street you would have to install a pedestrian crossing approximately 20 or 30 feet down a side street. When the traffic stops for pedestrians to cross then traffic backs up.

10. Next RNBC Meeting

Due to the upcoming March Break, the Thursday, March 13, 2003 meeting was cancelled. The next scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday, April 10 at

Regional Headquarters – Committee Room 4 – 7:00 p.m. A reminder letter will be sent out to that effect.

Meeting Notes Taken by:

Julie Bittner

Reviewed & Revised by Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner