

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

REPORT 8-2009

Minutes of a meeting of the Region of Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee (RNAAC), Ontarians with Disabilities Act held in the Community Board Room of Niagara Child and Youth Services, 3340 Schmon Parkway, Thorold, Ontario, on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 commencing at 12:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

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

Committee

Regrets: Krystine Donato, Geoff Eden, Christine Keith, Brian Kon, Diann Krieger, Carol Walker

Staff: Mary Eagles, Eric Flora, Steve Murphy, Accessibility Advisory Coordinator, Penny Pitt, Administrative Assistant,

Guests: Renee McKinley (oral interpreter)

Quorum

There being a lack of ordinary quorum, Chair Gagne determined that the ordinary quorum for the meeting be reduced to 6 members, pursuant to Section 22.10 of the Procedural By-law 96-2007.

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

- 96. Moved by Jean Bennett
Seconded by Mary Lou Whitty**

That Agenda 8-2009, being the agenda for the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of Tuesday, November 10, be approved as amended to include information under "Other Business" regarding Charles Beer feedback.

Carried.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

97. **Moved by Anita MacKenzie**
Seconded by Jean Bennett

That Report 7-2009, being the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of September 29, 2009 be approved as distributed.

Carried.

AODA UPDATE

98. Built Environment Standard Update

Steve Murphy thanked the committee for their comments and informed them that the Built Environment Standard feedback with their input was sent to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Copies of the comments will be sent to committee members by email.

99. Customer Service Training Standard

The majority of Regional staff has taken the Customer Service Training held in various in house locations. Training has been completed offsite for staff from the Regional Seniors homes, all five Regional Child Care Centres, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities (SAEO) and most of Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Departments that work 24/7 are completing their own training.

It has been difficult to arrange training for Niagara Regional Police Services, Emergency Medical Services and Regional Councillors. Other municipalities may have a different method of providing the Customer Service Training and Councillors who are also Mayors and may receive training in their own cities. Customer Service Training has been tentatively scheduled for December 9th in between the Corporate Services Committee meeting and the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee meeting.

Steve Murphy is providing Customer Service Training to Niagara College of Applied Arts and Technology staff at their various locations on a charge back basis.

Committee members were welcomed to attend any of the current available training sessions and will be sent the spreadsheet in order to make a choice. The Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce offered training this past spring for municipal employees but it was not well attended.

100. Compliance Update

Steve Murphy apprised the committee that the Service Disruption Policy was completed in both English and French.

The Purchasing Department is in the process of placing a clause in all future tender bids that advises Third Party Service Providers of their compliance with the AODA Customer Service Standards by January 2012. A Guide for Niagara Regional Service Providers will be available to all contractors for their review.

101. 2009-2010 Update on Initiatives

Steve Murphy reported to the committee the status of the 2009-2010 Initiatives:

- Improve facility accessibility on a continual basis – *waiting for Built Environment Standards*
- Ensure AODA legislation is incorporated into policies and practices - *completed*
- Support the continued implementation of audible pedestrian signals at Regional traffic intersections – *TSSC initiative*
- Advocate for increased availability of accessible transportation – *TSSC initiative*
- Endorse the inclusion of accessibility planning into Emergency Preparedness initiatives – *EMS initiative*
- Ensure availability of alternative formats for information and material – *in process*
- Further the accessibility sensitivity / awareness and customer service training for staff – *in process*
- Development of policies and procedures for AODA Customer Service compliance – *in process*
- Development and delivery of training for AODA Customer Service compliance – *in process*
- Transportation Strategy Steering Committee approve the Terms of Reference for an Inter-Municipal Transit study (study commencement 1st quarter 2009), and of which the Accessible Transit issues will be reviewed and recommendations made for future implementation.

102. Employment Standard Final Draft

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 calls on us to work together to develop and implement accessibility standards that will apply to public, private and non-profit sectors. Standards are being developed in five important areas of our lives, one of which is employment.

The Employment Accessibility Standards Development Committee began meeting in the fall of 2007 to develop and draft a proposed standard to help employers create equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

The initial proposed standard was released for its mandatory public review period from February 18 to May 22, 2009.

The Committee has now:

- revised the initial proposed standard to reflect the public's input, and
- submitted the final proposed standard to the Minister of Community and Social Services for consideration as law

Ontario is the first jurisdiction in Canada to develop province-wide, enforceable accessibility standards. The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 is the first standard to become law. It came into force on January 1, 2008.

The Employment Standard Final Draft was previously sent to the Regional Human Resources staff for comment/feedback.

NIAGARA SPECIALIZED TRANSIT (NST) UPDATE

103. NST Operating Results July – September 2009

Eric Flora provided the committee with copies of the NST Operating Results for the period July 1 – September 30, 2009. Committee members were apprised that ridership to the end of September was 7900 and expected to meet the 10,000 goal by the end of December. The more ridership equates to less cost. The report will be sent by email to committee members.

104. Google Transit Trip Planner

Tom Jamieson, Manager GIS Services, gave a presentation at the TSSC meeting on October 27, 2009 regarding the development of a region wide transit tool "Google Transit Trip Planner. It is a web-based transit trip planner mapping application that integrates transit data to provide complete itineraries using origin and destination points, date and time of travel. Because it is an integral part of Google Maps, people can use place names as the origin or destination instead of addresses. In addition, people can get information on attractions and businesses along the route. Trip planners can also turn on the Street View function to look at the stops before they get off and can compare the trip to one using a car. When completed, it will be a useful tool that once up and running will adhere to AODA Information and Communications Standard. Next steps are to revisit the Memorandum of Understanding and process future updates with Local Transit Authorities including GO, Coach Canada, and Grey Coach.

105. Committee of the Whole – Inter Municipal Transit

The Committee of the Whole meeting held on October 29, 2009 at the Quality Hotel Parkway Convention Centre in St. Catharines was well attended and included AAC committee members Geoff Eden and Anita MacKenzie. Mr. Jim Thomas facilitated the

Committee of the Whole meeting regarding Inter Municipal Transit. Mr. Thomas provided the issues for engagement on inter-municipal transit that will allow Council to more fully explore the information, options, and opportunities to improve inter-municipal transit in the Niagara Region. He stated that he would be testing for common ground, leading discussion on tough issues (e.g. funding, governance), highlighting areas of priority and trying to assist in bridging the gap between “How” and “Whether” to commit to Inter-Municipal Transit.

A report will be formulated to go forward to Council on December 3 or 17th, 2009.

OTHER BUSINESS

106. 2010 Meeting Schedule

The committee was provided with the 2010 Meeting Schedule and will be sent meeting requests before the end of the month.

107. Update on Council Chambers

Concerns with the possible wheelchair lift for Council Chambers were discussed. Garaventa, the supplier, stated that the lift will move 20 or 30 feet per minute which committee members felt was slow. It was suggested that Garaventa be contacted again and request an installation video in order for the committee to actually see how the lift will work, details will follow. The Regional Clerk, Kevin Bain, is aware of the Council Chamber’s shortcomings has shown great interest in providing the proper equipment for people with accessibility challenges.

108. Local Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting

On Friday, June 12, 2009, the McGuinty Government announced the appointment of Mr. Charles Beer, a former Liberal Member of the Legislative Assembly, to conduct an Independent Review of the AODA’s effectiveness.

Section 41 of the AODA requires the Government to appoint this Independent Review of the AODA’s effectiveness four years after this legislation went into operation. That four year mark was reached on June 13, 2009; the day after the Government announced the appointment of Mr. Beer.

The Independent Review must “undertake a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of this Act and the regulations and report on his or her findings...” The report of the Independent Review may, among other things, “include recommendations for improving the effectiveness of this Act and the regulations.” The Independent Review must consult the public, and in particular, the disability community. It must render a report to the Legislature. That report must be made public.

The Government’s announcements indicate that the Independent Review is expected to deliver its report by January 2010. This provides the public, including the disability community, needed time to take part in this Independent Review, while making sure that

its final report is available for full implementation well before the 2011 provincial election.

In his first public statement on this Independent Review, Charles Beer emphasized the need to see how things have been progressing, with a view to recommending ways to strengthen the AODA.

The key issues that this Independent Review must address are these: Is Ontario now on schedule for becoming fully accessible for all people with physical, mental or sensory disabilities on or before 2025, as the AODA requires? If not, why not? What new changes are needed to the AODA itself or to the Government's implementation of it to ensure that Ontario is on schedule for reaching the goal of full accessibility by 2025?

At the request of the NRAAC members Steve Murphy was directed to connect with Mr. Beer's office to arrange for a meeting with the NRAAC and perhaps with the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP).

INFORMATION ITEMS

Summary of Information Items

Information Items – Reviewed and received.

137-2009	Kirkland Lake Northern News – Oct 9 09 – Accessibility rules costly say North Bay Council
138-2009	Lindsay Post – Oct 9 09 – Accessibility awards handed out Saturday
139-2009	Durham Region – Scugog prepares for first chapter of new accessibility laws
140-2009	Ottawa Citizen – Oct 13 09 – Missteps on York Street
141-2009	Durham Region – Oct 13 09- Accessibility focus on next Scugog chamber meeting
142-2009	Lindsay Post – Oct 13 09 – Barriers will face us all as we get older
143-2009	Durham Region – Oct 14 09 – Preparing for new accessibility laws
144-2009	Cowichan Valley Citizen – Oct 23 09 – Rec Centre referendum
145-2009	Owen Sound Sun Times – Oct 23 09 – Poor must have access to rec centre
146-2009	Hamilton Spectator – Oct 26 09- Design: How to think anew about everything
147-2009	Chatham Daily News – Oct 29 09 – Being accessible costs
148-2009	Northumberland Today – Oct 29 09 – Some patients face difficult climb
149-2009	Northumberland Today – Nov 2 09 – Cobourg's SNT costs could be halved
150-2009	Sarnia Observer – Nov 2 09 – Accessibility comes at cost
151-2009	Waterloo Region Record – Nov 5 09 – Should be more Native, less rude prices
152-2009	Daily News – Nov 5 09 – Friday flu clinic next, homeless get their shots

ADJOURNMENT

**Moved by Jean Bennett
Seconded by Ian Greaves**

That the Committee be adjourned at 2:00 p.m. to meet again on Tuesday, January 5, 2010 at 12:30 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

Carried

Jocelyne Gagne
Chairperson

Penny Pitt
Administrative Assistant
Council Support