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, July 3, 2007, commencing at 12:45 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Jocelyne Gagne, Chair; Tony Di Paola; Krystine Donato, St. Catharines; Geoff Eden, Welland; Ian Greaves, Niagara Falls; Brian Kon; Diann Krieger, Fort Erie; Anita MacKenzie, Niagara Falls; Carol Walker, Niagara-on-the-Lake; Mary Lou Whitty, Port Colborne.

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator; Anne Hepplewhite, Manager Corporate Records and Archives Services; Steve Murphy, Community Services; Wendy Middleton, Corporate Services – Clerks.

Part-time: Larry Bousfield, Manager Property Management

Guests: Renee McKinley, Interpreter; Gordon Bowes, Niagara This Week.

Regrets: Councillor Cindy Forster; Jean Bennett, Grimsby; Janet Genge; Griz Witlib, Wainfleet; Eric Flora, Associate Director Transportation Systems; Catherine O’Leary, MOH Assistant; Birgit Page, Human Resources Associate; Karen Russell, Corporate Services Administrative Assistant.

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

It was noted that Mr. Bousfield was attending his last Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting, as he is retiring, Ms. Gagne thanked him for all his efforts and help he has provided the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Ms. Gagne read a letter from the now retired Nancy Winslow which expressed how she enjoyed being apart of the Accessibility Advisory Committee and that it was an educational and rewarding experience.

It was noted that there is not adequate Council or Staff representation at recent Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings and it was agreed that Ms. Gagne would speak to Regional Chair Partington on this matter.
It was agreed by Committee members that the correspondence package should be sent out with the agenda package the week prior to the meeting.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

51. Moved by Carol Walker
    Seconded by Krystine Donato

That Agenda 5-2007, being the agenda for the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of Tuesday, July 3, 2007, be approved.

Carried.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

52. Moved by Dian Krieger
    Seconded by Mary Lou Whitty

That Report 4-2007, being the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of Tuesday, May 22, 2007, be approved as distributed.

Carried.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN REVIEW

The following changes/additions/updates were noted under:

53. Section 1: Municipal Highlights (pg 3 of 21)
    The 12 municipalities and respective populations are up to date. Information courtesy of Nancy Winslow

54. Section 2: Legislation and Interpretation
    Bill numbers and the year the Bill was enacted should be listed beside all Acts.

55. Section 3: Other Organizations & Agencies Participating in This Accessibility Plan
    Diana noted that she keeps in touch with all the Organizations and Agencies listed in the plan and keeps them up to date.

56. Section 4: Outside Consultation Activities
    Add area municipality Accessibility Advisory Committee information to 4.2 Consultation Activities
57. **Section 5: Plan Development Working Group**

Diana requested that Committee members keep her informed of any changes to their contact information so that she can keep the Working Group List up to date.

58. **Section 6: Regional Operations and Departmental Purview**

Ms. Lecinski is going to check with Eric Pilon to find out whether employment and education are going to be included in the Intermunicipal Specialized Transit criteria.

It was noted that the Transportation Standards were released last week. Hard copies can be obtained from either Ms. Lecinski or Ms. Middleton.

59. **Section 7: Status and Updates by Other Organizations & Agencies**

Review of this section to be saved when more staff representation is present.

60. **Section 8: Summary 2005/2006**

Mr. Bousfield spoke to the committee and advised members that his replacement would be responsible for making any revisions to the FADS. His replacement is unknown at this time.

A number of committee members suggested having regular updates to the FADS and perhaps creating a schedule for these updates.

Ms. McKenzie noted that there are a range of ‘best’ measurements within the FADS and that the most generous of those measurements should be used. This was found to be beneficial during a recent audit of the new addition to Regional Headquarters.

Mr. Bousfield suggested that updates to FADS occur every five to seven years as the need for FADS modification generally occurs during this timeframe and will require approval by Council.

Mr. Bousfield provided Committee members with a handout detailing an Accessibility Review of Regional Facilities by priority.

Ms. Hepplewhite spoke briefly on Corporate Services portion of the Summary 2005/2006 chart. Currently, information can be obtained in a variety of accessible formats. For example, Freedom of Information requests can be made electronically. Council Chamber updates are ongoing and all accessibility issues have been taken into consideration. Ms. Hepplewhite added that Human Resources department needs to report on the status of Sensitivity and Awareness training being added to Staff Orientation.
Ms. Hepplewhite also noted the Committee is pleased to continue sharing Accessibility Coordinator services with the City of St. Catharines.


Timeframes for Workplace Accommodations is very important. Need to follow up on any policies and procedures currently in place.

Mr. Eden noted that it is an aging workforce and there is a greater need for accommodation. Mr. Eden suggested that there should be someone in charge of accommodation initiatives and research where funding for these initiatives can be drawn from.

Ms. Hepplewhite suggested that Mr. Eden speak to Public Health and Social Services Committee as well as the Corporate Services Committee on accommodation funding. Ms. Lecinski will follow up with the H.R. Health Services Manager regarding Workplace Accommodation procedures.

Mr. Murphy gave a brief update on the Sensitivity and Awareness Training, saying that on July 16, 2007 frontline staff will be receiving a refresher course. It was also noted that the Niagara Regional Housing staff undertook the Sensitivity and Awareness training and it was well attended.

Ms. Donato shared a personal story on customer service in which she was treated unsuitably. Ms. Donato’s story only proves how important Sensitivity and Awareness Training is for staff who deal with the public.

Ms. Lecinski provided updates pertaining to the Accessibility Plan for the following departments:

62. Planning

A new representative needs to be found as Nancy Winslow has retired. Ms. Winslow submitted updates on behalf of Planning & Development before her retirement.

63. Public Health

Currently working on a recreational trail map of Short Hills Provincial Park, the goal is to have a finished product that shows residents, facing barriers, a way to enjoy Niagara’s beautiful natural environment. The Emergency Services section noted that Ontario has now published a guide titled Emergency Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities / Special Needs which they use in determining accessibility related criteria.
64. **Niagara Regional Police Services**

Have added Sensitivity and Awareness training videos, an 8 part training video series titled Police Response to Persons with Disabilities, to their current training program, as well as, offer TTY service and their website is W3C compliant.

65. **Niagara Regional Housing**

Seventy nine staff members recently received Sensitivity and Awareness training. Staff are currently reviewing opportunities to engage in accessibility audits on their properties. Goal is to ensure Niagara Regional Housing clients are provided with suitable homes.

66. **Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority**

Working on ensuring that Balls Falls Conservation site is accessible. Interested in participating in Making Ontario’s Heritage Accessible for People with Disabilities. Ms. Hepplewhite suggested that Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority should be shown on the Initiatives table.

Ms. Lecinski encouraged Committee members to notify her of any other changes or additions that should be made to the plan.

**ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY WORKSHOP – September 18, 2007**

67. Ms. Lecinski reminded committee members that the workshop will be held at Regional Headquarters and you need to register as soon as possible as space is limited. It was noted that this workshop is an excellent opportunity for people to get connected with the appropriate resources for making accessibility changes. Members will be sent the registration flyer to share with their municipal AAC’s.

**TAXI LICENSING**

68. Ms. Lecinski will be inviting the Niagara Regional Police Services Sgt. Mike McAllister to a future Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting. The NRPS list the Taxi Licensing By-law on their website at [www.nrps.ca](http://www.nrps.ca).

**ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT OF NEW ADDITION**

69. Ms. MacKenzie, Ms. Walker, Mr. Greaves, Ms. Lecinski and Regional staff Mr. Shah, Mr. Bousfield and Mr. Gouthro participated in an audit of the new addition on June 26, 2007. The following changes will be made:
• 4 interior auto-open doorways to be added to provide barrier-free interior access from one side of the building to the other
• Washroom soap dispensers to be relocated within reached by persons using wheelchairs
• Several cafeteria tables to be raised and an international symbol for access to be posted on or beside them
• Elevator door timing to be increased to accommodate embark / disembark
• Gravel perimeter at the exterior entrances of addition to be covered in hard surface for easier access to auto-open door button
• Accessible water fountains to be added in older section (have been installed in new addition)
• Visual fire alarms to be added to audible alarms in older section (have been installed in new addition)
• Review height of toilet in relation to grab bars (measurements conform to FADS)
• Review under-sink height clearance (measurements conform to FADS)

Mr. Bousfield noted that a group has been formed to look into these deficiencies. As well, funding is available for automatic doors and will be installed before the end of the year.

Ms. Gagne took this opportunity to thank those who participated in the audit for their time and effort.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

70. **Customer Service for Persons with Disabilities**

This video will be shown at the next Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting during the lunch break.

71. **AODA Draft Transportation Standard**

Ms. Lecinski noted that the deadline for feedback on the Transportation Standard is August 31, 2007. Ms. Lecinski will email the template for feedback to Committee Members and the document can be reviewed for comment by the Committee at the next meeting.
STAFF DIRECTIONS

Ms. Gagne to speak to Regional Chair Partington regarding the lack of Council and staff representation at Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings. (see minute item under the Introduction)

Ms. Lecinski to check with Eric Pilon to find out whether employment and education are going to be included in the Intermunicipal Specialized Transit criteria. (see minute item 58)

Ms. Lecinski or Ms. Middleton to distribute hard copies of the Transportation Standards to interested Committee members. (see minute item 58)

Ms. Middleton to email Mr. Eden a copy of Mr. Bousfield hand out, Accessibility Review of Regional Facilities by priority. (see minute item 60)

Ms. Lecinski will follow up with the H.R. Health Services Manager regarding Workplace Accommodation procedures. (see minute item 61)

Ms. Middleton will send Committee members the Ontario Historical Society Workshop registration flyer to share with their municipal AAC’s. (minute item 67)

Ms. Lecinski will email the template for feedback on the Transportation Standards to Committee members. (see minute 71)

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mary Lou Whitty that the Committee be adjourned at 3:00 p.m. to meet again on Tuesday, August 14, 2007 at 12:30 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

Jocelyne Gagne
Chair

Wendy Middleton
Administrative Assistant
Council Support