

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA  
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

**REPORT 3-2009**

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Minutes of a meeting of the Region of Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee (RNAAC), Ontarians with Disabilities Act held in the Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on April 14, 2009, commencing at 12:45 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

**ATTENDANCE**

Committee: Jocelyne Gagne, Chair, Jean Bennett, Councillor Cindy Forster, Ian Greaves, Christine Keith, Anita MacKenzie, Carol Walker, Mary Lou Whitty, Griz Witlib

Committee

Regrets: Krystine, Donato, Geoff Eden, Janet Genge, Brian Kon, Diann Krieger,

Staff: Eric Flora, Steve Murphy, Penny Pitt, Kumar Ranjan

Staff regrets: Mary Balfour, Mary Eagles, Anne Hepplewhite, Kim Koz, Gord Low, Catherine O'Leary, Denise Papaiz, Judy Sobchak

Jocelyne Gagne welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Introductions were made around the table for the benefit of everyone in attendance.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

- 18.** Moved by Carol Walker  
Seconded by Ian Greaves

That Agenda 3-2009, being the agenda for the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of April 14, 2009, be approved as amended to include under the heading of Transit Update - Hospital Improvement Plan (HIP) meeting update and Taxi Licensing update. Also added under the heading of Other Business - Emergency Measures (EMS) presentation.

Carried.

## **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

19. Moved by Ian Greaves  
Seconded by Anita MacKenzie

That Report 2-2009, being the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of February 17, 2009, be approved as distributed.

Carried.

## **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN– UPDATE FROM DEPARTMENTS**

20. Steve Murphy will be updating the annual Accessibility Advisory Plan fro 2009-2010. This will be the last update as there will be no need for a new plan with the compliance deadline of January 1, 2010. A draft copy will be sent out to all departments for their portion of updates. To date the plan is 75% completed and if there are any questions please contact Steve Murphy.

During discussion the question if the Province would be monitoring compliance arose. The Province is requesting training policies and the documentation of the training provided, when and where the training was provided and how many people were trained.

Niagara Region will keep records of the training through the PeopleSoft program and a certificate of completion will be retained in the employee's Human Resources file. The numbers of trained staff will be provided to the AAC committee.

Problem solving will be the role of the committee in the future and the expertise of the group will be used as a barometer to Provincial Accessibility by 2025. Compliance and reports still need to have council approval and the committee has an opportunity to provide feedback.

The training policies will be reviewed by the Corporate Management Advisory Team (CMAT) within the next few weeks and then forwarded to the Corporate Management Team (CMT). The e-training and short class room versions of the Customer Service Training are completed and the long class room version is in progress.

New groups that need to be included, commencing January 2010 – 2012, in the Customer Service Training will be ones that provided a 3<sup>rd</sup> party service. The policy may be that if you want to do business with Niagara Region, their staff must comply with the required training. Other municipalities are providing information to their 3<sup>rd</sup> party service providers through pamphlets.

Through committee discussion it was suggested the all advisory committee update their Terms of Reference to in AODA and to engage in the Customer Service Training. Sessions should also be held in the regionally operated seniors' homes and provided to private day care personnel. Customer Service Training should be listed in the Corporate Learning Calendar, distributed with policies, and included in staff orientation.

## AODA UPDATE

21. Geoff Eden has emailed to the committee members the Draft Proposed Accessible Information and Communications Standard for their information. (IC – SDC #: N134) At this stage, the IS-SDC committee is looking for feedback on any glaring errors that may be found. The standard received nearly four times as much commentary as others, and there have been endless hours of committee deliberation sorting out the best way of including feedback. Because the requirements of other standards are unknown, we will concentrate on the Information and Communication Standards.

## TRANSIT UPDATE

### 22. Industry Response Proposed Transportation Standard

Correspondence from Larry Ducharme, Chair of the Ontario Committee of Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) to the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur in reference to the Proposed Transportation Standard was distributed to the committee. Since the Region only operates an Inter-municipal Specialized Transit service (NST), and does not operate any conventional (fixed-route) type of service, Niagara Region will review the AODA Transportation Standards recommendations as part of its current Inter-Municipal Transit study.

### 23. Accessible Taxi Licensing

Kumar Ranjan apprised the committee that Sergeant Larry Regnier and Constable Chris Grace of the Bylaw Enforcement and Licencing Unit of the Niagara Regional Police Services attended a recent IMSTAC meeting to give a brief explanation of the licensing of ParaTransit taxis. The committee was informed that a quota of 50% of regular taxi cabs per municipality could be licensed as ParaTransit taxis. A comparison of the ParaTransit Taxi and ParaTransit Specialized Services was made:

#### ParaTransit Taxi

- Vans were working everyday with the same availability as taxis
- Availability of prearranged rides
- Rates by meter same as taxis
- Able to transport both ParaTransit and regular fares
- Cannot charge extra for ParaTransit fares
- Waiting time can be charges

#### ParaTransit Specialized Taxi

- Ontario Patient Transfer ambulance
- Pre booked rides
- Contracted with hospitals
- Drivers subject to random checks

Sergeant Regnier informed the committee that drivers were not allowed to refuse a fare unless they were pre-booked or a safety issue was an element. Any complaints should be directed to the Licensing Unit by phone or email. Telephone numbers, type of vehicle, license plate number, and location of pickup was the specific information that would be needed to follow up with complaints. Fines would be imposed if there was a proven breach of the bylaw.

On the subject of training drivers the committee was informed that driver training was the responsibility of the taxi owners there was no specific training for the proper procedure for securing wheelchairs. There is also no upgrade of the drivers' license to include ParaTransit training. The Red Cross supplies the drivers for the Niagara Specialized Transit who must pass training on the proper securing of wheelchairs because of the concern of liability issues. Staff will discuss with the Red Cross the training available to future drivers.

**24. Inter Municipal Transit Update**

Eric Flora informed the committee that the Niagara Region will provide one time funding of the 2008-2009 inter municipal transit costs. (PWA 45-2009) An Inter Municipal Transit study will be undertaken by ENTRA Consultants and completed by the end of August or first of September. From 2010 onward, local municipalities can then plan budgets for their share of the costs.

The Township of Wainfleet has four (4) eligible riders for the Niagara Specialized Transit (NST) service (confirmed after meeting that the number is actually 7), but to date, no applicant has used the NST system. In order to promote awareness of the NST, it was decided that information regarding the NST should be provided to the Township of Wainfleet possibly through their Mayor's quarterly newsletter, hydro bill or "Big Pipe" meetings. Kim Koz will send out flyers to the Township of Wainfleet for disbursement.

**25. Hospital Improvement Plan (HIP) update**

At the March 10, 2009 NHS-TIP meeting, Eric Flora presented the major findings/recommendations from the West St. Catharines Transportation Study recommendations regarding infrastructure improvements for better connectivity (ramp off Highway 406).

**26. Go Transit Coming to Niagara**

Mr. Flora announced to the committee that GO Transit, the provincial commuter system, will start offering regular bus service to Niagara this September. GO Transit buses will be accessible.

\$2.5 million in federal and provincial infrastructure funding will be used to build four new park-and-ride GO stations in Niagara.

Construction of the first station, at Casablanca Boulevard and the QEW in Grimsby, will start in June, with service to St. Catharines and possibly two locations in Niagara Falls by September.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

27. Information Items AAC 15-2009 – AAC 41-2009 were reviewed and received.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

28. EMS Presentation on Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities

Steve Murphy provided the committee with information material from the EMS. He apprised the committee to peruse the information to see if this material is what the committee desired and then decide if a presentation was still necessary. If so, perhaps the presentation could be made in Council Chambers and the public could be invited to attend.

29. Transportation for Volunteer Committee Members

At the March 18, 2009 meeting of the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee meeting, the following motions were made:

That Report ICP 14-2009, March 24, 2009, respecting Transportation for Volunteer Committee Members, be received;

That the Niagara Region provide compensation for transportation costs to members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (i.e. Para Transit services or mileage reimbursement) to allow their participation on the Committee, and that the Terms of Reference for the Committee be amended accordingly;

That to ensure equal opportunities for members of our community with disabilities to participate on all of our committees with community representatives, we extend this transportation related assistance to those committees as well.

Report ICP 14-2009 was ratified at Regional Council's meeting of March 26, 2009. Steve Murphy provided the details of the mileage reimbursement and encouraged committee members to submit an expense report quarterly to Penny Pitt. Forms will be provided at the next meeting.

## ADJOURNMENT

30. Moved by Jean Bennett  
Seconded by Mary Lou Whitty

That the Committee be adjourned at 2:45 p.m. to meet again on Tuesday, May 26, 2009 at 12:30 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

Carried

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Jocelyne Gagne  
Chairperson

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Penny Pitt  
Administrative Assistant, Council Support