



Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

Meeting Date, Time and Location

Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall – Conference Room #1

Members

Lori Brant, Chair
Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Vice Chair (regrets)
Ashley Greaves (to 5:45 p.m.)
Adam McLeod
Gary Kooistra
Joe Kissman (to 5:45 p.m.)
Marilyn Abbs (regrets)
Jennica Giesbrecht
Lindsay Davis
Councillor Ann-Marie Noyes

Staff Resources

Keegan Gennings, Chief Building Official
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 (to 5:50 p.m.)
Angelo, PSW
Mary Jo, PSW

1) Call to Order

The May 28, 2024 AAC Meeting was called to order at 4:14 p.m.

2) Roll Call

All AAC members were present with the exception of Dennis Hernandez-Galeano and Marilyn Abbs. Sean Hutton was also not in attendance.

3) Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4) Adoption of the Agenda

Recommendation No. 1

Moved by: Gary Kooistra
Seconded by: Adam McLeod

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

(CARRIED)

5) Adoption of Minutes

Recommendation No. 2:

Moved by: Gary Kooistra
Seconded by: Joe Kissman

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

(CARRIED)

6) Site Plans

1) 0-19198 Townline Road

The proposed site plan was reviewed that includes a McDonalds, gas station, convenience store and truck fueling area. The development is across from the Black Creek Leisure complex on the north side of the QEW. There is a sidewalk access in from the road and a cross walk with a ramp on both sides and hatched out. The plan does not indicate tactile warning indicators and Keegan will ask that they be installed. The accessible parking spaces are between the McDonalds and convenience store with a curb cut and ramp aisles. The buildings are barrier free. There were no further comments from the AAC on the development.

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

Bev advised that the AAC will have a booth set up for Ridgefest on July 6 and 7 and members should advise their availability to assist with obtaining feedback on the three survey questions that will be posed as part of the MYAP. Lori and Bev presented at Council last evening and gave an overview of the MYAP planning/consultation and also an update on the StopGap Ramp program and other accomplishments of the AAC.

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

AAC members agreed to meet on June 3 at 1:00 p.m. and June 10 at 9:00 a.m. to conduct inspections of parks and facilities so that any identified barriers can be included in the MYAP. Sean confirmed the locations with Bev, which are attached as Appendix 7 to the minutes, and it was agreed that members would meet at Bay Beach on June 3 at 1:00 p.m. and work their way towards Ridgeway. A determination for where the AAC will meet on June 10 will be made based on how many parks/facilities have been completed. Lori asked that pictures be taken and included in a new banner for the consultation at Ridgefest. Bev advised that the survey will also be made available from June 15-July 15 on line and then all feedback will form part of the MYAP, scheduled to be finalized in early fall.

Discussion took place regarding parking and including as a recommendation for the MYAP that all parking fares be waived for persons with an accessible parking permit. During the meeting Keegan reviewed the By-law that was approved by Council on May 27, 2024 that now includes language that a person with an accessible parking permit from Ontario is not required to pay for parking in any paid lots in town.

8) Outstanding Matters

1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee
See notes under Item 8.6. Remain on outstanding.

2) Parking Concerns
No new issues. Remain on outstanding.

3) StopGap Ramp Project
Bev advised that, as part of the presentation to Council last night, slides related to the StopGap Ramp Project were shared and applications for 2024 have been opened. Social media will be used to get the message out and in the next several weeks all businesses will receive direct emails on the Project if there is still space available. Bev noted that already two new applications were received within hours of the first social media post. Remain on outstanding.

4) Barrel Restaurant Access
Keegan advised that there is no update but he did have a phone discussion with the owner. Remain on outstanding.

5) Beatties/Staples – accessible door
No update. Remain on outstanding.

8) Outstanding Matters, continued

6) Niagara AAC Workshop – May 16, 2024

Lindsay and Councillor Noyes provided an overview of the event hosted by the City of Niagara Falls Accessibility Advisory Committee. Approximately 40 people were in attendance. Discussions regarding Committee roles and responsibilities took place at the event and one of the attendees made a comment “I think the Region should be in charge of all of these committees, don’t you agree”? Councillor Noyes shared her concern that they thought that silence may have been consensus but in her discussions with other attendees she encouraged them to view the Town of Fort Erie accessibility webpage that shows all of the great things our committee has accomplished. Bev explained that there is no way that one person or one committee could overtake other municipal committees without having Council approval and members asked that this be noted in the minutes to state that we value the work that our Fort Erie AAC does for our community and there is no way we would want the Region or any other committee to take over that role. Lindsay noted that the speakers at the vent were good and there was a variety. Councillor Noyes shared discussions she had related to mental health, that is not talked about enough. Councillor Noyes shared a recent experience of a homeless man that was provided housing but no other supports, no furniture or other amenities and the issues that caused. Lori questioned if there were suggestions or if that was something that the Landlord-Tenant Act would be responsible for. Councillor Noyes advised that a meeting was held with Regional representatives and they shared other similar stores. There is a need to add more supports.

Jennica noted that the majority of efforts by AACs mostly focus on physical barriers and not intellectual barriers, which often fall through the cracks. There is not much being done for persons with intellectual or mental health disabilities and supports drop off. Jennica suggested that a tangible resource list should be put together that states different creative supports such as furniture help, that could be pointed to if someone asks. Bev showed the Town of Fort Erie website that provides services offered in the community (provided by the Fort Erie Service Providers Network that Bev belongs to) and also advised that customer service staff often direct callers to 211 if it is outside municipal services. Remove from outstanding.

7) Ramp at Royal Bank, Jarvis Street

Bev to write a letter to the bank with pictures and encouraging them to make improvements. Ashley advised that she has spoken with someone at RBC and they advised that “corporate” deals with accessibility matters. Councillor Noyes suggested that we involve Councillor McDermott as this is his ward and he may be able to help. Remain on outstanding.

8) Crafted 1885

No update. A letter has been sent to the business. Remain on outstanding.

8) Outstanding Matters, continued

9) A & W

Keegan advised that he has referred this matter back to Planning re Site Plan control. Remain on outstanding.

10) Accessible Taxis/Accessible Shuttles

Angelo advised that he has been speaking with a transportation network company, similar to Uber, who is looking at providing an enhanced transportation service in the south end of the Region (Fort Erie and Port Colborne). During discussions the company noted that as part of a Phase 2 they are hoping to have accessible vehicles available that will provide an on-demand service similar to Uber in the south end of the Region.

Angelo advised that he has issued three plates for accessible taxi vans in the south end and will have a better update by the September meeting.

Angelo advised that he gone over several scenarios with providers and all are on the same page that they are not to charge for empty vehicles to come to Fort Erie but he also doesn't want to scare anyone off. Currently it is voluntary compliance vs. forced compliance.

9) New Business

1) ONAP Virtual Conference

Bev provided an overview of the ONAP virtual conference she attended related to the Accessible Canada Act, the Sunflower Program, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Capes for Kids Week, the 2022 Canada Survey on Disability and the key note by Jeff Poirier of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Bev's notes are attached as Appendix "9.1" to the minutes.

2) Councillor Noyes described the opportunity she recently had to educate a local business that was distributing information that had very small print. She complained to the advisor and was directed to the accessibility line, which she called. The staff member of the business that dealt with accessibility was not aware of print requirements. Councillor Noyes directed them to the TOFE accessibility page and explained the importance of font that is accessible.

3) Complaint from resident regarding no accessible parking at the following Stevensville locations:

- Scuttlebutts – google maps was pulled up and it shows that there is accessible parking; however, the building is not accessible and has a walkway with stairs.

9) New Business, continued

3) Complaint from resident regarding no accessible parking, continued

- Commercial Hotel – it was noted that there were signs previously; however, it is a gravel parking lot. Keegan will follow-up with the owner and advise that there are accessible parking signs the Town can provide. Keegan was asked what type of spaces should be signed and he advised that he would recommend a Type A and Type B space. Councillor Noyes asked about the recent renovations that took place and if there were accessible requirements. Keegan advised that the changes were “cosmetic”. It was noted that the entrance on Sodom Road is accessible.
- Mae’s Restaurant – it was noted that this restaurant, with three entry steps, is in the commercial core and on a Regional road, which is being reconstructed in 2025 or 2026. There are no parking requirements specific to the restaurant. Councillor Noyes noted that there is not enough parking in downtown Stevensville and many people have to walk.

4) Sidewalk Issues

Lori advised that a piece of sidewalk randomly broke off and cracked her wheel chair on Derby Road and she will send the location to Keegan with a picture so that he can follow up with Engineering. There was also another space on Ridgeway Road, which she will provide more information on and new pavement on Westwood that has a drop off on the sides. Lori was asked if the final layer was poured on Westwood and she advised that the project was completed. Lori was asked if staff could follow-up with Engineering. Details and pics that Lori sends in will be sent to Ryan Maiden in Engineering for investigation. Lori was also directed to the Claim Form on the Town’s website for the damage to her chair.

Lori also described an issue at the intersection of Farr and Ridgeway Road where the tactile indicator takes you into a smaller half-way hub in the intersection with no further directional/tactile indicators and no curb cut or ramp. Bev will send this off to the Region for action.



9) New Business, continued

Joe and Ashley left the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

5) Mentimeter Survey

Lindsay provided a link that was given at the Niagara AAC Workshop from Niagara Housing and Homelessness that covered three questions related to homelessness and housing. The AAC completed the survey (up to 200 characters per question) and noted the domino effect of homelessness and the effect on new Canadians as well. Journey to Belonging is being rolled out by the Province which is supposed to change funding models to be more person-centered.

10) Date for Next Meeting

The next AAC meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, June 25, 2024, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

11) Adjournment

Recommendation No. 3:

Moved by: Adam McLeod
Seconded by: Jennica Giesbrecht

THAT: The May 28, 2024 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 5:54 p.m.

(CARRIED)

Meeting minutes recorded and prepared by:

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA, CMM III
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Lori Brant
Chair

CRYSTAL BEACH-RIDGEWAY AREA (Ward 4 and 5)

<u>Parks</u>	<u>Facilities</u>
1) Bay Beach 2) Crystal Beach Waterfront Park 3) Crystal Ridge Park 4) Lions Field 5) Shagbark Park/Trail – natural area 6) Battlefield Museum Park (new walkways)	1) Crystal Ridge Arena 2) Ridge Road Museum

CRESCENT PARK/OLD FORT AREA (Ward 3 and 4)

<u>Parks</u>	<u>Facilities</u>
7) Ferndale Park 8) Waverly Beach (Erie Beach) 9) Albert Street Park 10) Energy Park	3) Municipal Centre/Town Hall 4) Leisureplex

FORT ERIE – BRIDGEBURG AREA (Ward 1)

<u>Parks</u>	<u>Facilities</u>
11) Sugarbowl Park 12) Oakes Park 13) Bowen Road Park	5) Gibson Centre – public access areas

STEVENSVILLE AREA (Ward 6)

<u>Parks</u>	<u>Facilities</u>
14) Ott Road Park 15) Stevensville Memorial Park 16) United Empire Loyalist Park	6) Stevensville Hall

Appendix “9.1” to the May 28, 2024 AAC Meeting Minutes

Overview of ONAP virtual conference (May 9 and 10, 2024):

Accessible Canada Act – Federal Government – Philip Rizcallah

Standards completed over past 12 months:

- 1) Outdoor spaces – final product September 2025
- 2) Information, Communication and Technology – accessibility requirements – looking at European Union best practices – draft released in Spring of 2024
- 3) Employment Standard – first portion to Minister on recruitment soon – final targeted for 2026

Upcoming 6-18 months

- 1) Wayfinding
- 2) Emergency egress
- 3) Acoustics in building
- 4) Accessible travel journey – taxis, planes, trains
- 5) Model standard for built environment – fall of 2025

The Plain Language Standard is out for public review and elements will be incorporated into provincial standards in some cases.

Grants - \$8.5 million contribution funding research projects – 77 projects were funded totaling \$55 million

Accessible – Affordable (some say “access” to housing but there is no accessibility features.

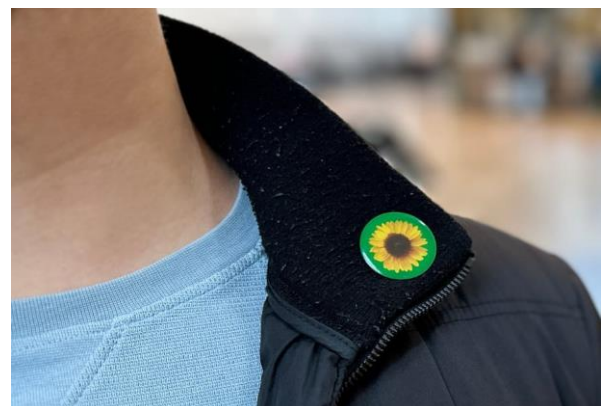
Every house is designed through a blue print is accessibility ready – conversion at considerable ease or at a low cost – guide developed turning into a standard. (i.e. ramp placement – can be offsetting a garden for the eventuality of a ramp in the future; auto design with wider doors/corridors (not structurally load bearing or any electrical/mechanical) – embed in blueprints.

Relationship with the Provincial Government/Territories – can’t control provinces or territories but some have signed MOUS (7 to date signed) – look at research and standards and not re-invent the wheel – steps toward harmonized approach.

Hidden Disabilities – Sunflower Program

Simple tool for customers to voluntarily share to staff that they have a disability or condition that might not be immediately apparent – Metrolinx program:

<https://www.metrolinx.com/en/discover/metrolinx-is-joining-the-hidden-disabilities-sunflower-program>



Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Presentation on the over 100 programs and services available – disability inclusion pledge – symbolic commitment for companies to make disability inclusion a priority in marketing and employment; Capes for Kids Week raised over \$7,000 in Aurora

Region of York – presentation on 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability

Women of all ages are more likely than men to have a disability – in 2022, 27% of Canadians aged 15 and older (8 million people) have at least one disability. In Ontario 28% of residents aged 15+ had at least one disability (3.23 million) – 30.8% women and 25% men.

Key Note was from Jeff Poirier – OHRC

Various identifies can intersect; spoke about ableism – attitudes and stereotypes in society that devalue or limit the potential and inclusion of persons with disabilities – may be unconscious, systemic – may lead to people not disclosing.

Province

Access Forward will be provided soon;

ONAP Members asked about vendors having to comply with AODA legislation as it relates to reports/studies that they are doing for the municipality. Asked the Province – is there any intention to communicate to businesses to be compliant? Our websites have to be compliant but vendors say “only on request” – Province stated that anything on a municipal website has to be compliant so we would have to make sure those consultant’s reports/studies meet the requirements. ONAP pushed back and advised the Province that these are the types of businesses/organizations they should be auditing, rather than municipalities that have done the heavy lifting since introduction of the AODA.

Re AI technology and accessibility – Lois and Lucille (ONAP members) are on Customer Service Standard Review