Minutes of a meeting of the Region of Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee (RNAAC), held in the Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on June 30, 2010 commencing at 12:30 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Geoff Eden, Chair, Krystine Donato, Jocelyne Gagne, Anita MacKenzie, Mary Lou Whitty, Griz Witlib

Regrets: Jean Bennett, Councillor Cindy Forster, Ian Greaves, Christine Keith, Diann Krieger, Carol Walker

Staff: Zeau Ismail, Steve Murphy, Accessibility Advisory Coordinator, Catherine O'Leary, Denise Papaiz, Penny Pitt, Administrative Assistant, Judy Sobchak

Guests: Kevin Bain; Regional Clerk, Erin Britnell; AMCTO Student, Renee McKinley; Interpreter, Lesley Jones Robertson; ASL, Alexandra Swigger; Brock University, Co Op Student

Geoff Eden welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

42. Moved by Jocelyne Gagne
Seconded by Kristine Donato

That Agenda 5-2010, being the agenda for the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of June 30, 2010, be approved with the addition of information items from Griz Witlib, Denise Papaiz and Kristine Donato.

Carried.
ADOPTION OF MINUTES

43. Moved by Anita MacKenzie
    Seconded by Mary Lou Whitty

That Report 4-2010, being the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee
meeting of May 11, 2010, be approved with the removal of “staff regrets” from
future minutes.

Carried.

PRESENTATIONS

44. Council Chamber Renovation Update

Kevin Bain, Regional Clerk, presented the committee with an overview of the proposed
Council Chamber renovations. At the CORC meeting of July 8, 2010, the presentation and
plan for the proposed Council Chamber renovations was received and referred to the
Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and to report back to the Council Organization
Review Committee. Mr. Bain apprised the committee of the extreme challenge in
addressing the accessible issues in Council Chambers. Mr. Bain informed the committee
that cost could be $1.5 million for interim renovations and possibly would not take place
until the new council is established. The following features associated with the plan were
noted:

- Installation of a wall mounted lift
- Elimination of the ramp
- Safe access to speaker podium
- Accessible locations throughout the chamber including Regional Chair location
- Improved sound system
- Hearing assist units
- Larger screen for the public to follow the meeting
- Flat screen monitors outside the council chambers
- Flat screen monitor in Committee Room 4 for council overflow
- Daylight screening for executive area – skylight above

Through discussion the following suggestions were made regarding the renovations:

- FM transmitter that operates within the standard FM band so that visitors to
  Council can use personal FM radio listening devices available in MP3 players
  and cell phones
- Possibility of using close captioning or real time captioning
- Keyless lift, large enough to accommodate larger chairs, not only for wheelchairs
- Lift that is secure and easy to use independently
- Confer with committee persons that will actually use the lift etc. before a final decision
  or purchase is made

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Questions that arose during discussion were as follows:

- How long will the renovations be expected to last until a total remake of the Council Chamber will be necessary?
- Is the 3'6" aisle allowance enough space to safely maneuver past attendees?
- Use a consultant (Bob Topping) whose expertise is accessibility to review the plan and drawings.

Following the in-depth discussion, the following motion was made:

**Griz Witlib moved**
**Kristine Donato seconded**

That the Regional Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends to the Council Organizational Review Committee that the proposed renovations to the Council Chamber to improve accessibility as outlined in the plan presented by the Regional Clerk to the Committee on June 30, 2010 be supported subject to the finalization of the design details following review by a consultant with expertise in the area of accessibility;

And further that the Accessibility Advisory Committee express its support for a fully accessible Council Chamber in the near future.

Carried

**AODA UPDATE**

45. **Charles Beer Report**

Steve Murphy provided the committee with a synopsis of Charles Beer's independent review of what has been accomplished to date in implementing the AODA. Continued progress towards achieving the 2025 vision will require action by the Ontario government to:

- Harmonize the accessibility standards before they are finalized in regulation
- Renew its commitment and strengthen its leadership on accessibility
- Build awareness and educate the public about accessibility and the AODA and
- Introduce a streamlined standards development process

The following recommendations were also made:

- The MAACs continue as advisory bodies to municipalities
Municipalities ensure that their accessibility advisory committees are appropriately utilized and seen as important resources in making communities more accessible.

In cooperation with stakeholders, the ADO continue to develop timely, regional forums to support MAACs and municipalities in carrying out their responsibilities under the AODA.

The ADO develop mechanisms for the sharing of best practices, in cooperation with stakeholders and MAACs play a role in bringing together other advisory and informal organizations in their communities that are assisting the obligated sectors to comply with the AODA. In summary, Mr. Beer recommends the following strategy for the government to repeal the ODA:

- Repeal the ODA once all of the accessibility standards are in regulation; repeal the ODA as a whole and not in stages.
- Undertake an assessment to determine which, if any, provisions of the ODA are not covered by the AODA legislative and regulatory framework and therefore may need to be incorporated, including the requirements on the provincial government.
- After consultations, incorporate the planning framework under the ODA into the AODA, with necessary modifications.
- Implement a transitional guideline to integrate and streamline the planning requirements under the ODA and the reporting requirements under the AODA, and
- Preserve the consequential amendments made by the ODA to other legislation, if necessary.

A copy of the full report can be found through the following link:

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN– UPDATE

46. 2010/2011 Accessibility Plan

Steve Murphy apprised the committee of the updates in 2010/2011 Accessibility Plan that must be filed yearly in order to remain compliant with the AODA. The plan will need to be endorsed by the Integrated Community Planning Committee and the ratified at Council.

Moved by Anita MacKenzie
Seconded by Mary Lou Whitty

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee accepts the 2010/2011 Accessibility Plan as presented.

Carried

NIAGARA SPECIALIZED TRANSIT (NST) UPDATE

47. Customer Service Satisfaction Survey

As requested at a previous meeting, copies of the 2008 Niagara Specialized Transit Customer Service Satisfaction Survey were provided to the committee members.

48. Declaration of Parallel Transit as Essential Service

Through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) distribution list, the committee received correspondence from the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee of the Corporation of the City of Kingston with the following motion:

WHEREAS the Access Bus is the only option for transportation for most people with disabilities; and,
WHEREAS accessibility to parallel transit was denied to citizens during a recent access bus strike;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT City Council request the Provincial Government to declare all parallel transit an essential service.

49. NST Ridership in Wainfleet

The committee received a memo in follow up to a request at the May 11, 2010 AAC Meeting that a communiqué be developed for Wainfleet residents/nurses regarding the awareness of the NST program. It was decided that the optimum communication would be through direct mail via the Township of Wainfleet Mayor’s newsletter. A sample of this newsletter was provided to the committee. The information was included in June’s edition which can be viewed at www.townshipofwainfleet.ca.
50. The following Summary of Information Items was reviewed and received.

AAC 55-2010 An article from the St. Catharines Standard dated May 7/10 entitled “Library embraces the digital age”

AAC 56-2010 An article from the Collingwood Enterprise dated May 12/10 entitled “Patios must move – council”

AAC 57-2010 An article from the Dunnville Chronicle dated May 12/10 entitled “Arenas break ground next week”

AAC 58-2010 An article from the Times Colonist dated May 19/10 entitled “Designer aims at good looking safety equipment for the home”

AAC 59-2010 An article from the Listowel Banner dated June 2/10 entitled “Community sees green at sod turning ceremony”

AAC 60-2010 An article from the St. Catharines Standard dated June 3/10 entitled “Biggest part of the world disability is ability”

AAC 61-2010 Breaking the Barrier Awards 2010

AAC 62-2010 An article from Inside Halton dated June 3/10 entitled “Canadian sledge hockey players in Milton”

AAC 63-2010 An article from the Lindsay Post dated June 4/10 entitled “Aware Fair returning to Victoria Park Amoury”

AAC 64-2010 An article from the Lindsay Post dated June 4/10 entitled “Conservancy trail, gazebo now accessible”

AAC 65-2010 An article from the Orillia Packet and Times dated June 7/10 entitled “Mayor earns Civitas Award”

AAC 66-2010 An article from the Belleville Intelligencer dated June 7/10 entitled “City gets jump on changing law”

AAC 67-2010 An article from Pembroke Observer dated June 15/10 entitled “Public awareness is a challenge”

AAC 68-2010 An article from Peterborough Examiner dated May 21 2010 entitled “Trail links expanding in the fall”

AAC 69-2010 An article from the Barrie Examiner dated May 21/10 entitled “Group wheeling for awareness”
51. **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)**

Kristine Donato informed the committee of her opportunity to be part of a discussion group regarding Augmentative and Alternative Communication. The discussion included the experiences of seven people who use AAC and their recommendations made about meeting people, engaging in social conversations, communicating at meetings, informing businesses and organizations about communication accessibility rights and negotiating accessibility accommodations for effective communication.

People who use AAC can experience major barriers that make it difficult to communicate effectively with others. They may be ignored or talked down to and perceived as not intelligent. They may not be given the time or supports they need to communicate. Often, people they encounter do not understand how they communicate using AAC.

A DVD and Guide are available at [www.accpc.ca](http://www.accpc.ca). The committee will view the DVD at the next meeting in September.

52. **Next Term Committee Application Process**

Steve Murphy reminded the committee members of the need to reapply when invitations are published if they would like to be considered as candidates for membership on the Accessibility Advisory Committee for the next term. An advertisement will be placed in local newspapers inviting individuals with an interest in accessibility issues to apply. Eligibility criteria does not include membership on any lower tier AAC. According to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001, the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committees will be comprised of the following.

- Up to 14 members being:
At least one member from Regional Council
At least eight members who are people with disabilities
Two members who are citizens or caregiver volunteers
Three members who are community or professional stakeholders

53. Evacuation Chairs Test

Steve Murphy reported that the Region is in the beginning process to determine the need for “evacuation chairs” in conjunction with emergency measures. Two emergency evacuation devices in the market at this time are “evacu tract” and “med sled”.

54. TextNet

In follow up to discussion at the AAC Meeting of May 11, 2010 a demonstration of the software “TextNet”, a computer network alternative, is being planned.

55. Wainfleet Accessibility Update

Griz Witlib provided the committee with her “400 Day Update” for the Township of Wainfleet. The following is a list of renovations that have taken place at the Town Hall in the area of accessibility:

- The accessible elevator shaft is now ready for installation of the elevator
- Ramps have been added to the front of the building
- The front counter is low and accessible
- The washroom in the boardroom is accessible
- Sidewalks have been added to both sides of the building
- Signs have been posted acknowledging support persons and animals
- Council has received funding for an accessible playground in the adjacent playground

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Kristine Donato that the Committee be adjourned at 2:30 p.m. to meet again on Tuesday, September 7, 2010 .at 12:30 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

Geoff Eden
Chair

Penny Pitt
Administrative Assistant
Council Support

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