

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
SMARTER NIAGARA STEERING COMMITTEE

REPORT 5-2008

Minutes of a meeting of the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee held on Wednesday, June 18, 2008 commencing at 5:12 p.m. in Council Chambers, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Gabriel, Chair; Augustyn, Vice-Chair; Cordiner; Messrs. Barr, Chrystian, Gaylor, Ensslen, Halverson, Holman, Lundrigan, Phillips, Ms. Dale Shipley, Ms. Stewart.

Staff: Mr. Robson, Acting Commissioner of Planning Services; Mr. Gummo, Associate Director, Comprehensive Community Planning; Ms. Emeneau, Planner; Mr. Brickell, Niagara Economic Development Corporation; Ms. Ricci, Legislative Assistant.

Working Group: Mr. Slepko

PRESENTATION

31. Smarter Niagara Steering Committee (SNSC); Proposal for Moving Forward

Councillor Gabriel, along with Councillor Augustyn, provided Committee members with a brief overview as to a "Proposal for Moving Forward".

Highlights were, in part, as follows:

- Foundations for Moving Forward
 - The Committee's Mandate
 - The Committee's Strategic Focus
 - Niagara 2031 – confirmed October 3, 2007
 - Working Group (Education) – confirmed October 3, 2007
 - Incentives Review – initiated January 2, 2008
- Smarter Niagara Steering Committee (SNSC) Moving Forward July – October 2008
 - Niagara 2031 and Incentives Review
 - Commenting on Three Options, Council Consideration of a Preferred Option, Incentives for a Preferred Option and A Renewed Focus

Councillor Gabriel stated that the SNSC had some early wins but the question was “where do we go from here” and “how do we stay valid and continue to contribute to Council”?

Mr. Robson advised Committee members that he felt the SNSC had a strong role in Growth Management, that is was important to see the impact the SNSC had on the community and that Council still needed their input and assistance.

Committee members offered, in part, the following as their input:

- Focus on Principles “fostering and development of diverse communities with identities”
- Development of a “report card”
- Have an annual “state of Smart Growth address”
- Create a website that has an active “blog” section that discusses Smart Growth
- Approach Brock University and Niagara College respecting incorporating Smart Growth Design in to course outlines (Urban Planning/Design etc.,)

The Committee approved by consensus the Proposal for Moving Forward as presented.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

32. Niagara 2031 – The 3 Growth Options and
Smarter Niagara Incentives Program/Development Charges

Committee members ventured into a lengthy discussion surrounding Niagara 2031 – The 3 Growth Options and *Smarter Niagara* Incentives Program/Development Charges.

Highlights of the comments/ discussion were, in part, as follows:

- Take systems approach
- Track progress
- SNSC provide direction in strategy
- Recommend Policy options
- Identify current trends
- Growth Management is not just absolute; it’s demographics, continued demand, age/unit, #/unit etc.,
- Financial relationship with Senior Government will demand participation
- Clarify Smart Growth definition
- Investigate Austin Texas matrix
- Key; balance between low/medium/high density

- Identify “how well we are doing attracting industry”
- Process; Staff responsibility
- Content; Committee responsibility
- Look at what we have but also where you want to be
- Support local but be part of global
- Don’t call it the Growth Management Plan, call it the *Smarter Niagara* Plan
- Don’t forget about economic sustainability
- Look closely at communications
 - Educating, marketing, simple concepts

Following a lengthy discussion it was:

Moved by Mr. Barr

Seconded by Ms. Stewart

That staff poll Committee members to determine availability for a Smarter Niagara Steering Committee meeting, designed specifically to discuss Niagara 2031 – The 3 Growth Options and *Smarter Niagara* Incentives Program/Development Charges on July 9, 2008.

Carried.

Staff suggested that prior to a July 9, 2008 meeting that Committee members do the following:

- Review “Understanding Niagara” and “Anticipating Niagara” documents
- Identify pro’s and con’s in each option
- Ask yourself “Do I have a preferred Option?”
 - “If not; what do you propose and why?”
- Evaluate criteria
- Review the Regional Development Charges Task Force minutes

Councillor Augustyn briefly provided an overview/clarification as to the process surrounding Development Charges (incentives/discounts). He mentioned that a system for evaluating Development Charges needed to be developed and that this Committee needs to be involved in the discussion.

(Refer to Councillor Information Requests)

PREVIOUS MINUTES

33. Smarter Niagara Steering Committee – May 7, 2008
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Moved by Councillor Augustyn
Seconded by Mr. Gaylor

That the minutes of the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee meeting of May 7, 2008, be received for information.

Carried

UPDATE

34. Smarter Niagara Education and
Communication Working Group (SNECWG)

Mr. Bernie Slepko requested that his update from the SNECWG meeting of May 28, 2008 be deferred and dealt with at the July 9, 2008 full meeting of the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee.

CORRESPONDENCE

35. Correspondence Summary

Moved by Mr. Halverson
Seconded by Ms. Stewart

That the following communications listed in the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee Correspondence Summary dated June 18, 2008, be received for information.

SG 37-2008 New Urban News – April / May 2008

SG 38-2008 An article entitled “Ontario Could Be ‘Environmental Technology Superpower’” by Jim Bentein, May 15, 2008

SG 39-2008 MEDIA RELEASE “Greater Vancouver’s Leadership in Smart Growth Slips Analysis of census data finds recent decline in Greater Vancouver’s compact, walkable neighbourhoods”

SG 40-2008 An article entitled “The change to walkable suburbs: Compact communities are still rare in WNY” The Buffalo News, May 28, 2008

SG 41-2008 *An article entitled "Boom town; 3,000 homes are being built on southwest Scarborough's old industrial lands" Toronto Star, May 24, 2008*

Carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

36. Geoff Holman – Smarter Niagara Steering Committee Resignation

Mr. Holman stated that he had enjoyed the work of the *Smarter Niagara* Steering Committee (SNSC) over the years and wished to thank everyone for the opportunities that being a member of the Committee provided however, due to an ever increasing work and home schedule he would be resigning from the SNSC effective immediately.

Moved by Councillor Augustyn
Seconded by Councillor Cordiner

That Mr. Holman's verbal resignation as a committee member of the *Smarter Niagara* Steering Committee, be approved.

Carried.

COUNCILLOR INFORMATION REQUESTS

Staff was requested to:

- Forward a copy of the Regional Development Charges Task Force (Refer to Minute Item #32) (Councillor Augustyn)

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 7:35 p.m. This Committee will, possibly, meet again July 9, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

Robert Gabriel
Chair

Lisa Ricci
Legislative Assistant