

# REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE

## MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, September 21, 2006  
Committee Room #4  
7:00 p.m.

### Present:

Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor (Acting Chair)
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large and Cycle Ontario Alliance
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large/Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee
Dianne Coppola	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Gwen Speranzini	- Regional Niagara Human Resources (Guest)

### Regrets:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers Bicycling Touring Group
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation

The meeting commenced at 7:09 p.m.

### 1. Adoption of Agenda

#### ***Motion:***

***To accept the agenda of September 21 as revised.***

***Moved by: Jan Somerwil***

***Seconded by: Dave Hunt***

***Carried***

### 2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (August 10, 2006)

The following revisions were added to the August 10, 2006 meeting notes:

- Dave Hunt, Public at Large and Cycle Ontario Alliance was added to the list of those present at the meeting.
- Motion to approve the meeting notes of June 22, 2006
- Reference to a Dutch article Mr. Somerwil had copied and commented on regarding a way of measuring areas as to their suitability for cycling.
- Under Item #9, the words "Provincial interchanges" were added and the word "intersection" was deleted. The word "motorist" was deleted and "cyclist" was added. In the second paragraph after Mountain Road the words, "... at the QEW interchanges" was added.
- Under Item #10 the words, "through St. Catharines," was added after QEW Widening.

- Under Item #11 the word “tentatively” was added after the word “session” in the first sentence. The sentence “More discussion on this topic is expected,” was added at the end of the paragraph.
- Under Task Force Reports, Engineering, the words “in Niagara Falls,” were added after Mountain Road.
- Under Task Force Reports, Engineering, “Action Item” was added to the Portage Road Plaza Project.
- Under Item #14, Car Free Day, a new introduction was added and a motion to participate in Car Free Day by setting up and staffing the RNBC display was added.
- Under Item #16, the initials “OTC” were spelled out to say “Ontario Trails Conference.”

A consolidated copy of revised meeting notes was distributed by Ken Forgeron for approval.

### **3. Business Arising**

***Motion:***

***To accept and approve the meeting notes of August 10, 2006 as revised.***

***Moved by: Dave Hunt***

***Seconded by: Bob Romanuk***

***Carried***

The Committee was provided updates on a number of “Action Items” which arose out of the revised August 10, 2006 meeting notes:

- Ms. Coppola and Ken Forgeron have not had an opportunity to look at what will need to go into the proposed RNBC backgrounder on Healthy Living and Safe Routes to Schools Program. This can be discussed at the upcoming strategic planning session.
- Mr. Flora reported that he had made a request to both engineering staff and staff at the sign shop about the possibility of adding an edge line to York Road. This action can be discussed at a future meeting.
- Mr. Flora reported that the Province is aware of the Portland Blue lanes and has provided him with a draft copy of a consultant’s report on this subject project. This report is being prepared for TAC. This report is confidential, but Mr. Flora said that he had spoken to Marshall Macklin Monaghan, the writers of the report, and they have agreed to let us review the draft report. TAC is looking to have the report completed this year and a pilot project set-up in Toronto in 2007. As this project evolves, future updates can be provided.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that the RNBC will not be pursuing the issue of a pilot project pertaining to bike racks on buses. He will contact either Virginia Madsen or Kithio from Brock University to suggest that the issue of bicycle racks on buses maybe an issue that the University would like to pursue. Eric Flora had provided the Committee an update on this issue at a previous meeting and the difficulties in getting local transit authorities’ support.

- Mr. Flora reported that McCormick Rankin would like to meet with Paul Pattison regarding the Portage Road Plaza Project. They are interested in hearing what the Region and the RNBC has to say on the project. **(Action Item)**
- Councillor Baty reported that the Ontario Trails Council is looking at accommodations in Welland for the 2007 OTC Conference. They will be interested in holding their annual conference in the Niagara Region next year. For more information please read the attached Greater Niagara Circle Route meeting minutes.

#### **4. RNBC Strategic Planning Session**

Councillor Baty introduced Gwen Speranzini to the Committee. Ms. Speranzini will be the facilitator for the RNBC strategic planning session in November.

Ms. Speranzini reported that she had previously met with Councillor Baty, Dianne Coppola and other RNBC staff representatives and has received a number of documents in order to get an understanding of what the RNBC does. She suggested having two strategic planning sessions. The first would be in the evening and second would be on a Saturday taking place shortly after the first session. This would allow members to think about what was said at the first meeting and then finalize information at the second meeting.

Councillor Baty told the Committee that the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee was almost at the end of their mission, which was the completion of the Circle Route. Also, the bicycling component of the Transportation Master Plan is complete. He suggested the possible formation of a new committee which would focus on moving forward Council's Active Transportation business plan and in particular how to do so with the Greater Niagara Circle Route. He suggested including Councillor Bruce Timms and a few members of the GNCRC in the RNBC's strategic planning session.

Ms. Speranzini asked who should be included in the sessions. She suggested a core group of RNBC members who are actively involved with the committee. Mr. Whittle suggested having a mini-planning session with the GNCRC and another with the RNBC and then have both groups come together to discuss the final product. Councillor Baty asked whether it would be of value to have active cyclists, who are not part of the RNBC, participate in order to find out what they think the RNBC should be focusing on and what type of committee would best drive it forward. He also suggested including former RNBC members who no longer attend meetings, but may have useful knowledge. The RNBC suggested including the four RNBC Task Force Chairs, staff and political representatives. Councillor Baty suggested having the four Task Force Chairs put together a final list of participants.

The strategic planning session will be held after the election and some possible dates suggested were:

November 16 and 18 or November 23 and 25 or November 30 and December 2

Ms. Speranzini said that a pre-request for information will be sent out to participants before the session. This pre-session work will not take any longer than 15 minutes. As well, participants will be asked to think about certain ideas/suggestions and will be asked to bring specific items to the strategic planning session.

**NOTE:** It has since been decided that November 16 & 18 will be the dates for the planning sessions.

## **5. Internship Student**

Mr. Forgeron asked the committee for suggestions on the types of projects a GIS student could do for the RNBC. Some suggestions were: mapping of loop rides, development of themed bike rides, development of a photo gallery, ride of the month and mapping of local bed and breakfasts. Bob Romanuk told the committee that e-mails have been received through the RNBC website from people wanting to cycle, but need to know where to park. He suggested that perhaps a student may be utilized to evaluate parking areas around bike trails. Once this information was gathered it could go into the GIS. Mr. Forgeron asked Mr. Romanuk to contact Tom Jamieson of the Region's GIS Division to see if a student would be capable of this level of sophistication. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Forgeron reported on an upcoming race called the Friends of Crystal Beach. Although this is a non-cycling race, the organizers of the event have asked to include the bike map in the race packet. They would like 200 copies and have offered to make a \$50.00 donation towards the map. Mr. Forgeron asked for direction on this request.

***Motion:***

***To provide 200 maps to the Friends of Crystal Beach in return for a donation of \$50.00***

***Moved by: Bob Romanuk***

***Seconded by: Dave Hunt***

***Carried***

## **6. Staging Areas and Parking for Trail Riding**

Mr. Romanuk brought up the subject of parking for trail riding. He reported that earlier this year he received an e-mail through the RNBC website from someone interested in riding along one the trails and wanted to know where they could park their car. He suggested that it may be necessary to evaluate parking areas although the evaluation may not necessarily be done by the RNBC. Mr. Romanuk suggested that once a list of possible parking areas has been completed then the list could go into GIS. If some areas are privately owned then there may be an opportunity for corporate buy-ins. He suggested contacting NEDC to see if they have a list of business who are near the trails and to contact them to see if they might be willing to let trail users park in their lots. Mr. Hunt said that the focus on valid parking spaces to initially start with and then have more research done into

the corporate-private sponsorship aspect. Councillor Baty suggested that with the completion of the Greater Niagara Circle Route there may be other opportunities for parking, for example, right by the Allanburg Bridge. He also suggested that evaluating parking areas could be a project for the GNCR Committee and they could provide the list of information to the RNBC to be put into GIS. He as well, thinks that there may be an opportunity for corporate buy-ins. Mr. Forgeron suggested that Bob Romanuk contact Tom Jamieson in GIS to discuss the initiative as a possible project with a Niagara College student. **(Action Item)**

#### **7. Start-up of Regional Bikeways Signage Program**

Mr. Flora said that he needs to speak to Frank Pravitz about starting the pilot project and looking at how it might tie into the Greater Niagara Circle Route. Councillor Timms is quite interested in this project. At previous RNBC meetings, this project had been identified as a priority project. Mr. Pravitz has developed a draft work plan for discussion. **(Action Item)**

#### **8. Revisions to Bicycle Friendly Awards**

Ms. Coppola reported that one challenge is having the presentations made to the award winners in front of Regional Council. In the past the awards presentation has been bumped from Council's agenda and rescheduled to another Regional Council meeting day and, due to Council proceedings, the awards were not presented early enough in the meeting. Ms. Coppola suggested that perhaps the awards could be presented in front of one of the Standing Committees or piggy back the awards presentations onto another event taking place at the Region such as the Bike to Work Week launch.

Mr. Forgeron said that he would like the awards presentation to involve the Regional Chair and to have press coverage in order to give the presentations some "profile." With the addition of Doug Draper to the Communications Division of the Region, Mr. Forgeron suggested having a media release done at the time of the presentations. Also, the time should be suitable to allow school children and their parents to attend.

Ms. Coppola requested that any feedback on the Bicycle Friendly Awards is to be received by September 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### **9. Forming a New RNBC for 2007-2011**

Deferred to a date following the November strategic planning sessions.

#### **10. Detail Design Study for Highway 405 Improvements**

Mr. Flora reported on the rehabilitation of the Glendale Avenue structure over the QEW just west of Highway 405. Currently the project is in the Detail Design Study stage of the project. Some of the improvements for the project include:

- Investigating the possibility of widening the Highway 405 eastbound off-ramp to Stanley Ave.
- Rehabilitation of the QEW/Glendale Avenue bridge
- Pavement rehabilitation on Highway 405
- Bridge rehabilitation at the Highway 405 ramp over the QEW, Mewburn Rd. and St. Paul Ave.

## **11. Task Force Reports**

### **Encouragement**

Ms. Coppola provided her report earlier in the meeting.

### **Engineering**

Mr. Flora told the Committee that the next Transportation Project Activity Reports (TPAR) will go before the Planning and Public Works Committee on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Once approved by Council the report will be distributed to the members. The report lists general constructions projects, engineering and planning projects being undertaken by the Transportation Division. Some of these projects affect the Regional Bicycling Network.

Mr. Flora announced that a Public Information Centre regarding the QEW Widening through St. Catharines will be taking place on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Policy**

No report.

### **Enforcement and Education**

Mr. Whittle reported that the "Caught You Using Your Head" program is now completed. Over 300 envelopes were distributed to kids wearing their bicycle helmets. The Town of Grimsby has expressed interest in starting their own similar program.

Mr. Whittle reported that there had been four recorded fatalities of cyclists in Niagara in the last few months. Most of the fatalities occurred in semi-rural areas and most of the cyclists were struck from behind which is very worrisome. Although lights on bicycles are important, driver awareness and care is equally important.

Mr. Whittle said that Fort Erie is interested in implementing a cycling education program this spring in the Fort Erie area. Currently, police staff are meeting with school principals to discuss what approach will be taken, i.e. whether the education program will be done in the schools or outside of the schools.

## 12. New Business

### Bicycle Parking Facilities for the New Regional Headquarters Extension

Mr. Forgeron distributed copies of a memo he had written containing recommendations on proposed new bicycle parking facilities at the headquarters building (attached). The memo provided committee members with an update on how discussions with Public Works regarding the new bicycle parking were progressing and also suggested recommendations for committee approval. Councillor Leavens, Mr. Forgeron and Ms. Coppola have met with Regional staff responsible for the new building construction and discussed locations for bicycle parking. The initial proposal was to locate all 40 bicycle parking spaces in an open area at the east end of the new building extension (between the new entrance and Schmon Parkway.). However, back on February 15, 2005 the RNBC passed a motion requesting that adequate bicycle parking facilities be provided that **are secured, sheltered from the weather and placed in a well lit area**. Mr. Forgeron's memo suggests an alternate interim proposal until the required "permanent" bicycling facilities, as outlined in the RNBC motion of February 15, 2005, are put in place. These include:

- Have the allotted bicycle parking facilities redistributed to four locations around the Regional headquarters building. In each location five bicycle racks would be situated near building entranceways and under an overhanging roof to provide shelter from the weather.
- That the existing bicycle parking shed for the Planning Department be relocated to the new headquarters building and placed in the vicinity of the loading area located at the west end of the headquarters building.
- That in the second quarter of 2007 a permanent staff bicycle parking compound be installed which is secure, covered and well lit.

If these recommendations are approved by the RNBC, Councillor Leavens will bring them forward at the Accommodation Committee meeting being held on September 22. Councillor Baty agreed to brief Councillor Leavens on the issues and recommendations.

Mr. Forgeron reported that one difficulty they are having at the moment is that the construction company is leaving in November and a location for the bicycle racks need to be found before then.

Mr. Romanuk suggested that a portion of the bicycle racks be installed at key locations and then the Region might seek a credit from the construction company to apply towards a proper enclosure in 2007. Councillor Baty agreed that this was a viable alternative.

**Motion:**

**To support the recommendations brought forward in Mr. Forgeron's September 21<sup>st</sup> memo regarding the location and placement of new bicycle parking facilities for the Regional municipal building.**

**Moved by: Dave Hunt**

**Seconded by: Bob Romanuk**

**Carried**

**13. Car Free Day**

Mr. Forgeron requested a volunteer to help him staff the RNBC booth for the mid-evening period. The RNBC display will be set-up at the Niagara Artists' Centre in St. Catharines. Mr. Hunt volunteered to staff the display for this period of time. Virginia Hatch-Stewart will assist Ken with set-up.

**14. Items for Distribution**

- September 21, 2006 memo from Ken Forgeron to Councillor Ron Leavens and members of the RNBC re: Location and Placement of New Bicycle Parking Facilities for the Regional Municipal Building.
- Final report of the Regional Chairman's Leadership Round Table on Obesity Prevention: "Trekzone"
- September 21, 2006 memo from Dianne Coppola re: Briefing Note – Ontario's Action Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living
- September 20, 2006 St. Catharines Standard newspaper article re: Park it and join Car Free Day Friday
- July 20, 2006 letter from Brian Richardson, Niagara Regional Police to George Nicholson re: Patrolling the Greater Niagara Circle Trails on bicycle and by ATVs.
- Cycle Ontario Alliance Board Meeting Agenda of September 23, 2006
- June 2, 2006 Niagara Advance article re: Annual bike rodeo draws almost 200 offshore workers

**15. Items for Next Agenda**

None suggested.

**16. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held November 2, 2006 at Regional Headquarters in Committee Room #4.

**MOTION:**

**To adjourn the September 21, 2006 RNBC meeting.**

**Moved by: Dave Hunt**

**Seconded by: Bob Romanuk**

**Carried**

Meeting adjourned at

Meeting Notes Taken by:  
Julie Bittner  
RNBC Recording Secretary

Reviewed by:  
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP  
Senior Planner