



Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date, Time and Location

Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall – Conference Room #1

Members

Lori Brant, Chair
Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Vice Chair (at 4:35 p.m.)
Ashley Greaves
Adam McLeod
Gary Kooistra
Joe Kissman
Marilyn Abbs(regrets)
Jennica Giesbrecht (regrets)
Councillor Ann-Marie Noyes

Staff Resources

Keegan Gennings, Chief Building Official
Sean Hutton, Facilities Supervisor
Bev Bradnam, Manager, Strategic Initiatives
Corey, PSW

1) Call to Order

The February 27, 2024 AAC Meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m.

2) Roll Call

At roll call, all Accessibility Advisory Committee members were present with the exception of Marilyn, Jennica and Dennis. Dennis joined the meet at 4:35 p.m.

3) Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interests.

4) Adoption of the Agenda

Recommendation No. 1

Moved by: Joe Kissman
Seconded by: Adam McLeod

THAT: The February 27, 2024 Agenda of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.

(CARRIED)

5) Adoption of Minutes

Recommendation No. 2:

Moved by: Joe Kissman
Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

THAT: The January 30, 2024 Minutes of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.

(CARRIED)

6) Parks and Open Space Update

There were no new updates provided by the Landscape Architect. Bev noted that there are two open house consultations for the Parks & Open Space Master Plan update on March 6 (Stevensville Hall) and March 7 (Leisureplex). Comments can also be provided through the Let's Talk Fort Erie page. Councillor Noyes noted that Communications staff are providing Councillors with a Facebook link so that they can share this important consultation with their constituents. Councillor Noyes advised that this Plan will help shape Parks and Open Space development for the next 15 years.

Ashley noted that her daughter is excited about the new Douglas Park playground. Bev advised that, following the last meeting, discussion took place with the Landscape Architect, Tikki Yuen, about the black rubberized surface that was being considered for the Sugar Bowl Park playground. Tikki advised that she has obtained prices for red/green rubberized surface vs. the black surface that AAC members had concern over and that there was a minimal difference and she will be changing that part of the request for proposal to reflect the coloured surface. Councillor Noyes advised that she talked to the Director following the last meeting and stressed to the Director that if there are increased costs for a better product that staff should bring those options to Council for a decision, rather than considering the removal of a piece of equipment to make up the difference.

7) Site Plans

1) 645 Niagara Blvd.

The Committee reviewed the site plan for a 5 storey building with commercial units on the front and 8-10 parking spaces under the building.

7) Site Plans, continued

1) 645 Niagara Blvd., continued

There will be 24 residential units with an elevator and stairwell. There are 4 accessible units and only 1 accessible parking space. There is also a roof top amenity with access by elevator. AAC members questioned the need for accessible parking spaces meeting the number of accessible units. Keegan advised that the zoning only requires 1 accessible parking space based on the overall number of spaces.

2) 2567 Stevensville Road

The Committee reviewed the site plan for a 3 storey building consisting of 4 commercial units and 14 residential units at the northwest corner of Stevensville Road and Main Street. Councillor Noyes asked that the Region be consulted in relation to the development's location as the Region is redeveloping the road/sidewalk network along this location. Keegan advised that the Region is a commenting agency. Discussion took place regarding the differing grades, different wings, access to the various levels and the access only provided by the elevator. Dennis questioned if a ramp could be used rather than stairs and Keegan will follow-up with the designer to see if there is room. Keegan noted that once the lot grading plan is received there may be additional opportunities to level access points. The drawings showed 1 accessible parking space but the AAC noted that it is quite a distance from the front accessible entrance.

8) Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023

Bev advised that in preparation for the tour of Airbus, she has been working with Keegan on a checklist based on up to date legislation. The form will be used for audits of Town facilities and parks as part of the MYAP. Bev also advised that she is waiting for a list of events so that consultation can be done, once again, in person and will be looking at ordering swag for these events. Councillor Noyes advised that the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee hosts euchre tournaments at the Leisureplex and that may provide an opportunity for individuals to complete surveys that will help shape the 2024-2029 MYAP.

9) Outstanding Matters

1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

Bev advised that she reached out to the Regional AAC Coordinator regarding consultation on the Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Coordinator provided details regarding open house consultations and an on-line survey. At the end of the meeting, the AAC members completed the survey as a group and stressed the need for improvements to transportation – both transit (specialized and conventional) and accessible taxi services. There were also comments included about the responsiveness of the Region when trying to call in and access services (i.e. too many prompts and length of time on hold).

9) Outstanding Matters, continued

2) Parking Concerns

Gary advised that once again the parking lot at the medical centre at 238 Bertie Street is full of potholes and patchwork. Gary advised that the parking lot at the corner of Garrison Road and Thompson Road (Life Lab location) also have huge potholes. Keegan advised that he will check to see if either properties are under Site Plan control or if there is anything in a by-law to regulate the requirement. It was noted that the damaged pavement is not only dangerous to cars but also to people that may trip over the uneven/damaged pavement.

3) Adult size Change Table at Bay Beach

This matter will stay on outstanding until the table is installed.

4) StopGap Ramp Project

Bev advised that the budget was passed last night and she will work on reactivating the StopGap webpage and application process. Councillor Noyes noted that St. John's church has a StopGap ramp in place.

5) Barrel Restaurant Access

Keegan has reached out to the owner. Remain on outstanding.

6) Accessible Taxi Service

Bev shared an email message that was sent to Regional Councillor Insinna and provided background from the meeting with the Region and Niagara Regional Police that took place several years ago, led by Councillor McDermott. It was noted that in Fort Erie there are two accessible taxi licences, held by a company, who does not provide the service. There was discussion about a provider that is willing to provide the service but cannot do so without a licence. Councillor Noyes advised that she will bring up this matter at the next Regular Council meeting and request that Regional Councillor Insinna follow-up and ask that the Region consider changing the licencing to require a licence holder to provide the service or forfeit their licence to someone who will offer the service. It was noted that taxi licences have been known as "the golden ticket". Joe noted that he is missing out on a lot of social time because he is unable to access a ride after 9 p.m. Lori noted that the lack of taxi service is not just about accessibility but also affects those who work late and don't have their own vehicle and individuals who have been drinking that need a ride home so they are not driving under the influence. Joe asked that the Regional Councillor be asked to come to the next AAC meeting so that we can discuss our concerns with him.

9) Outstanding Matters, continued

7) Beatties/Staples – accessible door

The sale of the building has not yet taken place. The Committee asked that Bev provide a follow-up letter to Beatties. Remain on outstanding.

8) South Niagara Hospital Consultation Opportunity – February 1, 2024

Lori provided an overview of the consultation that took place and spoke to all of the great features that they are including in the new South Niagara Hospital such as computer screens in each room, lifts in each room, various entrances depending on what service you are seeking, robots that will provide service, green space, etc. Bev shared the slide deck and showed the entrances, parking, green space and various gardens. Lori had questioned the placement of toilets in the accessible and universal washrooms and they took her advice on transferring challenges based on the current design. Areas will also be colour-coded and there is tactile indicators throughout the building.

9) Niagara AAC Workshop – May 16, 2024

Bev advised that the Niagara AAC workshop is being held on Thursday, May 16, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at The Exchange, 5943 Sylvia Place, Niagara Falls. Further registration details will be forthcoming. Bev advised that she will be away at a conference during the event.

10) Ramp at Royal Bank, Jarvis Street

Dennis advised that the ramp looks beat up and looks like it is in the same position. Gary noted that the foot plates and bolts are sticking out. Keegan advised that he will send staff out to review and a letter may be required.

11) Transit Issues

Discussion took place regarding the request for proposal for transit services, noting that the current agreements expire in 2024. Lori questioned if anyone on the public advisory committee has the voice of persons with disabilities. The composition of the committee was reviewed and it was noted that there is supposed to be representation. It was noted that the Mayor is the Co-Chair of the Niagara Regional Transit Commission.

12) Wendy's accessibility improvements

Keegan advised that the deficiency of the door timing has been noted and staff have reached out to Wendy's but haven't heard back. Remain on outstanding.

10) New Business

- 1) Accessibility audit at Airbus - 1100 Gilmore Rd, Fort Erie, ON L2A 5M9 on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Bev advised that Committee members will conduct a walk through of Airbus and provide comments on accessibility barriers. The audit sheet is being updated. Committee members were cautioned that Airbus staff will be getting out at 4 p.m. so there may be some traffic congestion. A reminder notice will be sent out the day before the audit.

- 2) Accessible Canada Directorate Webinar

Bev advised that she participated in a webinar yesterday hosted by the Accessible Canada Directorate that celebrated many success stories that stemmed from the National AccessAbility Week including the Congress on Disability and Inclusion which noted that it is coming up on the 5th anniversary of the Accessible Canada Act coming in to force. It was noted that the government is working on Federal data and a measurement strategy including the development of a framework and indicators for employment, information and communication, etc. Once the slide deck is available, Bev will share details.

11) Date for Next Meeting

The next AAC meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

12) Adjournment

Recommendation No. 3:

Moved by: Joe Kissman
Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

THAT: The February 27, 2024 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 6:01 p.m.

(CARRIED)

Minutes recorded and prepared by:

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA, CMM III
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Lori Brant
Chair