

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Tuesday, November 9, 2004
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large & Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee (Acting Chair)
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large and Velo Ontario
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Gregg Dame	- Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
William Dickson	- Guest
Mary Stanko	- Guest
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Dwight Alguire	- Public at Large

The meeting commenced at 7:15 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

As Ms. Landry had a previous commitment she provided an update on the activities of the Encouragement Task Force.

She reported that there were new nomination forms for the 2005 Bicycle Friendly Awards and requested feedback from the RNBC on the new forms.

Ms. Landry reported that planning for the Greater Niagara Circle Trek is moving forward and it has been established that the Trek will take place the first Sunday of May every

year. The City of Port Colborne is thinking of starting their trek in Port Colborne and moving towards Fort Erie. Ms. Landry suggested the City of Port Colborne contact Fort Erie as they will be sharing the same stretch of road.

Healthy Living Niagara and the Ottawa based Go for Green organization will be holding three public forums followed by two days of workshops. The schedule for the pilot projects is as follows:

Thorold – November 15th
Niagara Falls – November 17th
Pelham – December 1st

Ms. Landry asked that if anyone is interested in participating to please call ahead in order to reserve a spot.

2. Presentation: Bicycle Safety Issues

Mr. Bill Dickson spoke to the RNBC about his concerns regarding safety and cyclists. His written brief is attached. He explained that while growing up in Toronto cyclists had their bikes examined yearly by the local police in order to ensure that the bike was in a safe condition. The bikes were checked for brakes, lights, tail reflectors and either a horn or a bell. A copy of the current cycling regulations was given to the cyclist at this time. As well, the bike's serial number was registered and a 50 cent license fee was paid to the police.

Mr. Dickson said that he noticed many cyclists were now lacking lights, tail reflectors and either a horn or a bell. To deal with his concerns, he wrote a letter in 2000 to then Premier Mike Harris asking about the reinstatement of bicycle licensing. The response Mr. Dickson received was that there was no action planned at that time for bicycle licensing. In a further letter to the MTO a few years later, Mr. Dickson received a response suggesting that he contact the municipalities regarding this issue. Mr. Dickson said that he felt that the bicycle safety aspect was being over looked and that we needed to get back to having some control over cyclists to make sure they are protected from injury and theft. Mr. Dickson said that his biggest concern was the lack of lights and reflectors used by cyclists riding at night and asked what steps could be taken to educate cyclists on safety.

In response to Mr. Dickson's suggestion of licensing bikes, Mr. Whittle said that this issue had been discussed extensively in the past by the RNBC. There are problems in licensing bikes due to the volume of bicycles on the road today. Another issue would be who would administer the program. As for bikes being equipped with either a bell or a horn, Mr. Whittle responded that this requirement is included in the Highway Traffic Act. It was his opinion that the biggest issue is lack of police enforcement. Also, anyone under the age of 18 is considered a young offender and they cannot be issued a ticket like you would an adult if their bicycle did not comply with the Highway Traffic Act. He

explained that the process for charging a young offender for not having a bell or horn on their bike would cost more than the actual ticket (i.e. \$45.00).

Mr. Hunt added that we all agreed that more emphasis should be placed on cycling safety and education and this should come from the Province. He also suggested that if the mandatory helmet law comes into affect, then it would give us a chance to comment on not only helmets, but on other cycling safety issues. He said that it would give us a chance to present a case to the Provincial government.

Ms. Mary Stanko shared her concerns regarding cyclists who ride on the sidewalk, especially in the St. Catharines downtown area and along Queenston St. Mr. Whittle reported that the majority of collisions involving cyclists are the result of sidewalk cycling. The RNBC does try to educate cyclists through media releases and brochures, which are distributed to school children. Mr. Flora suggested to Ms. Stanko that she write a letter to Kris Jacobson of the City of St. Catharines regarding her concerns.

Mr. Forgeron said that the Public Health Department attends various schools and provides information on a number of different health related topics. As well, the RNBC's various cycling safety brochures are distributed to schools. The RNBC also attends trade shows and other events where we distribute promotional material.

Mr. Whittle suggested having a targeted police enforcement campaign for Bike Month. For example, Bike Month in 2005 could target sidewalk cycling. He offered to draft a letter for Councillor Ron Leavens' signature requesting that the Niagara Regional Police provide an enforcement blitz for sidewalk cycling. **(Action Item)**

Motion:

To request that the Niagara Regional Police carry out an enforcement campaign targeting sidewalk cycling during Bike Month in 2005.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Gregg Dame

Carried

3. Review of Meeting Notes of October 14, 2004

The following corrections were made:

Pages 1 and 4 – "...320 kilometre Waterfront Trail...." should be corrected to read 740 kilometres.

Page 2, Item #3, second bullet – "... St. Catharines Municipal Liaison meeting with the MTO would be held on October 15th and the meeting minutes would be circulated to the RNBC." This statement should be corrected as only the cycling related highlights from that meeting will be circulated.

On page four, Item #7, fourth line – the word “conveying” should be changed to “converging”.

Motion:

To adopt the RNBC Meeting Notes of October 14, 2004 as amended.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

4. Business Arising

The Committee was provided updates on a number of “Action Items” which arose out of the September meeting notes:

- A Public Information Centre (PIC) on the QEW Widening through St. Catharines will take place on November 24th from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Quality Inn on Ontario St. Although this PIC is for the High Mast Lighting addendum, the MTO consultants expect that other issues will be raised.

Mr. Flora recently attended a Value Engineering Study for this project and the issue of a pedestrian structure connecting the Terry Fox Trail on the south side of the QEW to an area on the north side of the QEW (near the Fairview Mall) was discussed (between Geneva St. and Lake St.). Due to the structural cost and the location, the pedestrian structure suggestion was “screened out”. However, Mr. Flora emphasized that this does not mean that it will not be considered in the future. It means that the suggestion will not be brought forward to MTO senior management.

Mr. Flora also told the RNBC that four lanes are prepared on the Geneva St. structure plus a common centre turn lane. There will be 1.5 metre bike lanes and sidewalks on each side as well.

- Mr. Flora reported that he had spoken to Joe Cousins from the Region’s Public Works Department on allowing the RNBC to review and comment on traffic signal designs to ensure that cyclists can easily access them. Mr. Cousins was in agreement with the suggestion. The coordination of how to get the designs to the RNBC needs to be decided upon.
- Mr. Pattison reported that as he had not yet heard from the Bridge Commission, he will be contacting them sometime in mid-November to discuss access to the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge during the construction phase.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that the November 6th joint meeting of the Hamilton/Burlington/Niagara Bicycling Committees has been postponed. The next meeting will be held in the Spring of 2005.

- Mr. Flora reported that the West St. Catharines Transportation Study stakeholders meeting will be held in December and the RNBC will be invited to the meeting. A PIC will be held sometime in January 2005.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that he had prepared a draft memo for the Public Works Committee and it had been forwarded to Councillor Leavens for his review and signature. This memo advises the Public Works Committee and Council of the RNBC's intention to hire a co-op student for the winter term to undertake various priority projects.
- An update was provided on obtaining bicycling related photos. Bob Romanuk reported that he had received some photos from the Freewheelers which he has forwarded to Ken Forgeron.
- Mr. Whittle reported that he will report on the 2004 bicycle collision statistics in December. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora provided an update on Pearson Park. He reported that the City of St. Catharines will be constructing a new parking lot next year and that parking will be moved from Niagara St. The Region will be adding a new curb and a nine metre pavement width. This should not interfere with safe bicycle passage along Carleton and Niagara Streets.
- Mr. Forgeron brought the RNBC's attention to an article distributed at the October RNBC meeting. The St. Catharines Standard article, dated September 23rd, mentioned how cycling tours along the Welland Canal have become popular with both American and Canadian tourists. The article reported that there are more cyclists than bus tourists.

5. Accommodating Bicycling – Glendale/QEW Interchange Area (NOTL)

Mr. Somerwil raised some concerns regarding the Glendale/QEW interchange area between Airport Road and York Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Mr. Somerwil had observed that the roadway was paved, but that the bike lanes were still concrete with no markings. He reported that this area is utilized by many cyclists due to the proximity of Niagara College. With the bike lanes made of concrete, Mr. Somerwil felt that the area is more dangerous than it was before construction was started. Mr. Flora said that this area is on the Bikeways Master Plan network. It is possible that the concrete is only a base and that paving may be completed in the future. This item was deferred until the December meeting. In the interim, the Project Manager will be consulted to find out what is being planned for this area in terms of future construction. As well, a map of the area will be brought to the next RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**

It was reported that Totten Simms Hubicki (TSH) has been retained for the Niagara Falls Trails and Bikeways Master Plan review. The stakeholders' meeting will be held on Thursday, November 25th, in the evening, at the Niagara Falls Library. Mr. Pattison announced that he is unable to attend the meeting due to another commitment. If anyone from the RNBC is interested in attending please contact Bob Bolibruck at the City of Niagara Falls. Ken Forgeron and Dave Hunt will be in attendance.

Some areas where trails and bikeways are an issue include:

- Community Centre/Montrose Road/McLeod Road – the location of the new community centre is in an area that is difficult to cycle to.
- Garner neighbourhood – there is the possibility of developing some trails for inclusion in the master plan.
- Mitchell Line/Brookfield Court property– information has been received that Hydro One is likely to divest themselves of some property and perhaps the corridor could be used for a linear park.
- Millennium Trail – Information has been received that the Millennium Trail may not have a bridge across the hydro canal. Changes to the water structure may need to be made and as a result, the changes will take up the space which was to be used for the Trail.
- Downtown Trail.
- Portage Road, south of Marineland Parkway to Chippawa.
- Queen Street Community Improvement Area/former CP rail lands/Parks Street.
- Murray Hill connection to the NPC/Allendale/Downtown Trail.
- River Road to the Spanish Aero Car.
- Walker Heights Park.
- Dorchester Road/Beaverdams reconstruction issues.

6. Update On Possible Winter Co-op Student

Mr. Forgeron reported that the draft memo to the Public Works Committee advising that the RNBC intends to hire a student for the winter co-op term had been prepared and forwarded to Councillor Leavens for signature. The memo should be submitted to the Public Works Committee on November 23rd.

Mr. Flora reported that he had spoken to Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan about the Region's directional signage program. They have offered to assist us, but indicated that we first need to determine what the final product should be and what steps we believe should be taken to get there. **(Action Item)**

One of the projects assigned to the student will be the updating of the bicycle map. It was requested that all RNBC members review the current map and forward any changes to either Phil Bergen in the Public Work's Department or to Bob Romanuk. **(Action Item)**

7. Sweeping & Maintenance of Regional Roadways on the Bicycling Network

Mr. Whittle and Mr. Forgeron completed a draft memo and distributed copies to the RNBC. They asked the RNBC to review the draft and provide any changes to Mr. Forgeron. Once the memo has been finalized, it will be forwarded to Councillor Leavens for his signature. **(Action Item)**

8. Comments on RNBC Terms of Reference

Mr. Hunt reported that further work on the draft Terms of Reference could not be completed until direction from the RNBC was received.

Mr. Forgeron requested that any comments on the draft Terms of Reference be sent to Mr. Hunt or himself. **(Action Item)** At the January meeting the RNBC would have a discussion on the comments received. At that point the Policy Task Force can incorporate the comments into the final draft Terms of Reference and bring them back to the RNBC in February for approval.

9. Line Fences Act – Action Necessary?

Mr. Pattison discussed an article on Section 20 of the Line Fences Act which was distributed at the September meeting. He questioned whether the RNBC should become involved in this issue or if information on the Act should be passed on to the Bruce Trail Association and other organizations. Mr. Forgeron responded that the Line Fences Act issue had been raised at the Waterfront Trust Partnership meeting and it has been identified as a serious concern. As well, the Province is also aware that this is a problem which needs to be addressed. The RNBC could send a letter to the Province suggesting that changes be made to the Act. Mr. Pattison suggested, as an alternative, that individuals contact their MPPs and raise their concerns with them.

10. Ontario Trails Council Cross Border Trails Meeting

A meeting of the Ontario Trails Council Cross Border Trails will be held the weekend of November 20-21. One item on the agenda is a presentation from the RNBC/Velo Ontario. The RNBC decided that it might be more appropriate to have Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan make a presentation on Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan. Mr. Flora volunteered to fax Dave McLaughlin the agenda and follow-up with him to see if he might be interested in making a presentation.

11. Task Force Reports

Enforcement

No report.

Policy

No report.

12. Power Assisted Bicycles

Mr. Hunt reported that Transport Canada has come up with a definition and specifications on what constitutes a power assisted bicycle. The Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) has developed a best practices paper on this issue. Both the police and the insurance industry would like to have them identified as a motor vehicle. The MTO would prefer to identify them as a bicycle. This would exempt them from licensing, insurance, etc. Many cycling groups also would like to have them classified as bicycles. Power assisted bicycles would offer another means of sustainable transportation and is another way to keep people from using their cars.

13. Segways

Segways are new motorized vehicles that are similar in appearance to a narrow push lawnmower. Mr. Flora reported that he had received an e-mail from a gentleman in Niagara Falls who was fined for driving a Segway. He had asked that the issue be raised with the RNBC. Mr. Whittle suggested that Dave Brennan of the Police Service be contacted.

14. Mandatory Helmets for Cyclists

Velo Ontario will be issuing a press release on the subject of mandatory helmets for cyclists on November 10th. In a letter to the Premier of Ontario, Velo Ontario asked that public hearings be held as cycling organizations have not been consulted.

15. Announcement

Mr. Whittle, on behalf of RNBC member Dwight Alguire, advised that a PIC on the Port Dalhousie redevelopment project will be held on November 17th at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Alguire is encouraging RNBC members to attend the PIC as there are a number of misconceptions he believes that are associated with this proposed project.

16. Items for Distribution

- Newspaper article on proposed legislation that would require all skateboards, cyclists and in-line skaters, regardless of age, to wear a helmet
- VeloOntario autumn newsletter.
- "Cyclometer" newsletter – a monthly newsletter which keeps cyclists informed about cycling issues and programs in the City of Toronto.
- St. Catharines Standard article regarding the near completion of the Waterfront Trail in Niagara

- Waterfront Regeneration Trust news release regarding improvements to the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail web site (www.waterfronttrail.org)
- Freewheelers newsletter announcing upcoming ribbon cutting ceremonies for the Waterfront Trail and the Greater Niagara Circle Route.
- Notice of Project Initiation and Public Information Centre for the City of Welland Northwest Area Planning and Servicing Study: Class Environmental Assessment Study.
- Media Alert regarding the completion of 10 major projects in Niagara and the connection of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail to the Greater Niagara Circle Route.
- Ontario Trails Council Cross Boarder Trails Meeting proposed agenda for November 20-21.

MOTION:

To adjourn the November 9th RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Gregg Dame

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

Next Meeting December 9, 2004

The next scheduled meeting will be **Thursday, December 9th** at 5:30 p.m. in the **Planning Services Department boardroom**. The business portion of the meeting will run until about 7:00 followed by our annual Christmas Social. The meeting location is 3550 Schmon Parkway on the 2nd Floor.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner

Reviewed by:
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP,
Senior Planner