

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, September 9, 2004
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
John Reep	- Public at Large
Gregg Dame	- Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee
Brenda Sidlar	- Guest
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large & Velo Ontario
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large

The meeting commenced at 7:05 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

Ken Forgeron requested to speak on the following items:

- Waterfront Regeneration Trust certificates of recognition
- Fort Erie Friendship Trail
- Abandoned NS&T rail line in Welland
- Bicycle safety issue raised by former Councillor Bill Dixon

Paul Pattison requested to speak on the following item:

- Pictures of bike lanes taken in Helsinki

Gregg Dame requested to speak on the following item:

- Update on Port Colborne Bike and Trailways Committee

Eric Flora requested to speak on the following items:

- Dorchester and Morrison Road Environmental Assessments (EAs)
- Kalar Road EA

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Brian Baty

Seconded by: Jan Somerwil

Carried

Ken Forgeron presented certificates of recognition to seven members of the Niagara Freewheelers, who were invited to attend at the RNBC meeting, for cycling the 320 kilometre Waterfront Trail from end-to-end. Packages containing a pin, a pedal passport to various events along the Waterfront Trail and a gift certificate for a free Tilley hat was also given to each member who received a certificate in recognition of their accomplishment.

Steve Rivers (recipient and Planning Director for the City of Port Colborne) thanked Ken and the RNBC for their hard work and support in prompting cycling in the Niagara Region.

2. Review of Meeting Notes of July 8, 2004

Motion:

To adopt the RNBC Meeting Notes of July 8, 2004.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

3. Business Arising

Ron Leavens provided an update on the Regional Road 20 EA. He reported that that the Town of Pelham passed a resolution supporting the cross section proposed by the Region. He explained that it's not that the Town did not want bicycle lanes on Regional Road 20, but both residential and commercial developments will be undertaken along this stretch of road and a four lane cross section will best accommodate them.

He also reported that the Town of Pelham is presently updating their Official Plan and may be interested in participating in a pilot project to make Pelham a more walkable and cycleable community. Marian Landry will be making a presentation to Pelham Council (Sept. 20) on this pilot project and a formal decision will be made by Council as to whether they will participate.

Mr. Forgeron said that many out of town cyclists going to Niagara Falls generally take Regional Road 20. However, Regional Road 20 was not included on the network at the recommendation of our bicycling consultants. Port Robinson Road

is on the network and there is a need for adequate signage to direct cyclists to the Port Robinson route which leads to the ferry crossing and the bridge crossing at Regional Road 20. He suggested that this area may make a good pilot project for the upcoming Directional Signage Program.

Eric Flora provided some additional information as to why the Township of West Lincoln was not interested in pursuing the abandoned Dunnville Spur Line. The Township might be responsible for constructing and maintaining fencing along the entire line as indicated in the *Line Fences Act*. Also, there are some structures that would require upgrading. This would be a very expensive undertaking for them.

Mr. Forgeron reported that a joint report was submitted to the Corporate and Financial Services Committee and Planning Services Committee in regards to two trail projects -- one in Wainfleet and one in West Lincoln. One project pertained to the Dunnville Spur Line through West Lincoln. The report recommended that since the purchase of the Spur Line was no longer a priority for the Township, the Region also should no longer pursue the acquisition of the Line. However, the Planning Committee did not support this recommendation. Therefore, the future of the rail line is still "up in the air." It was reported that the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee would be considering what steps to take at their next meeting.

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

- Mr. Forgeron reported that Tim Whittle had agreed to provide assistance in the drafting of a memo to the Public Works Department outlining reasons why sweeping and maintaining roadways on the Regional Bikeways Network should be given some priority. This had been identified and recommended in the recent Bicycling Master Plan. However, as Mr. Whittle was not in attendance at the meeting, Mr. Forgeron requested that this item be deferred until the October meeting. **(Action Item)**
- As Marian Landry was not in attendance, the preparation of a possible joint report on the Walkable Communities in Niagara Web-Cast Workshop "Action Item" was deferred until the October meeting. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora reported that there have been no Municipal Liaison meetings held since the June 15th meeting. However, he was able to report that the cost of the proposed bike lanes on Martindale Road over the QEW bridge would be, approximately, \$290,000 and the cost of bike lanes on the Lake St. bridge would be, approximately, \$430,000. The Region has budgeted for the installation of bike lanes on the Martindale Road structure and is considering assisting with funding if bike lanes are included on the Lake St. bridge. Mr. Flora also stated that the Ministry of Transportation is in the detailed design stage for the Geneva St. crossing and is revisiting their initial decision not to widen the bridge crossing/underpass.

Mr. Flora said that it was his understanding that any PICs for the QEW widening would not begin until next year. An update will be provided at the next RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**

- Gregg Dame reported that the Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee had contacted the Tim Horton's Lake-to-Lake race organizers regarding the possibility of having the race route reversed. The Committee was unsuccessful in convincing the organizers to do this. However, the Committee is looking at creating a weekend event featuring cycling. For example, BMX events as well as a criterium race may be held.
- An update on the RNBC's website was deferred until the next meeting. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron reported that the Region's Corporate Communications Division does use a release form for pictures which are submitted to be displayed on the Region's website. He has a copy of the form if anyone needs to use one.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that, as requested by the RNBC, a letter has been sent to all local municipalities to encourage them to incorporate supportive bicycling policies and mapping in their Official Plans. The letter was signed by Councillor Leavens. A copy was sent to the Regional Chair as well.
- Participation at the Grape and Wine Squeezer race events. Mr. Forgeron will contact Frank Pravitz to discuss participation. **(Action Item)**
- Directional Signage Program Start-up – deferred until the October meeting. **(Action Item)**
- In regards to the request to know the names of the Freewheelers pictured in the photo published in the June 5th St. Catharines Standard, Mr. Pattison indicated that he had exchanged e-mails with the photographer who replied that he would contact Mr. Pattison in September. Mr. Pattison suggested that Tom Bailey might be the appropriate person to speak to in identifying the cyclists.
- The question regarding triggering and timing mechanisms in Regional traffic signals was deferred until the October meeting. Mr. Flora said that he would investigate Mr. Pattison's question and provide an update. **(Action Item)**

4. **NETC Follow-up on Map Distribution**

Mr. Forgeron reported that Gary Hardy from the Niagara Economic Tourism Corporation (NETC) has sent out a letter and questionnaire to the businesses who had received new bike maps to distribute. Among the questions asked are

suggestions for improving the next edition and what the overall response to the map has been. So far, \$5,000 has been collected in donations, and requests for maps have come in from California and as far away as Europe.

Mr. Forgeron said that there is a running list of corrections that need to be made to the map before the next reprinting. Mr. Pravitz would like to look into the possibility of having urban insets included on the back of the map.

5. **Progress on Poster Display for Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike Conference**

This item was deferred to the October meeting.

6. **Post Analysis of Bike Month in Niagara**

This item was deferred to the October meeting.

7. **Coordination and Participation at Annual Bicycle Events**

Mr. Forgeron reported that there are, approximately, six major cycling events throughout the year the RNBC believes that it should have a booth staffed with a display. The next event is the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival Squeezer. He reported that it is his understanding that Frank Pravitz is interested in coordinating with this event.

8. **Directional Signage Program**

Mr. Flora said that \$5,000 in a 2003 Public Works Transportation Studies capital account has been set aside, but not allocated, for the signage program. He suggested that the Committee may want to look at starting up the program again and determine if we can move forward with it. This is one of the possible projects to be undertaken by a student hired by the RNBC.

9. **Update on Environmental Assessment Studies Affecting Cycling**

Glendale Avenue

Mr. Flora reported that he had no new information to provide the Committee.

Mr. Pattison said that he had one suggestion in regards to Glendale Avenue in St. Catharines. When the improvements are completed at the intersections of Merritt Street and Government Road, bike lanes should be included so that when improvements are done to the rest of the roadway the bike lanes in the intersections will already be in place. Mr. Flora will follow-up on this suggestion and provide an update at the October meeting. **(Action Item)**

Jan Somerwil expressed concern over the lack of cycling facilities at Glendale Ave. in Niagara-in-on-the-Lake near the QEW intersection. Mr. Flora said it was his understanding that the Glendale interchange is to be improved. Improvements are also to be completed at the end of Sandplant Hill. He will follow-up with the Project Manager and report back to the Committee in October. **(Action Item)**

Highway 405/Queenston-Lewiston Bridge Crossing

Both Mr. Pattison and Mr. Flora had no new information to report on this issue. However, Mr. Pattison did want to know if anyone had been contacted by the designers of the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge plaza. Mr. Flora said that he would contact the Bridge Commission and find out where they are in terms of the plaza design. He will provide an update at the October meeting **(Action Item)**

Mr. Flora indicated that the Region would be transferred Portage Road between Stanley Avenue/Townline Road and the Niagara Parkway. He was unsure as to how this section of Portage would be dealt with in terms of bicycle lanes. It is identified on the Regional Bicycling Network as a short term improvement with on-road paved shoulders.

Dorchester Road

Mr. Flora also advised that the City of Niagara Falls had concluded their EA Study in regards to Dorchester Road from Lundy's Lane to Thorold Stone Road. Dorchester Road is to include two northbound lanes and two southbound lanes with left turn lanes at the major intersections. It was Mr. Forgern's understanding that on road bike lanes will not be included. The curb lane may be widened for shared use.

Kalar Road

Mr. Flora reported that Kalar Road, from Westwood to McLeod – including a section of McLeod where the community centre is being built – will include bike facilities on that section.

10. Brief Presentation on Niagara-on-the-Lake Transportation Master Plan (Cycling Component)

Mr. Flora reported that Delcan was undertaking the Niagara-on-the-Lake Master Plan. Cycling is one component and Delcan has already identified a series of additions and concerns. They also make additional recommendations on the type of routes needed. A technical report has been completed and a steering committee will review and finalize the recommendations with another public information centre to be held. Mr. Flora will provide an update on the Town's next steps at the October meeting. **(Action Item)**

11. Progress on Obtaining Bicycling Related Photos

Deferred to the October meeting.

12. Update on Niagara Falls Bikeways Master Plan

Mr. Forgeron distributed a memorandum from Bob Bolibruck, Manager of Community Development and Landscape Design in the City of Niagara Falls to Clyde Carruthers, Chair and Members of the Niagara Falls Trails and Bikeway Committee. The subject of the memo was the draft terms of reference for the Trails and Bikeway Master Plan Update. The City submitted the draft Terms of Reference to the Bikeway Committee for comment.

The draft Terms of Reference suggests having a member of the RNBC as a representative on a stakeholders group. The City of Niagara Falls wants to make sure that their local network dovetails with the Region's network. Further discussions on this initiative will take place at the October meeting.

13. Underground Railway Bicycle Route

Mr. Forgeron reported that the RNBC had received a letter from John Crossingham, of Crossingham, Brady Barristers and Solicitors, suggesting the creation of a map linking places in Niagara to those in the United States. Specifically, he suggested a route that would follow the Underground Railroad. Mr. Forgeron suggested the possibility of including this route as a theme on a future edition of the Regions' bicycle map. He will also bring this to Dave Hunt's attention since Velo Ontario currently is involved in a cross border cycling initiative.

Mr. Reep suggested putting our bicycling map in tourism locations in Buffalo. Perhaps even having a reciprocal deal whereby we would give them some of our maps in exchange for some of theirs. Councillor Baty also suggested having the Hamilton Spectator article, which featured our bicycling map, repeated in Buffalo. Mr. Forgeron asked whether there are key areas where we should be sending maps for distribution. Mr. Reep said that he is aware of a couple of large bike shops in Buffalo, but was not sure about the tourism centres. Mr. Flora offered to e-mail the name of a contact person and suggested he contact this individual to see if she could provide names of people to distribute the map to. **(Action Item)** Mr. Forgeron will provide maps to John Reep for distribution to Buffalo area bike shops. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Flora said that when the new Regional bike map and the Bicycle Master Plan was completed, the GBNRTC was provided with our information. It was his understanding that GBNRTC, jointly with the Niagara Region, is interested in making a "Niagara Frontier Cycling" map. A meeting with the GBNRTC Executive Director is scheduled for September 21st. He will bring up the issue at this meeting and provide a report at the October meeting. **(Action Item)**

14. Fort Erie Friendship Trail

Mr. Flora and Mr. Forgeron reported that the Fort Erie Friendship Trail Committee is having an open house on September 14th. He said that the Region had commented on the trail component as it crosses both Point Abino and Gorham Roads. The Region is a major supporter of the Friendship Trail. Some design details will need to be worked out. The Friendship Trail will include a three metre wide asphalt trail and a parallel trail which will accommodate equestrian riders.

15. NS & T Line in Welland (Extension of Steve Bauer Trail)

Mr. Forgeron said that the City of Welland is exploring the possibility of partnering with the Region and having this section of trail paved. However, it is his understanding that the Region's primary focus is on completing the Waterfront Trail and the Greater Niagara Circle Route. The City of Welland will be encouraged to continue developing the NS & T Line, but currently there are no Regional funds available now to partner with them.

16. Regional Niagara Road Safety Committee

Mr. Forgeron told the Committee that he had been contacted by a Public Health staff person regarding RNBC participation on initiatives of the Niagara Regional Police Road Safety Committee. The staff person said that bicycling safety is an issue that is in front of this group and there will come a point when a representative from the RNBC will be needed to sit on a task force. Mr. Flora informed the Committee that he will ensure that a letter is received by the RNBC when they are looking for bicycling representative to sit on a sub-committee. **(Action Item)** Mr. Forgeron noted that Paul Pattison already had agreed to participate on this Safety Committee as the RNBC representative.

17. Bicycle Safety Issue

Mr. Forgeron circulated and reported on a letter submitted to the St. Catharines Standard from former Councillor Bill Dickson. The letter discussed the issue of bicycle licenses and increased emphasis on safety/enforcement. Mr. Forgeron suggested having Mr. Dickson attend the October RNBC meeting to discuss this issue and this suggestion was agreed to by the Committee. **(Action Item)**

18. Cycling Facilities in Helsinki

Mr. Pattison circulated a number of photos from his recent trip to Helsinki, Finland. He commented that he was amazed at how bicycle friendly the city was. In the downtown core there were bike lanes along the street and beside the lanes were

sidewalks. In locations where there was not enough space for a centre median, the bike lane and sidewalk were side by side.

19. Task Force Reports

Encouragement

Although Ms. Landry was not in attendance at the meeting, she provided an update via Mr. Forgeron. Ms. Landry reminded everyone that the deadline for Bicycle Friendly Award nominations is October 1st. She encouraged everyone to nominate people, particularly in the government category. She also requested a few volunteers to participate on the review committee. Councillors Ron Leavens, Brian Baty and RNBC members Paul Pattison and Gregg Dame kindly agreed to assist.

Education and Enforcement

No report

Engineering

No report

Policy

No report

Councillor Leavens reported that the St. Catharines Cycling Club and the Town of Pelham co-hosted the 2004 Ontario Road Race Championship. There were 328 competitors entered in nine divisions. He noted that one reason why the Town hosted the event this year is because they are interested hosting a future national cycling championship. Many positive comments were received regarding the route, the time spent by the cyclists in Niagara and the hospitality provided by the Town of Pelham.

20. Items for Distribution

- August 31st St. Catharines Standard article titled, "Cyclists take to the road in Pelham." The article reports on the 2004 Ontario Road Race Championship which was held in Pelham.
- June 23rd Port Colborne Trails & Bikeways Committee Meeting minutes.
- August 5th e-mail from RNBC member Frank Pravitz regarding the Hamilton Spectator newspaper article on the Niagara bicycling map. Mr. Pravitz commented that the writer of the article left him a message stating that the bicycle map article generated more response than any other article he had written previously.

Mr. Flora reported that the Region has officially initiated the West St. Catharines Transportation Study. The RNBC will be a stakeholder and a public information centre will most likely be held in November.

Mr. Forgeron announced that RNBC guest Brenda Sidlar has agreed to become a formal member of the RNBC and to sit on one of the Task Forces.

MOTION:

To accept Brenda Sidlar as a public at large member of the RNBC.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Jan Somerwil

Carried

MOTION:

To adjourn the September 9th RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Brian Baty

Seconded by: Gregg Dame

Carried

21. Next Meeting October 14, 2004

The next scheduled meeting will be October 14th at 7:00 p.m. in the Regional Niagara headquarters building.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner

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