

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, July 10, 2003
24 Wolseley Avenue, St. Catharines
6:00 p.m.

Present:

| | |
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| Brian McMullan | - Regional Councillor (Chair) |
| Bob Romanuk | - Public at Large |
| David Hunt | - Public at Large |
| Jan Somerwil | - Public at Large |
| Paul Pattison | - Public at Large |
| John Helm | - Public at Large |
| Peter Davies | - Niagara Freewheelers |
| Frank Pravitz | - Ministry of Transportation |
| Tim Whittle | - Niagara Regional Police Service |
| Ken Forgeron | - Regional Niagara Planning |
| Nick Rosati | - Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation) |
| Phil Bergen | - Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation) |
| Julie Bittner | - Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation) |

Regrets:

Marian Landry - Regional Niagara Public Health Department

1. Adoption of Agenda

The order of the agenda was changed so that the verbal report by Nick Rosati was first on the agenda. Jan Somerwil had information on round-a-bouts to be submitted to Brian Hughes of the Public Works Department. Except for the change in the order of the agenda, the meeting notes from June 12, 2003 were adopted.

2. Review of Meeting Notes of June 12, 2003

Motion:

To adopt the agenda and the RNBC Meeting Notes of June 12, 2003.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

3. Business Arising

4. Flash Traffic Signal Lighting in Late Evening

N. Rosati from the Public Works Department provided a verbal report on the use of flashing traffic signal lights in the late evening. Mr. Rosati explained that the use of flashing lights in the evenings is currently not used within the Region of Niagara. A report was done a number of years ago regarding the pros and cons of such a system, which recommended against it. This follows recommendations made by

the Institute of Transportation Engineers, Ontario Traffic Conference and Ontario Traffic Manual of Traffic Signals written by the Ministry of Transportation.

In cases where the signals do go to flash (eg. problem with the signal) the lights will flash red in all four directions. The system is programmed this way due to safety concerns. It was felt that it is safer for motorists and for those who maintain the lights if all traffic was made to come to a stop. The system can only be programmed one way: either all the lights at an intersection flash red or else the lights flash red for traffic on one street and amber for traffic on the other street for all flash operations whether programmed to do so or a malfunction has caused the flash mode.

T. Whittle questioned why it is necessary to have people stop at intersections in the late evening/early morning when there is no traffic approaching in either direction. N. Rosati said that people have a sense of security regarding traffic signals. Also, some signalized intersections have been installed due to political requests or due to a fatality having occurred at the intersection.

A discussion was held regarding the problems that a cyclist faces when they are stopped at a traffic light. A bicycle does not have enough mass to trigger the light to change. N. Rosati reported that the signal will rest on green on main streets until a vehicle pulls up to a side street. On the side street, there is a push button which a cyclist could press in order to cause the signal to cycle. However, this requires a cyclist to dismount, walk onto the sidewalk and press a button.

K. Forgeron suggested a possible compromise. Perhaps the push button device could be located close to the curb so that a cyclist would not have to get off their bike in order to push the button. N. Rosati said that certain design guidelines have to be followed in regards to the positioning of the push button. There are minimum horizontal clearances from the travelled portion of the road. Also, the guidelines can vary depending on whether the road is a rural or urban area.

K. Forgeron said that it was his understanding that there had been some discussion at Public Works Committee on re-visiting the issue of the signals turning to flash during certain hours. Chair McMullan said that more discussion may be required at Public Works Committee.

N. Rosati told the Committee that a consultant had recently been hired to do a signal system review. Perhaps the consultant could do a review of what other municipalities have in terms of their current operations. He said that possibly a comment could be made in the consultant's report. N. Rosati agreed to provide further information to the RNBC once the consultant's review has been completed **(Action Item)**.

J. Helm suggested that the consultants contact the City of Newmarket where he believes they use the flashing signal system in the evening.

Motion:

To accept Nick Rosati's verbal report and to await further information once Regional Niagara's consultant has completed a signal review.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Jan Somerwil

Carried

5. 2003 Transportation Capital Program and Hot Mix Resurfacing and Strengthening Projects

At the June RNBC meeting, the 2003 Hot Mix Program was distributed. Two lists were distributed which consisted of areas that would be addressed in the program, and the other list consisted of areas that will be addressed if funds are available.

K. Forgeron reported that F. Pravitz has spoken to John Rizzo in Public Works regarding the resurfacing of those roads, which are to have bike lanes. The following roads are part of the 2003 Hot Mix Program:

- RR26 (Jordan Rd.) from the QEW to Fourth Avenue in Jordan (for the most part a SuperBuild project).
- A section of road in Grimsby along the North Service Road between Hunter and Kerman.

In terms of paved shoulders, segments which are part of Marshall, Macklin and Monaghan study are being included.

- RR50 (Merrittville Road) from Beaverdams Road to Schmon Parkway

Other roads are listed, but will only be completed if funds permit.

K. Forgeron also said that, although this area is not in the Niagara Region, the MTO will be working on Highway 3 in Haldimand County. There is a nine kilometer part of Dunnville which will be shouldered to the Niagara boundary.

6. Comments on Draft Bicycle Map for Niagara

It was reported that a number of edits had been made on the draft Bicycle Map for Niagara. The map is set to go to the printers on Friday, July 18. A meeting would be held on Tuesday, July 15 to discuss final edits and the logistics of printing.

P. Bergen presented a mock-up of the map including contact information and some safety tips. He requested that comments be provided soon, particularly with respect to the back layout of the map.

T. Whittle mentioned that Zoom Leisure, which is shown as being in Fort Erie, is actually located in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

P. Bergen reported that Tom Bailey, of the Niagara Freewheelers, had received a copy of the map this afternoon. Mr. Bailey has quite a few good comments which will lead to further modifications on the map.

F. Pravitz reported that some base information came from Tom Bailey and CanMap. F. Pravitz said that he had gone over the map with both Phil and Nathan Hercanuck to try and get the information as accurate as possible. This is the Committee's final opportunity to provide input on the map.

F. Pravitz briefly highlighted the following points:

- orange roads are the "quiet" roads.
- yellow roads are the busy roads.
- red outlined roads have paved shoulders.
- QEW is mostly faded out.
- gravel roads are marked in light brown.
- road allowances are shown in dotted lines.
- paved trails are marked in green.
- roads which are only suitable for mountain bikes were not included.
- the Escarpment and hills are also marked.

Input regarding the accuracy of the Fonthill area would be appreciated.

F. Pravitz reported that on the reverse side of the map, they were hoping to do inset maps of St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland. However, both budget limitations and time did not permit this to be done. Instead, off-road trail information will be provided, including mapping and trail descriptions.

F. Pravitz reported that they did not end up having the amount of advertising that they were hoping to have. He requested the Committee to provide suggestions for alternatives to fill the space where the advertising was to go. Some members of the Committee expressed surprise that more bike shops did not purchase advertising space. They wanted to know which shops were approached. P. Bergen said that NETC sent out two letters to bike shops asking if they were interested in advertising. B. McMullan reported that he had a meeting with P. Bergen and G. Hardy to discuss the issue of advertising and the inclusion of bike shops. However, NETC did not feel that they had the manpower to provide individual, person-to-person contact. J. Helm, P. Davies and T. Whittle reviewed the list of bike shops which were solicited and noticed a number of omissions. They have offered to approach some of the bike shops who were not included on the list to see if they would be interested in purchasing advertising space on the map (**Action Item**).

F. Pravitz said that the more advertising space we sell, the more money we will have to print more maps.

The Greater Niagara Circle Route will be an important component on the map. A short description of the route will be provided.

Comments on the accuracy of the list of bikes shops, rental shops and tour operators would be appreciated.

A meeting for Tuesday, July 15 is scheduled with the individuals who are doing the layout for the map.

T. Whittle suggested that the information regarding how to use the map should be placed in the large green area at the front of the map in the space which represents New York State.

The Committee indicated that if there is unsold advertising space remaining, that one of the spaces be given to the Freewheelers in gratitude for all the support they have provided us.

Motion:

To provide the Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club with free advertising space if any spots are unsold.

Moved by: Bob Romanuk

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

F. Pravitz requested that J. Somerwil provide any good bicycling photos he may have. P. Davies said that Helen Barber from the Freewheelers has been taking pictures for about ten years and that if F. Pravitz needed some photos, he could also get them from her.

D. Hunt reported that the Shorthills Provincial Park map that is shown on the 2001 Off-Road Trails Map is a bit out-of-date. There is now a third trail that should be identified. K. Forgeron suggested that Dave provide him with the new mapping for inclusion on the map. D. Hunt said that the map showing the third trail could be sent electronically.

P. Davies suggested that, if there is enough space, perhaps advice on cycling could be included. Riders should, for example, carry a spare inner tube and repair kit. F. Pravitz requested P. Davies send him an electronic description.

On a previous draft there was a large inset showing the local wineries. Someone commented that the inset was so large that the map gave the appearance of it being a winery map. A reduced version will be put on the backside of the map. Chair McMullan said that he would arrange a meeting with the Wine Council in an attempt to receive some additional funding. Also, Niagara Falls Tourism is reconsidering purchasing advertising space on the map.

B. McMullan spoke to the Committee regarding putting a value on the map. He suggested that the map should be, at least, \$1.00, taking into consideration staff time, printing, etc. The map could still be given away at events if the Committee wished to do so.

D. Hunt said that the Shorthills map is \$5.00 and that a number of retail stores buy the map at that price and then it's left up to them to decide at what price they want to sell the map at.

B. Romanuk said that eventually the map will be available electronically.

F. Pravitz asked if there was any Regional policy that would prevent the RNBC from putting a price on the map. K. Forgeron said that the map may have to be included within a Regional By-law. There is a by-law that lists everything that is sold and the map may need to be included on that list.

Motion:

To sell the new Niagara Bicycling Map for \$2.00 inclusive of taxes.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

7. Comment on Bicycle Master Plan

K. Forgeron said that he had received comments from both F. Pravitz and D. Hunt regarding the Bicycle Master Plan (copies distributed). The comments will be forwarded to Eric Flora and then passed on to the consultants. Marshall, Macklin and Monaghan said that the Bicycle Master Plan would be available for the Regional website within the next two weeks.

K. Forgeron reported that the Bicycle Master Plan may be presented to the Public Works Committee in August and then to Council in September.

J. Helm inquired as to whether Regional Road 24 would be included on the map. K. Forgeron said that Marshall Macklin Monaghan have taken the position that Regional Road 24 (Victoria Avenue) should not be included on the map because of safety considerations. However, they have included Fourth Avenue on the network which is a new change. The consultants are also crafting an additional recommendation regarding a signage policy.

8. Joint Bicycle Committee Meeting Highlights

B. Romanuk provided the Committee with a copy of the meeting notes from the Joint Meeting of Bicycling Committees from Burlington – Hamilton – Niagara, which was held on June 14 in Niagara Falls.

The Joint Bicycle Committee Meeting started off with a presentation regarding the National and World Cycling Championships in Hamilton.

Discussion took place on the Niagara map project and on utilitarian cycling. A presentation was made on the Millennium Trail and the NIMBY obstacles associated with it in Niagara Falls.

Highlights from the Toronto Bike Show were presented.

Burlington, Hamilton and Niagara all provided Bicycling Masterplan updates.

The Joint Committee discussed bicycle curb lanes vs. shared use lanes. The City of Burlington spoke about some of the difficulties they have been experiencing there. The City has hired Marshall Macklin Monaghan to advise the City on the painting of pavement lines. They may be recommending that the City does not put an edge line down because of safety concerns unless there is, at least, one metre of shoulder available in urban areas.

D. Hunt provided a brief update on Velo Ontario.

M. Landry gave a presentation on the highlights of Niagara's Bike Week.

Lastly, a bike ride was taken by the participants to showcase the Millennium Trail. Photos were taken of the ride.

F. Pravitz asked the RNBC about participation at the World Cycling Championships in October. K. Forgeron said that he had spoken to B. Foster about having a booth at the Worlds. It was reported that booth space is \$1,000 and that if we are willing to spend the \$1,000 and provide volunteers to staff the booth, then NETC will make the arrangements. Regional Councillor B. Timms has expressed interest in having a Regional presence at the Worlds to promote the Greater Niagara Circle Route. K. Forgeron suggested that either Councillor Timms or Councillor B. McMullan speak to Bill Connors from NETC regarding our participation at the Worlds. B. McMullan said that he would speak to B. Connors.

P. Davies thought that a number of volunteers for the booth could come from the Freewheelers organization. It was suggested keeping volunteer time down to two or three hour slots to allow the volunteers an opportunity to watch the races as well. B. Romanuk suggested restricting the volunteers to either RNBC members or knowledgeable members of the Freewheelers. T. Whittle reminded the Committee that we should be careful who we have volunteering as they will be representing Regional Niagara. Also, there should be some orientation training for the volunteers. P. Pattison wondered if parking would be a problem and the logistics of getting the volunteers in and out of the area. J. Helm suggested the possibility of approaching St. Catharines Transit or Laidlaw for transportation to the Worlds.

9. RNBC Web Site Use

B. Romanuk reported that through our service provider, we are able to order statistical reports over a seven day period. He distributed an RNBC Web Site General Statistics Summary. It is possible to know, for example, how many hits our webpage is receiving per day or over a specific period of time. He reported that the number of hits to our site has tripled since the Toronto International Bike Show. The summary also shows us that the top three pages being accessed are: mapping, cycling links and upcoming events. The most downloaded file was the St. Catharines Loop, followed by the Niagara-on-the-Lake route and then the Fort Erie route. The summary also lets us know from what page people are coming from when they access our webpage. The second most common page providing access to our site was from Cycle Niagara. A Google search was the third.

10. Task Force Reports

- K. Forgeron distributed a summary of Bike Week highlights on behalf of M. Landry and the Encouragement Task Force. Also, she wanted everyone to start thinking about the 2004 Bike Week. She is also looking for nominations for the 2003 Bicycle Friendly Awards. Marian said that she is depending on committee members to nominate businesses, educational institutions and workplaces.

11. Information Items for Distribution

K. Forgeron distributed and provided some highlights on the following items:

- “2003 World Cycling Championships Update – June 6, 2003.” Provides some “fast facts” about the event and its significance.
- Copy of an article from a newsletter titled “Safe Routes to Schools: Sustrans” Summer/Autumn 2003 edition. The article discussed a very interesting survey which had been done which investigated what factors had contributed most to high cycling rates in the schools surveyed. The top three reasons were:
 - New cycle storage
 - Proactive head teacher or champion
 - Designated cycle route within 0.5 km
 - Marian’s task force will be interested in this information. It has direct links to Jan’s interest in utilitarian cycling.
 - Ministry of Transportation Media Release regarding \$2.1 million for Highway 3 improvements in the Dunnville Area. The work will include curve widening and construction of fully paved shoulders to the Niagara boundary.
 - Toronto Star series on Bike Week in Toronto. The articles include: Bike routes, health aspects, the business of cycling, ex. couriers.
 - J. Somerwil provided additional information on the issue of roundabouts. The information contained a diagram related to the design of roundabouts. The

information will be referred to Brian Hughes to incorporate into the Niagara Region's roundabout pilot project (**Action Item**).

- Meeting notes from the June 14, 2003 Joint Meeting of Bicycling Committees.

Motion:

To refer the information provided by J. Somerwil on roundabout designs to Brian Hughes in Regional Public Works.

Moved by: John Helm

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

12. Other Business

T. Whittle asked for an update on the RNBC budget. K. Forgeron said that there is a new budget process this year. Public Works can only spend a certain portion of their budget and then they have to ask Public Works Committee and Council for authorization to spend the rest. It is at this point that money will be allocated to the mapping project and to the Waterfront Trust.

F. Pravitz suggested that since there will not be another meeting until September, perhaps we should put together a preliminary list of volunteers for the Worlds. Chair McMullan suggested waiting to see if we received the funding from NETC because unless we get the funding, we will not have a booth. If we do receive the funding for the booth, we could probably use e-mail to communicate information and slot the volunteers into timeframes. Chair McMullan will ask NETC to let K. Forgeron know if we will receive the funding.

Chair McMullan read a letter from J. Somerwil thanking the Committee for the birthday cake and the gift certificate which were provided to him at the June RNBC meeting.

Congratulations were extended to Julie Bittner, RNBC recording secretary, on her recent marriage.

Finally, a thank-you was extended to both Paul and his wife Willie for providing us with the location and the food for the meeting.

13. Next RNBC Meeting

The next RNBC meeting will take place on Thursday, September 11th in Committee Room #4. The August meeting has been cancelled.

Meeting Notes Taken by:

Julie Bittner
Reviewed by Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner