

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, January 8, 2004
Committee Room #3
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Rob Gabriel	- Regional Councillor (Interim Chair)
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
John Reep	- Public at Large
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Brenda Tanfara	- Guest
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Tim Whittle	- Regional Niagara Police Service
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Angela Gueldenstubbe	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Bob Johnson	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Dwight Alguire	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

Paul Pattison would like to speak to the Committee regarding the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge.

Ken Forgeron would like to speak to the Committee about a suggestion made by the CAO, Mike Trojan, to merge the RNBC with the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee.

Jan Somerwil would like to discuss with the Committee the date of the November 11th RNBC meeting. The date of this meeting falls on Remembrance Day.

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

2. Review of Meeting Notes of December 9, 2003

Motion:

To adopt the RNBC Meeting Notes of December 9, 2003.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

3. Business Arising

K. Forgeron updated the Committee on a number of "Action Items" which arose out of the December 9th meeting.

The Committee's suggested changes to the letters being sent to the Cities of Thorold and St. Catharines regarding signage along Canal Road. The changes were made and the letters were sent out under Councillor Gabriel's signature.

A question had arisen at the December 9th meeting regarding bicycle lanes along Colbeck Drive in Welland. B. Johnson reported that he will clarify this with E. Flora. **(Action Item)**

K. Forgeron reported that edge lines for cyclists had been put down between Rykert and Regional Rd. 81 in St. Catharines

B. Johnson said that he has spoken to the City of St. Catharines and reported that the City does not want to assume responsibility of dealing with parking issues on Regional roads. Regional Niagara could make that decision. In the case of Carleton Street, however, without local support, B. Johnson reported that he could not see the Region removing the parking from that street.

K. Forgeron reported to the Committee that he had spoken to Brian Hughes regarding the RNBC's request to be notified of public meetings on environmental assessments. Notification will be sent via e-mail to a contact at the Freewheelers for distribution to their members. Notification, also via e-mail, will be sent to RNBC members by Julie Bittner, RNBC Recording Secretary. **(Action Item)**

4. Comments on the Draft Terms of Reference for RNBC (2003-2006)

K. Forgeron reported to the Committee that he and Dave Hunt have reviewed the most recent draft of the RNBC Terms of Reference and have a number of changes and suggestions. He requested that other committee members do the same and provide him with their comments. The draft Terms of Reference contains a lot of suggestions made by Marshall Macklin Monaghan. Mr. Forgeron noted that it was suggested in the Terms of Reference that committee participation be increased to 40 members. Getting a quorum of 20 members for each meeting will be a challenge.

5. Toronto International Bike Show

Mr. Forgeron reported to the Committee that he had contacted NETC and space has been booked for the RNBC to set-up a display at the Toronto International Bike Show (March 5 – 7). The new bike map will be a key feature and a \$1.00 donation will be requested. B. Foster of NETC will arrange for the set-up of the display. Mr. Whittle volunteered to be responsible for taking down the display on the Sunday. Mr. Forgeron told the Committee that we will need volunteers to staff the display. A volunteer sign up list for this purpose will be created.

6. Collision Statistics for 2003

T. Whittle reported that the overall collisions reported for 2003 are lower than in 2002. He reported that there were no fatalities in 2003. However, the main cause of collisions involving cyclists was due to cyclists riding on the sidewalk, jumping the curb and then getting struck by a car making a turn at an intersection. He also noted the high number of collisions in the 10 – 19 age category. Mr. Johnson asked whether this category could be broken down into two categories to reflect the difference in maturity level. Mr. Whittle agreed and said that this category could deal with grade school, high school and even people who are out of school. He said he could break down that category more in the future. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Whittle reported that the number of drivers being charged has increased, but the total number of charges laid are low when you consider the number of collisions which have resulted in injuries. T. Whittle said that he would contact Sue McNevin at the Region to find the collision statistics for Regional roads. Mr. Johnson said that the Region would be preparing a report to Public Works Committee on collision statistics for 2003.

Until Mr. Whittle's statistics and the Region's are confirmed, the collision statistics posted on the RNBC website will be referred to as "preliminary".

7. New Bicycle Committee Display

K. Forgeron reported to the committee that the RNBC display needs to be updated. Depending on the 2004 budget, Mr. Forgeron suggested that a student could be hired to develop a new display among other duties. The RNBC should start gathering suitable photos for the new display now. In the meantime, the current display will be used for the Toronto International Bike Show. Mr. Johnson offered the assistance of his staff in terms of providing photos of different areas of the Region. This offer was accepted. **(Action Item)**

8. Update on Regional Police Service Safety Task Force

B. Johnson reported that he attended the last meeting of the Traffic Fatality Task Force and it appeared to him that the Task Force was unsure as to what direction they wanted to go in. On January 21st, the Region is hosting the next meeting with the purpose of devising a plan on exactly what needs to be addressed and how the committee will work.

9. Bicycle Friendly Awards and Possible Incentives

Marian Landry introduced Angela Gueldenstubbe to the Committee. Ms. Gueldenstubbe spoke to the Committee regarding the updated information package to be sent to the schools to promote the Bicycle Friendly Awards. Ms. Gueldenstubbe reported that she has been working with the elementary school nurses and together changes were made to the criteria in order to make them more applicable to the schools. The nurses said that they would work to promote and support the awards with the revised criteria. The number of criteria has changed from ten to nine and is applicable to both workplaces and schools. Mr. Whittle suggested that under criteria number five, "*Encouragement of cycling through programs and events for students, staff, employees or customers...*" that perhaps another example of bike related programs could be added, for example, "CanBike."

Councillor Gabriel asked about criteria number eight, "*Incentives or discounts for cyclists,*" and whether the criteria is applicable to students. Ms. Gueldenstubbe said that an example could be added pertaining to "monetary or other." It was also suggested that the word "*discounts*" be taken out altogether.

Also, Mr. Whittle commented that in the proposed package to be sent to the schools, reference was made to cycling on the sidewalk and the procedure to follow in going around a pedestrian. He expressed to the Committee that the wording should either be changed or clarified to indicate that riding on the sidewalk should apply to Kindergarteners or small children only.

Ms. Gueldenstubbe said that the nurses would distribute one package, along with a nomination package, to the school Principal. When presentations are done at the schools, another package would be given right to the teacher. With 186 elementary schools, it was felt that this would be a good way to get the information out, encourage the children to ride their bikes and, as well, the information would go out to the parents. The package will cost, approximately, \$1.65 and 300 copies will be needed. Bob Johnson will investigate remaining RNBC funding. **(Action Item)**

Motion:

To approve the printing of 300 copies of the Bicycle Friendly Awards school packages dependent on the availability of funds in the RNBC budget.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

M. Landry reported that the school nurses have indicated that there are many competing interests at the schools and strongly recommend that a financial prize be awarded to the winning schools. M. Landry suggested that the prize must be cycling specific. Mr. Whittle said that he thought that the Bike Friendly Awards were to be awarded to institutions that have already demonstrated how they are bike friendly. We should not have to offer a bribe. They should be doing it on their own. Also, he felt that if we offer a financial award to educational institutions then what happens with the other categories. Ms. Landry said that a lot of thought had been given on the issue of financial awards for schools. She explained that the school age children are our future and since we have limited money it should go the schools only. Mr. Johnson said that he thought that "recognition" was needed rather than a "financial reward". He suggested that press coverage may be more substantial recognition.

Ms. Landry told the Committee that she had been approached by the St. Catharines Standard on doing an article on the Bicycle Friendly Awards featuring workplaces. She asked the Committee to forward to her the names of individuals who cycle to work and she will forward the names to the Standard of those who may be contacted for interviews. **(Action Item)**

Ms. Landry reported that Niagara's Bicycle Friendly Awards are becoming well known across the province. Health Promoters from Thunder Bay have approached the Public Health Department regarding a Bicycle Friendly Award presentation at an upcoming workshop.

10. Velo Ontario Annual General Meeting (February 21, 2004)

Dave Hunt will provide more details at the next RNBC meeting.

11. Task Force Reports

Encouragement

M. Landry reported that based on the input she had previously received, the slogan for bike month will be "Niagara Cycles". The slogan will be used on the pamphlet printed to promote bike month and the other suggested slogans will be used in various promotional materials.

Motion:

To approve the use of the slogan “Niagara Cycles” for bike month.

Moved by: Peter Davies

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

Safety and Enforcement

T. Whittle requested the re-printing of the pamphlets, *Trail Etiquette on Multi-Use Trails*, and *Lighten Up, Eh?*. Approximately 2,000 copies are required. Bob Johnson will check on available funding. **(Action Item)**

Engineering

F. Pravitz reported that the Task Force has been active and had been looking at what new network facilities have been implemented. Striping has been included on Queenston Street through Victoria Lawn Cemetery and on Louth Street between Rykert and St. Paul. Bike lanes have been included on a newly reconstructed portion of Stanley Avenue between McLeod Road and Main St. in Niagara Falls.

Written comments have been provided by several members of the RNBC on the Lakeshore Road EA in St. Catharines.

Mr. Pravitz said that he had a meeting with Paul Pattison and Regional Councillor Bruce Timms on January 7th to discuss an EA for the Glendale reconstruction from the Welland Canal to Merritt Street. Mr. Pravitz reported that there may be bike lanes on this segment of the road and there may be a multi-use path which will connect to the Welland Canals Parkway. He also reported that Councillor Timms is interested in the reconfiguration of the intersection of Government and Glendale roads. Also, they would be interested in seeing bike turning lanes at the Wembley Road intersection.

Mr. Pravitz reported that an EA will be completed for the extension of the South Service Road in the Town of Grimsby. This work would extend the South Service Road in an easterly direction and would provide a connection to Greenlane Road. Mr. Pravitz said he would like to view the plans to see if there will be a paved bike lane or wide paved shoulders to accommodate cyclists. The extension of the South Service Road might help move cyclists through the town to Greenlane which is part of the cycling network.

Mr. Pravitz reported that the Signage Sub-committee has not yet met, but will become active later in the year. **(Action Item)**

12. Queenston-Lewiston Bridge

Paul Pattison distributed a draft of the comments he had helped to develop involving RNBC members on the proposed Queenston-Lewiston Bridge improvements.

Motion:

To endorse the recommendations made by RNBC members in the December 21, 2003 response to the consultant.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: John Reep

Carried

Ken Forgeron will provide a copy of the RNBC's final comments to George Nicholson for the next Greater Niagara Circle Route agenda (**Action Item**)

13. Information Items for Distribution

K. Forgeron distributed the following items:

- Memo from Bob Johnson to Joe Cousins, Director of Transportation Services, requesting a Public Works Committee representative to sit on the RNBC. It was reported that Mr. Cousins will bring this item forward at the next PWC meeting.
- Letter from Velo Ontario to the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission opposing the proposed changes to the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge and the negative impact they will have on pedestrians and cyclists.
- Letter from the Waterfront Regeneration Trust to Ecoplans Limited expressing its concerns regarding the EA improvements to Highway 405, Stanley Ave. Bridge and Queenston-Lewiston Bridge and Plaza, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The letter discusses the economic and tourism impact that the proposed improvements would have.
- Letter from the Region of Niagara's Planning Department to Ecoplans Limited regarding concerns that they have with the proposed changes to cycling and pedestrian access to and over the Queenston Lewiston Bridge.
- Letter from the Region's Planning Department to Cam Milne, Regional Niagara Project Manager for the Glendale Avenue reconstruction, providing comments on the Glendale Avenue Class EA.
- Letter to the City of Thorold from the RNBC regarding the issue of signage located along the Welland Canals Parkway.
- Letter from Velo Ontario to the Regional Clerk (copies to Ian Neville, Corwin Cambray and Dr. Williams) supporting the continuation of the RNBC and the importance of bike committees across Ontario for promoting and advocating cycling.

14. Suggested Agenda Items for February 12, 2004

Councillor Gabriel suggested that RNBC members forward any agenda items to Ken Forgeron.

15. Next RNBC Meeting

The next RNBC meeting will take place on Thursday, February 12th in Committee Room #3 at Regional Headquarters beginning at 7:00 p.m.

16. Other Business

Councillor Rob Gabriel told the Committee that Mike Trojan, CAO, had made a suggestion in regards to joining the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee and the RNBC. He requested comments from both Committees on this suggestion. Mr. Whittle told the Committee that he was not in favour of this suggestion as the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee is very focused on promoting one loop in the Region and we (RNBC) look at broader issues like cycling on roads, engineering, education, policy and safety. Also, some municipalities are not part of the Greater Niagara Circle Route. Mr. Pattison said that he thought that the two Committee's focuses are too different. Mr. Forgeron passed along to the Committee e-mailed comments from Dave Hunt and Bob Romanuk, which do not support a merger. Mr. Pravitz agreed with the comments, but said that there may be some advantage in the future of joining the two committees once the Greater Niagara Circle Route winds down. The work and the experience of the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee on off-road trail development may be lost if we can not find a way to bring them in to the RNBC.

Mr. Gabriel said that it appeared that the consensus of both Committees was that this was not a good idea and he would relay the information.

Mr. Forgeron provided the Committee with some statistics on Regional bicycle facility construction for 2003. He reported that 21 kilometres of on-road facilities and 10 kilometres of (i.e. Greater Niagara Circle Route) off-road trail had been constructed.

Mr. Pravitz suggested to the Committee that whenever there are opportunities to provide input on EAs, members should try and attend public open houses and provide written comments.

Meeting Notes Taken by:

Julie Bittner

Reviewed by Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner