



Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

Meeting Date, Time and Location

Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall – Conference Room #1

Members

Lori Brant, Chair (regrets)
Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Vice Chair
Ashley Greaves
Adam McLeod (at 4:30 p.m.)
Gary Kooistra
Marilyn Abbs
Jennica Giesbrecht (regrets)
Lindsay Davis
Councillor Ann-Marie Noyes

Staff Resources

Keegan Gennings, Chief Building Official (regrets)
Sean Hutton, Facilities Supervisor (regrets)
Bev Bradnam, Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Guest

Angelo Apfelbaum, Manager Business Licensing, Business Licensing, Office of the Deputy CAO, Niagara Region
Barbara McLeod, former AAC member

1) Call to Order

Dennis Hernandez-Galeano chaired the meeting and called the June 25, 2024 meeting to order at 4:25 p.m. It was noted that Joseph Kissman has resigned from the Committee and Municipal Council accepted his resignation at the June 24, 2024 Regular Council meeting. Joe was thanked for his dedicated service to the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the community.

2) Roll Call

All AAC members were present with the exception of Lori Brant and Jennica Giesbrecht. Sean Hutton and Keegan Gennings were also not in attendance.

3) Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4) Adoption of the Agenda

Recommendation:

Moved by: Gary Kooistra

Seconded by: Marilyn Abbs

THAT: The June 25, 2024 Agenda of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.

(CARRIED)

5) Adoption of Minutes

Recommendation:

Moved by: Councillor Noyes

Seconded by: Lindsay Davis

THAT: The May 28, 2024 Minutes of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.

(CARRIED)

6) Site Plans

No site plans were reviewed.

7) Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) 2024 - 2029

Bev advised that the MYAP survey is now live on-line and was distributed through the Town's social media platforms and a link is also on the accessibility web page. Lori and Bev both participated in the Seniors Stepping Out event on June 12, 2024 at the Ridgeway Legion and obtained about 12 surveys at the event, mainly dealing with accessible parking and the state of our roads that cause harm to people with bad backs or other injuries when the roads are not smooth. Bev advised that she also assisted someone with accessing a specialized transit application by mailing a hard copy of the form.

Bev confirmed that the AAC will be partnering with Planning staff for Ridgefest and will only be there on Saturday, July 6 and will need volunteers from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. to collect survey responses. The following times are confirmed:

Set up at 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.:	Lindsay and Gary
10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.:	Councillor Noyes
12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.:	Ashley
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.:	Dennis and Adam

All inspections of facilities and various parks/playgrounds were completed. Councillor Noyes asked that AC Douglas Park in Black Creek also be inspected and she will contact Bev with available times.

7) Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023, continued

Councillor Noyes also noted that a storm water management pond has been constructed for a new subdivision and advised that the design is perfect, the pathway well used and should be repeated wherever storm water management ponds are needed. Councillor Noyes also noted that the Director of Infrastructure also ensured there was a sidewalk put in to access the pond, which has also been very appreciated by residents.

Bev advised that, once all of the surveys and inspection notes have been analyzed, a draft report will come before the Committee at the September AAC meeting and then be presented to Council for approval in October.

8) Outstanding Matters

1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee
No updates.

2) Parking Concerns
No updates. Remove from outstanding.

3) Stop Gap Ramp Project

Bev confirmed that 10 applications have been processed and one of the applicant's had an uneven sidewalk and she is attempting to get staff to fix the sidewalk so that the application can be approved by the StopGap Foundation. Bev advised that a wait list will be started for any additional applications that come in.

4) Barrel Restaurant Access

No update from Keegan. It was noted by several members that recently went to the restaurant that the doors are extremely heavy and it is hoped that there will be a solution found. Remain on outstanding.

5) Beatties/Staples – accessible door

Bev showed a picture of the door marked accessible that is close to the accessible parking space. Bev attended the location and the door was locked and she did have a brief discussion with staff who provided contact information for the manager. AAC members suggested some type of door buzzer when the door is opened or have automatic doors at the main entrance, but asked that Keegan provide commentary as the sidewalk is very narrow and would be hard to access either doors independently in any type of mobility device. Remain on outstanding.

6) Ramp at Royal Bank, Jarvis Street

Bev advised that Councillor McDermott met with the Bank Manager who was going to pass on our concerns to Corporate Headquarters. Remain on outstanding.

7) Crafted 1885

No updates.

8) Outstanding Matters, continued

8) A & W

Keegan to provide an update on the tactile warning surface indicators at the next meeting. Remain on outstanding.

9) Accessible Taxis/Accessible Shuttles

Angelo advised that a new specialized transit provider is coming. BTS has been licenced as a private operator and currently has 20 vehicles, which may increase to 30-50. Angelo advised that he is working on a business plan with them and he has identified south Niagara as being in critical need for services, from Fort Erie to Wainfleet. Angelo advised that the former transportation provider, VIA, will continue with a licence and will look to partner with something similar to Uber. Angelo advised that he is also working with Regional Limousine and believes they are still offering OnDemand in Fort Erie until sometime in October. Premier has added three more taxi plates and 2 of the 3 are to be accessible. Taxi providers are now aware of what they should be charging and there should no longer be additional charges. He has also received inquiries from other taxi providers.

During the summer break, Angelo advised that he will provide email updates to the Committee and will have more news in September. Councillor Noyes questioned if any of the providers will be running on Sundays and Angelo responded that they are looking at 7 days per week and he can suggest service runs to 9:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. with on call service. If they provide a service to 2:00 a.m. they must also match that for specialized service. Angelo advised that he is also meeting with the City of Hamilton regarding accessibility vehicle volume and penalties imposed to Uber and other ways to support the specialized transit. The Region cannot subsidize a privatized business and they may have to come up with viable options to support, noting the expense of operating and cost of an accessible taxi is over \$100,000. One suggestion he received was to waive the licencing fee; however, Angelo noted that is only \$200 and would not have much of an impact. The accessible vehicles are not as robust as a regular taxi cab and burn out quicker. Marilyn asked if Angelo has looked at other provinces, such as Nova Scotia, and Angelo advised that he has and some provide funding through provincial sources that the Region does not have similar access to. The Region is funding transit but cannot fund a private entity.

Angelo talked about the challenges of peak hours of service and noted that not all dialysis patients require specialized transit. Gary asked about language barriers. Angelo advised that he is a member of the IATR (International Association of Transportation Regulators) and they are well aware of ongoing issues.

8) Outstanding Matters, continued

10) Sidewalk Issues

Bev advised that she had forwarded details to the Niagara Region regarding the traffic issue Lori identified at the May meeting, the intersection at Farr and Ridgeway Road and the smaller half-way hub in the intersection that has no directional indicator or curb cut/ramp. Bev advised that she received a response from the Region's Accessibility Coordinator to inquire if she had received a response, which she had not. The matter was then forwarded to Transportation at the Region for a response. Remain on outstanding.

9) New Business

1) Review of the Design of Public Spaces Development Committee

The five year review of the Design of Public Spaces Development Committee is currently taking place. The AAC reviewed some of the recommendations, however the document is 89 pages in length and, due to time, Bev will provide additional feedback on behalf of the Committee. Committee members were encouraged to review the document and provide feedback independently.

2) Enabling Change Funding Application

Bev advised that the Province has opened up funding under the Enabling Change Fund and once again it is not for "bricks and mortar" but more for training and raising awareness. In 2013, Town staff participated in accessible document creation training and, with the new website, updated software, and new staff, the requirement for training has been identified. The following recommendation was passed by the Committee:

Moved by: Marilyn Abbs
Seconded by: Adam McLeod

THAT: The Town of Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the Town's application under the Enabling Change Fund for accessible document training for staff.

(CARRIED)

10) Date for Next Meeting

The next AAC meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 24, 2024, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

11) Adjournment

Recommendation:

Moved by: Gary Kooistra
Seconded by: Adam McLeod

THAT: The June 25, 2024 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 5:28 p.m.

(CARRIED)

Minutes recorded and prepared by:

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA, CMM III
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Dennis Hernandez-Galeano
Chair