

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, July 14, 2005
The Ice Box Restaurant in Port Colborne
6:00 p.m.

Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Gregg Dame	- Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee
Wray Bennor	- Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee
Randy Benn	- Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Region Police Service
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large and Cycle Ontario Alliance
Bill Dickson	- Public at Large
John Reep	- Public at Large
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning

Regrets:

Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Bob Romanuk	- Niagara Falls Trails and Bikeways Committee
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

The meeting commenced at 6:00 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

Councillor Leavens thanked members of the Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee for making arrangements for the joint meeting/social this evening and he looked forward to a productive discussion.

The order of the agenda was revised, and with the addition of the agenda items listed below, the agenda was adopted.

- Line Fences Act (Paul Pattison)
- CANBIKE Safety Courses (Ken Forgeron)
- Completion of Glenridge Avenue Road Reconstruction (Ken Forgeron)
- Pedal 100 Charity Bicycle Ride (Ken Forgeron)
- Accessibility and the Greater Niagara Circle Route in Welland (Tim Whittle)

Motion:

To accept the Agenda of July 14th as revised.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (June 2nd, 2005)

- Councillor Leavens indicated that the Environmental Assessment (EA) for Regional Road 20 should be revisited from the perspective of accommodating cyclists traveling through Niagara via Fonthill on their way to Niagara Falls. He requested that this item be added to the August 25th RNBC agenda. In the meantime, Councillor Leavens agreed to speak to Ian Neville, Commissioner of Public Works and Mayor Robin Brock about the possibility of paved shoulders along Regional Road 20. **(Action Item)**

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of June 2nd as revised.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Gregg Dame

Carried

3. Business Arising

The Committee was provided updates on a number of "Action Items" which arose out of the June 2005 meeting notes:

Mr. Forgeron noted that Eric Flora had provided a summary e-mail on various Action Items to update the RNBC. This information will be summarized below.

- Southern Ontario Gateway Council met on July 5th in Burlington. It was attended by John Barr on behalf of George Nicholson of the Planning Department. The Southern Ontario Gateway Council has established a sub-committee to deal with the proposed Strategic Plan and Economic Impact Study. Niagara's position/concerns will be voiced. The Council is planning a major launch in the fall (tentative for late November). There are follow-up meetings planned for October 2005 and January 2006
- No further information is available on the form or timing of a possible enforcement blitz aimed at cycling. Mr. Whittle will report at a later date when information is available.
- The RNBC Terms of Reference (ToR) was approved by Regional Council June 9th and was e-mailed to RNBC members June 10th.
- A letter is still outstanding from Mr. Flora regarding cyclists activating traffic lights **(Action Item)**
- A regional staff report on the Geneva St. underpass will go to the Public Works and Utilities Committee in August. The report will deal with cost sharing details/issues related to the increase in structural span due to the additional lane request by the Region and City of St. Catharines – including increased sidewalk width. The city will take a similar report to their Council after approval of the Region's report.
- A discussion on promoting bicycle tourism in Niagara through NEDC was held. The discussion was first focused on who should pay for bicycle tourism promotion.

Some members felt that the RNBC should not contribute financially. Most committee members felt that NEDC's request for a shared approach could not be avoided, and our participation would be required to obtain a positive outcome to bicycle tourism.

A priority list of items is to be forwarded by Mr. Forgeron to NEDC as identified below:

- A display system and component contents. This might also include a tent for use in the outdoors
- A DVD to provide information on bicycle tourism in Niagara
- Finalization, production and distribution of an enhanced bicycle map for Niagara

It was suggested that NEDC should assist in the preparation of future map layers that can be overlain on this base map by members of the public.

Councillor Leavens indicated that \$4.00 out of every \$5.00 is leveraged by NEDC from outside sources. He has been quite impressed, to date, with progress being made by NEDC to market and promote Niagara.

Mr. Forgeron will prepare a memo for submission to NEDC on the items discussed above. **(Action Item)**

- Councillor Leavens indicated that 20,000 letters would be distributed throughout Niagara to land owners adjacent to regional roads to inform them about proposals dealing with road rights-of-way. Mr. Flora has indicated that mapping information has been provided to RNBC members for their review. A joint Planning and Public Works report was considered in mid-July with respect to proposed rights-of-way and policies. Three public meetings will be held in the fall to discuss the proposals.

Mr. Forgeron indicated that regional staff are examining and evaluating regional roads with respect to the policy impact on bicycle facilities. More detailed information will be provided to RNBC members in the near future.

- Mr. Forgeron indicated that in regards to the mapping of historical routes that after the new bicycle map has been finalized and distributed, that the RNBC should turn its attention to developing routes that can be downloaded over the internet. These maps should include historical themed routes, for example, the Underground Railroad, the Laura Secord Walk, etc.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that the Region had received mixed comments and concerns about the possible initiative of having bike racks on buses. Mr. Flora intends to prepare a letter for the RNBC Chair's signature. **(Action Item)** This letter will be submitted to transit managers. Mr. Flora indicates that there has not been much interest expressed by transit users and the transit authorities, to date, are not

planning on installing bike racks in the near future due to the high cost to install/maintain them. They indicate that they may have a negative impact on bus scheduling. St. Catharines Transit does not permit bikes on the low floor buses. Cyclists are allowed to bring bicycles aboard buses if there is sufficient room to bring them on without blocking the aisles.

- Bike-to-Work/School Week 2006: This action item will be deferred for discussion at the August RNBC meeting when Marian Landry will be in attendance.
- Both Mr. Whittle and Mr. Forgeron reported on recent discussions regarding the issue of accessibility on the Welland Canals Trail. A presentation was made to the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee over accessibility concerns voiced by several members of the public. For example, bollards have been placed in inconvenient locations along the Welland Canals Parkway Trail. These bollards prevent wheelchair access. Mr. Forgeron distributed copies of the minutes from the June Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee on this issue. The minutes indicate that improvements to the rail crossing, north of Ontario Road in Welland, are complicated by jurisdictional issues with CN Railway. A letter will be sent to John Maloney, Federal MP for the area, asking if he can assist in resolving the issue. The Circle Route Committee would like to see this resolved with a crossing being accessible to everyone. There is some urgency to this issue, which has been under discussion for several years, in terms of access from Woodlawn Rd. to Merritt Island. A new fence has been installed which limits physically challenged people from getting to Merritt Island from Woodlawn Road. The City of Welland will be asked to review this access. In terms of a third issue affecting the east side of the recreational waterway at Townline Road, three bollards appear to restrict access. They appear to be unnecessary as people can easily get around them. This issue will also be reviewed. The Circle Route Committee will be asking the Regional Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee to review the trail through Welland from the stand point of accessibility for the physically challenged. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora is to meet with the Niagara Parks Commission on July 18th to discuss actual locations for signage installation. Mr. Flora will report on this issue at a future RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora's summary e-mail reported on three additional projects:
 - (a) St. Catharines Downtown Street Conversion Study – A second PIC was held on June 29th. The Regional Transportation section is reviewing the alternatives and will be providing comments back to the City of St. Catharines within a few weeks. The City would like to complete the study over the summer and have recommendations in front of City Council by October.
 - (b) West St. Catharines Transportation Study – A focus group meeting was held on June 21st. Cyclists concerns will be fully addressed (i.e. future road

construction/road rehabs, new roads to include bikeway facilities) subject to approved Environmental Assessments and budgets.

- (c) QEW Widening Project – Martindale Road Toronto-bound off-ramp – Both the Region and the City have indicated to the MTO that, at the staff level, they do not agree with a southbound channelized lane design concept. However, with a free-flow channelization of the tramp right-turn movement, signalization is warranted, but the MTO/consultant had previously agreed not to signalize this off-ramp at Martindale due to other geometric design issues associated with off-ramp and South Service Road intersection location. The MTO/City/Region are re-addressing this issue.

4. Activities of Port Colborne Trails & Bikeways Committee:

Mr. Dame and Mr. Benn provided a summary of the Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee activities that included:

- Participation in the June 4th, 2005 International Trails Day
- a new list of bicycle friendly businesses and services in the community. A copy of this list will be distributed at the August 25th RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**
- It was mentioned that the Friendship Trail development was almost complete for the last section between Port Colborne and Ridgeway with service stone dust awaiting a final coat of asphalt.
- Next year's 2006 Bike Fest is being planned with strong linkage to community groups.
- Road reconstruction projects are also now being reviewed for consideration of bicycling infrastructure.

5. Update on new Regional Bicycling Map

In Mr. Pravitz's absence, Mr. Forgeron provided a brief update on the project. Progress is moving slowly toward the final product with a fall completion date expected. Considerable care is being taken to use a new and improved road base map that is positionally accurate and which can be easily updated in future years. A mock-up of the reverse side of the map was shown to Committee members comprising three major urban area insets.

More information is expected from interest groups such as Friends of Shorthills Park. It is expected that notices and invitations will be sent out to potential advertisers for the map.

The GIS section of Niagara Region Public Works is quite excited about the information and quality of the product being developed to date. Off road trail information has just been provided by the Region's Planning Department for use on the map. Some of the information pertaining to the 2005/06 Road Reconstruction/Rehabilitation Program still

needs to be provided by Regional Public Works for inclusion on the map. Further updates will be provided at the next meeting. **(Action Item)**

6. Proposed Bicycling Conference: Cycling Ontario Alliance

Mr. Hunt and Mr. Forgeron circulated information concerning the proposed October 22nd Bicycling Conference. It is planned to be a day for presentations and discussions around a broad theme of "making Ontario a more bicycle friendly place" with possible cycling issues including facility design, safety, community health, role of the Cycling Ontario Alliance, etc. A detailed agenda will be circulated once it has been defined by a program committee. **(Action Item)** A Friday evening social and a Sunday bike ride are also being considered. Anyone wishing to participate in helping with this conference, please contact Ken Forgeron at 905-984-3630. The proposed venue will be McMaster University.

7. Bicycle Registration Programs

Mr. Forgeron circulated Burlington and Hamilton bicycle registration cards as examples of bicycle registration being conducted in the two neighbouring communities. Mr. Whittle indicated that he would forward these examples to his Sergeant, but noted that he Niagara Region Police Service is considering a self-administering internet system that would reduce the labour cost and be self sustaining. He also noted that individuals should keep their own records of their bicycle purchases (picture, receipt and serial number) so that this information can be on hand to help identify any stolen bicycle. He also indicated that the bicycle registration cards used elsewhere might be suitable for distribution through bike shops when new bicycles are sold.

8. Highlights of the Annual Joint Meeting of Bicycling Committees (Niagara/Hamilton/Burlington)

Mr. Hunt and Mr. Forgeron attended the June 25th joint bicycle meeting in Hamilton at McMaster University and provided a summary of the items discussed. Highlights included:

- Circulation of the new and much improved Burlington bicycle map
- Circulation of an ARC (Alternative Commuting and Transportation)
- Pamphlet, outlining the work of a McMaster University group for alternative transportation that promotes cycling
- Continuing concerns over MTO's over lack of concern for bicycle consideration at interchanges
- Halton is starting up a new bicycling committee. Mr. Peter Leyser, a former RNBC member, sits on the committee as a staff resource person.
- On road bicycle road connections between Hamilton and Niagara were reviewed. It was noted that a Young to Highland Road link should be considered and shown on the new Niagara map (Frank Pravitz please note).

- Burlington is considering putting bike racks on some of their buses.
- The need for standardized bicycle mapping between jurisdictions is necessary
- Preparations for a fall bicycling conference (previously discussed)
- Availability of cyclist activated traffic signals was discussed and the City of Burlington agreed to provide information available in their municipality as well as in Halton Region.
- The use of round-a-bouts and accommodating cyclists: Ken Forgeron agreed to provide the round-a-bout brochure prepared by the Niagara Region's Public Works Department
- A new report prepared by Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan on edge lines and bicycle transportation is available in digital form from the City of Burlington. A copy will be distributed to members of the RNBC. **(Action Item)**

The next joint meeting was scheduled for May 13th, 2006 in the Town of Pelham. Possible meeting locations include Peninsula Lakes Golf Course or the old town hall located on Canborough Road.

9. Task Force Reports

Policy Task Force

With the completion of the RNBC Terms of Reference, the next project will be the updating of the Regional Policies Plan with respect to updating the bicycling policies to coincide with those in the approved Bicycle Master Plan. It was agreed that this work should wait for the Regional Road Rights-of-Way Policy work to be completed sometime in the fall or early in 2006.

Enforcement Task Force

Mr. Whittle reported that the production of new pamphlets to replace those such as the existing Trail Etiquette brochure will soon be underway, with this effort needing a budget allotment. Also underway is the Niagara Police Services "Caught You Using Your Head" program that rewards those cyclists who are wearing helmets. Mr. Whittle mentioned the free helmet initiative for those children in need.

Engineering Task Force

In the absence of Mr. Pravitz, Gregg Dame mentioned that he had attended a Garrison Road Public Information Centre meeting in Fort Erie. This road is not on the regional bike network, but is used by cyclists due to good connections to other nearby routes and the Peace Bridge area. Mr. Dame suggested that bicycle lanes should be considered. It was also noted that a five lane cross section in the built-up area is being proposed by the Niagara Region, but it is not favoured by the Town who want a three-lane facility. The latter design may also best accommodate bicycle lanes and will reduce speeds along this section of roadway. The Town of Fort Erie would like to see boulevards and tree planting as this is a gateway project in the vicinity of the Peace Bridge.

10. Announcements

Waterfront Trail Phase III in Niagara – Mr. Forgeron reported that Phase III of the Waterfront Trail has been initiated between Jordan Road in Lincoln and Seventh Street Louth in St. Catharines. This is a six kilometer stretch of roadway that will receive 1.5 metre paved shoulders and Waterfront Trail signs. The project should be completed in August or early September. This represents the last phase of Superbuild program that Regional Niagara has received funding from the Waterfront Trust, the Provincial and Federal governments.

New Brock University RNBC representative – Mr. Forgeron that Kithio Mwanza has requested to become a members of the RNBC. The new Terms of Reference for the RNBC make provision for Brock University to have a member on the Committee. Kithio intends to be present at the August 25th meeting. In the meantime, Mr. Forgeron will meet with Kithio and brief him on the work of the RNBC and his possible involvement.

Pedal 100 – Mr. Forgeron notified everyone that on August 14th the annual Pedal 100 Bicycle Ride for the Heart and Stroke Foundation will occur. The Niagara Freewheelers will not be involved in this event as it has in the past due to liability and insurance issues.

Glenridge Avenue – Mr. Forgeron circulated a photo showing the completed bike lanes, boulevards, bus pullover areas along Glenridge Avenue between the railway and Glendale Avenue. The Region's Public Works Department is commended for work on this stretch of roadway, which involves multiple users and interests.

Moving on Sustainable Transportation Letter of Support – Mr. Forgeron circulated a letter from the City of Burlington with a request from Barb Wentworth of the City of Toronto seeking support for a program grant for Can Bike development across Canada. The grant is being submitted by the Canadian Cycling Association to expand CAN-BIKE courses in Canada through better delivery mechanism, marketing programs and structure resources. Mr. Forgeron suggested that perhaps Peter Davies could prepare a letter on behalf of the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee that could be used to support the initiative. **(Action Item)**

11. New Business

11. (a) Need for Bicycle Facilities on Regional Roads and Interchanges

Councillor Leavens mentioned the need for bicycle lanes on the section of Regional Road 20 in Fonthill, and at the Highway 406/Regional Road 20 interchange. It will be important for this east/west road artery to provide facilities to the many cyclists who use it. The discussion revealed that the bridge code may now allow the 1.5 metre buffer beside the travel portion of the pavement to

be called a bicycle lane. It was also noted that sidewalks and overpasses in this area should be provided to serve future pedestrian growth.

11. (b) Line Fences Act

Mr. Pattison previously e-mailed a package on recommendations to help amend the Line Fences Act as outlined by Dr. Wayne Caldwell from the University of Guelph. Mr. Pattison reviewed the key recommendations and asked that the RNBC support this position. The discussion indicated that the Ontario Trails Council and others do not agree with Mr. Caldwell's position in that it seems to keep the status quo power with the adjacent land owners, many of whom are farmers. It was agreed that a support letter would not be provided at this time, as other interests, such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Trails Council are deeply involved to protect the interest of trail users. Individual letters of support still can be provided however. Mr. Forgeron indicated that the Region's Agricultural Sub-Committee will also be discussing this issue at their upcoming meetings. In developing an Ontario Trails Strategy, the province will have a major challenge in trying to balance the interests of the agricultural and recreational communities in the province.

11. (c) Pelham Active Transportation Committee

Councillor Leavens indicated that this new committee to promote active living in Pelham will be initiated in the fall of 2005. Pelham residents are urged to participate through membership and by submitting ideas.

Councillor Leavens suggested that Manfred Fast, a resident of Pelham and a director on the Trillium Foundation, should be invited to speak a future meeting of the RNBC. Mr. Fast can walk the committee through the Trillium Grant process. Apparently, cycling themes are desirable for funding purposes. Councillor Leavens agreed to invite him to a fall meeting of the RNBC. **(Action Item)**

12. Items for Distribution

- E-mail from Cycle Ontario Alliance on the 2005 proposed Bicycling conference. The e-mail provides information on the possible conference theme, committee structure, program outline and potential workshop topics.
- Examples of bicycle registration cards in Burlington and Hamilton
- E-mail from Nick Rosati of the Region's Public Works Dept. on traffic signalization and bicycling. The e-mail indicates that Public Works is evaluating a new unit which uses a combination of infrared and sonic sensors. It will be installed on a pilot basis and monitored during the winter under snow and ice conditions.
- A conference promotion item on the October 22nd Cycle Alliance Conference.
- Copies of the final Terms of Reference for the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee (2003-2006) were distributed for members to keep for future reference.

- Minutes from the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee pertaining rail crossings in Welland and their impact on safety and handicap access.
- An e-mail from the City of Burlington requesting letters of support

13. Items for Next Agenda

Several items were suggested for the August 25th meeting.

- Urban design guidelines and support for cyclists and pedestrians
- Ideas for 2006 Bike-to-Work/School Week
- Utilitarian cycling
- New or revised bicycling brochures
- Active transportation in Pelham
- Cycling Ontario Alliance conference agenda

14. Next Meeting: August 25, 2005

MOTION:

To adjourn the July 12, 2005 RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Bill Dickson

Seconded by: John Reep

Carried

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:

Dave Hunt, Public-at-Large, Cycle Ontario Alliance

and

Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner