

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

**REPORT 8-2007**

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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 Tuesday, November 6, 2007, commencing at 12:35 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

**ATTENDANCE**

Committee: Jocelyne Gagne, Chairperson; Geoff Eden , Janet Genge, Ian Greaves, Anita MacKenzie, Mary Lou Whitty, Griz Witlib, Diann Krieger, Carol Walker, Jean Bennett

Committee

Regrets: Councillor Cindy Forester, Krystine Donato, Brian Kon, Tony DiPaola

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator; Steve Murphy, Community Services; Eric Pilon, Transit Manager; Gord Low, Project Manager Buildings for Joe Gouthro; Eric Flora, Public Works-Transportation, Janice Emeneau, Planning Department; Catherine O'Leary, Public Health, Penny Pitt, Corporate Services-Clerks

Staff regrets: Denise Papaiz, Communications

Guests: Sergeant Mike McAllister, NRPS; Margaret Sanderson and Vanessa Bilenduke (student) of Brock University; Kerry Grandfield and Jeralee Munro (student), ASL Interpreter

Jocelyne Gagne welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

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

It was noted that Denise Papaiz sent her regrets due to organizing the Region's Flu Immunization Exercise. Denise Papaiz has extended this invitation to the RNAAC members.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

90. Moved by Jean Bennett  
Seconded by Diann Krieger

That Agenda 8-2007, being the agenda for the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of Tuesday, November 6, 2007, be approved as amended to include several additional Information Items.

Carried.

## **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

91. Moved by Carol Walker  
Seconded by Diann Krieger

That Report 7-2007, being the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of Tuesday, September 25, 2007, be approved as distributed.

Carried.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

92. Taxi Licensing  
89-2007

Sergeant Mike McAllister of the Niagara Regional Police Services was invited to speak about the taxi licensing and inspection process for accessible taxis in Niagara. He suggested future opportunities for the RNACC to be a resource and to provide the user perspective to the NRPS licensing board and the membership concurred.

There are currently 320 taxi licenses in the Niagara Region and specifically accessible taxi licenses are the only licenses available at this time. Accessible taxis can take other clients when not providing accessible taxi service. Members of the RNAAC noted awareness of issues where the accessible taxi service providers in the Region have declined to pick up clients who use mobility devices. There was also concern about flat fee trips vs. point-to-point trips (metered fares) being used depending on who was using the service. The public are reluctant to complain for fear of reprisal. Sergeant McAllister said that written complaints can be submitted to the Vehicle Licensing Division. Plans are being made for a public meeting in February or March 2008.

Sgt. McAllister's office is available to receive suggestions and complaints. Details and the licensing by-law are available on the website [www.nrps.com/licencing](http://www.nrps.com/licencing).

On completion of the discussion, Jocelyne Gagne thanked Sergeant McAllister on behalf of the RNAAC for the informative presentation.

93. Supportive Technology for Vision  
Geoff Eden, RNAAC

Geoff stated people who can't independently access hardcopy newspapers, magazines or government documents due to, for example, low literacy skills, blindness, vision restriction, physical or learning disability or just getting older could listen to the newspaper 24 hours a day. VoicePrint Canada is accessed on Channel 26 CBC Newsworld and via the Internet at [www.voiceprintcanada.com](http://www.voiceprintcanada.com)

Prior to the Committee viewing the DVD presentation, Geoff explained briefly that Audio Vision is used in movies to describe actions that can't be seen whereas captioning (CC) describes speech that can't be heard paid for by Cable Satellite. Audio Vision was established in 1995 and could be contacted at 800-567-6755 or at [www.audiovisioncanada.com](http://www.audiovisioncanada.com) for more information.

Geoff added a new TV channel – The Accessible Channel – has just received approval to broadcast TV programs in accessible formats and will be available in Spring 2008.

#### **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2007-2008 – UPDATE**

94. Diana Lecinski advised the committee that Council approved the 2007-2008 Accessibility Plan on September 27, 2007 and it is now available on the website at [www.regional.niagara.on.ca](http://www.regional.niagara.on.ca). Hard copies will be provided at the next meeting as it relates to the Accessibility Plan.

#### **NIAGARA SPECIALIZED TRANSIT (NST) UPDATE**

95. Eric Pilon reported that it was the NST 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary today. He reported that as of September, 2007, NST ridership was 3197. These were for medical appointments only as the educational and employment trip criteria have just been introduced. An anniversary promo is planned for next week and Councillors will be invited to ride along. There is a new brochure, 3 panel fold out with large 14 point font. Ian Greaves commented on the need for fully accessible bus routes. Diana Lecinski researched a comment on ParaTransit reservation windows and confirmed that St. Catharines ParaTransit trip reservations can be made no longer than 2 weeks in advance of the trip date. It is recommended that registered clients make reservations in advance as space fills up and it is best to reserve 2 week prior to a trip up to 24 hours before.

#### **AODA UPDATE**

96. Geoff Eden circulated highlights from the Information and Communication Standards Development Committee (IC-SDC) Meeting held on Oct. 23-24, 2007 via email to the RNAAC. A preliminary draft of the "Initial Proposed Information and Communications Accessibility Standard" was completed. IC\_SDC members are seeking feedback on the

draft standard from constituents and their networks before November 26. Geoff Eden will circulate these documents via the email. He noted that this is a preliminary draft, not the final public comment draft. Any comments can be sent directly to Geoff Eden.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

97. Summary of Information Items

Information Items – Reviewed and received.

98. Revised 2008 RNAAC Meeting Schedule

Moved by Diann Krieger  
Seconded by Carol Walker

That the revised 2008 AAC Meeting Schedule be approved as amended.

Carried

99. All Candidates Meeting Update  
84-2007

Jocelyne Gagne, Geoff Eden and Margaret Sanderson provided a report on the All Candidates Meeting held at Brock University on October 4, 2007. It was a good example of hosting an accessible meeting. It was attended by the general public and as well by some persons with disabilities, although the numbers were less than what was anticipated. There is now a how-to handbook for organizing an accessible meeting. Jocelyne Gagne will look into obtaining a copy. It was also reported that the Lions Hall on River Road in Welland is fully accessible for anyone needing an accessible venue.

100. TASC Niagara  
78-2007

As requested, Steve Murphy followed up with TASC Niagara. They are a “not for profit” organization looking to make more community contacts. Steve Murphy suggested the United Way as a resource and also provided them with information about NST. (TASC – Therapy and Alternatives for Special Children)

101. Fort Erie Friendship Trail

Steve Murphy was contacted by Grant Winterton, a Port Colborne AAC member and a former RNAAC member. He commented that the Fort Erie Friendship Trail at the end of Helena Street has no curb cut and was therefore inaccessible. Steve Murphy spoke to Fort Erie and Regional Niagara staff about Mr. Winterton’s concern. They addressed the situation and explained that it was a temporary fix until further and final construction is completed. An asphalt ramp was added to the end of Helena Street.

## 102. Jean Bennett's Report on Conferences Attended

Jean Bennett echoed the other comments (RNAAC minutes of September 25) regarding the proactive information shared at the Ontario Heritage and Accessibility Workshop of September 18<sup>th</sup>.

Jean Bennett also attended the Celebrate Canada National Meeting in Niagara Falls, October 17-20, 2007. Due to the nature of the convention, and with the City of Thorold being Canada's Most Patriotic City, Thorold hosted a luncheon on October 19<sup>th</sup> as part of the convention agenda which was attended by Lieutenant Governor Onley.

On October 15, 2007, Jean Bennett was a speaker on the Universal Design Panel, on behalf of interior design, at the ACE Conference held in Toronto. She took the opportunity to share Niagara's FADS and included information on the benefits of barrier-free access. Ergonomist Tye Farrow from Farrow Partnerships was in attendance. His company plays an integral part in design of health care facilities.

During a tour of the Four Season Centre for Performing Arts in Toronto, it was found to be a fabulous facility, accessible, with good lighting way-finding signage and adequate seating for mobility devices.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Geoff Eden announced the Welland AAC has the privilege of hosting all of the local AAC's across the Region of Niagara for this biannual gathering. It is planned for Saturday, May 20, 2008 from 9 – 3 p.m. There are plans for some very special guest speakers. Event details are being planned and as soon as the agenda can be confirmed, invitations will be in the mail. Diana Lecinski will assist the Welland AAC wherever possible and will provide organizers with membership names or contacts to ensure that all Niagara's AAC's are included.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Mary-Lou Whitty that the Committee be adjourned at 3:00 p.m. to meet again on Tuesday, January 15, 2007 at 12:30 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

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Jocelyne Gagne  
Chairperson

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Penny Pitt  
Administrative Assistant  
Council Support