

**Meeting Date, Time, and Location**

Tuesday, October 29, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. in Conference Room #1 at Town Hall

**Members**

Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Chair  
 Bev Ferris, Vice-Chair  
 Gary Kooistra  
 Barbara McLeod  
 Tammy Clark (regrets)  
 Lori Brant  
 Veronica Sparling  
 Steve Gucciardi, Transit Representative  
 Councillor Ann-Marie Noyes

**Staff Resources**

Keegan Gennings, Chief Building Official (regrets)  
 Sean Hutton, Facilities Supervisor  
 Bev Bradnam, Manager, Strategic Initiatives  
  
 Guest:  
 Adam McLeod (previous AAC Vice-Chair)

1) **Call To Order**

The October 29, 2019 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 5:19 p.m.

2) **Approval of Minutes**

**Recommendation No. 1:**

**Moved by: Bev Ferris**  
**Seconded by: Barbara McLeod**

**THAT: The September 24, 2019 Minutes of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.**

**(CARRIED)**

3) **Outstanding Matters**

1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

- Accessible Bus Demo – nothing new to report.

Bev B. advised that she participated in the September 25, 2019 Niagara Specialized Transit Study – Public Focus Group and provided a brief overview of the discussions. Notes taken at the meeting are attached as Appendix “3.1” to the Minutes.

3) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee, continued

Keegan has had further discussions with the Director, Infrastructure Services, regarding the tactile warning surface indicators at Municipal Centre Drive and Garrison Road. The AAC requests that the Director review the information provided by the Region of Waterloo and our previous request to have tactile warning surface indicators along the entire depressed curb at the intersection and advise his thoughts, noting that the Design of Public Spaces has varying interpretations. Bev will forward the Director all pertinent background information.

2) Parking Concerns - Downtown Cores – Winter Maintenance

Following last month's discussions, Lori provided details on curb cuts that are not properly cleared during the winter and pictures and notes were forwarded to the Operations Manager.

3) Fort Erie Active Transportation Committee (FEAT)

Dennis advised that the FEAT Committee discussed the presentation by the Consultant on the Active Transportation Master Plan and provided comments on the draft.

4) Letter to 660 Garrison Road re Life Labs

Bev advised that the property has been sold and the new owner came to Town Hall to meet with her about what the AAC was looking for in terms of improving access. Copies of the minutes and discussions were provided to the new owner who has reached out to Keegan to have an on-site meeting. Remain on outstanding.

5) Community Theatre – Greater Fort Erie Secondary School

Bev advised that she followed up with the School and the railings have not yet been installed. Keegan to follow-up with his contact on timelines for the installation. Remain on outstanding.

6) Accessible Taxi Cabs

Councillor Noyes advised that she will follow-up on her resolution and noted that she believes someone has applied for another licence for Fort Erie. It was noted that the Niagara Regional Police no longer are responsible for licencing taxi cabs and the responsibility now lies with the Region of Niagara. Remain on outstanding.

7) 238 Bertie Street – Request for Funding

Remain on outstanding until accessible washroom has been completed.

3) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

8) Business Excellence Award Winner

Dennis advised that both he and Bev attended the Chamber of Commerce 2019 Business Excellence Award and Dennis presented the winners, Boggio's in Ridgeway, with the Accessible Business award. Following the event, Dennis went to Boggio's and noted that the entrance was not accessible and brought it forward to Bev. Bev noted that they received the award for the great work that they do in the community (conducting home inspections and providing assistance with improvements that allow people to remain in their homes). Bev contacted the Chamber of Commerce and asked that in future, when the AAC is sponsoring the award, that they be provided an opportunity to vet the winner as we do not want to be awarding someone that does not have an accessible entrance as this does not send the right message. The Chamber agreed that in the future the AAC would be able to provide comment on the nominations. Bev also followed up with the Town's Community Health Care Services Coordinator who confirmed that an accessible entrance will be part of the reconstruction taking place at the store. Dennis also noted that they provided great customer service and the inner door was automatic, just not the outer door.



Dennis also described his difficulty getting into the Buffalo Canoe Club where the event took place as the ramp was very steep for someone using a manual wheelchair. Lori noted that the Club will be hosting events for the Paralympics and will be undertaking accessibility improvements including access to the Boathouse.

9) Hand Rail – Town Hall

Councillor Noyes advised that she brought this matter up at Council and the Town will be doing something (most likely installing an additional rail on the east side of the ramp). Councillor Noyes advised that Council agreed that the AAC should be consulted on matters that affect access. Remain on outstanding.

10) Telephone at Leisureplex

Dennis advised that during an event in June he was unable to hang the telephone back up that is located in the atrium of the Leisureplex. Sean advised that he has sent the request to Digital Services. Sean did note that the phone was placed higher to keep out of the reach of children. Remain on outstanding.

4) **Site Plans (if applicable)**

No site plans were provided.

5) **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023**

Bev provided a detailed overview of the 2019-2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Committee members noted how much the AAC has achieved in one year. The Plan, with an accompanying presentation and report to Council, will be made at the December 2, 2019 Council-in-Committee meeting.

Councillor Noyes questioned if the newspaper article “City looks to improve access for disabled employees” should be included under achievements. Bev noted that the Town covers the cost of accommodations and has a Work Place Accommodation Plan that is completed with the employee. Bev also noted that there is a myth held by many employers that accommodating an employee with a disability is very costly, where the reality is that most accommodations are under \$500.

Veronica noted that she has followed up with the veteran that was part of the Ridgefest consultation and both he and his wife are in a good place now and the information that the AAC provided to them has really helped. Councillor Noyes advised that a Veterans’ Health Information Plan has recently been released that may also assist.

The following recommendation was passed by the Committee:

**Recommendation No. 2**

**Moved by: Gary Kooistra**

**Seconded by: Lori Brant**

**THAT: the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the recommendations contained in the draft 2019-2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.**

**(CARRIED)**

6) **Other Matters**

1) Boards and Committees Training – October 10, 2019

Dennis advised that he attended the training which provided a procedural review for Town Board and Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs, staff resources and secretaries. The session also included very informative information related to the Town’s social media.

2) Call re Dollarama (poles on buggies) and signage on accessible washroom stalls

Bev advised that she received a call from a resident who provided two accessibility issues:

- a) The Dollarama store has buggies that do not allow seniors or persons with disabilities to take their purchases out to their vehicles as there are poles on the carts. Nor do they provide assistance to carry items out. Bev F. noted that the automatic doors are regularly broken and she was advised that they no longer fix them because children damage them. It was noted that the AODA requires that maintenance is required for all accessible equipment.

6)

**Other Matters, continued**

3) Call re Dollarama (poles on buggies) and signage on accessible washroom stalls, continued

a) Dollarama – continued: Barb described an issue with the Niagara Falls store related to Adam purchasing something that he tried to return and they were advised that the store policy is “no returns” and it is written on the receipt. Adam is legally blind and Barb advised that they need to accommodate his disability and allow him to return the item and the response was “we do not make accommodations”. Barb provided the store manager with the customer service requirement details on assisting persons with disabilities and the manager finally allowed the return. The Dollarama Accessibility statement shown on their website was brought up on the screen which states that they are “committed to providing a barrier-free environment for clients, and to providing our goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. The objective is to ensure that Dollarama is compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005”. It was noted that the culture in both stores was not one of respect for persons with disabilities and directed that feedback be provided to Dollarama and request that they provide their Accessibility Policy. Add to outstanding.

b) The requirement for an accessible sign on each accessible stall in public washrooms. Lori noted that the accessible stall is the only choice for her to use. Discussion took place regarding the pros and cons of placing a sticker on accessible washrooms and it was noted that the larger stalls are also used for mothers with small children and often times have change tables in them. No action to be taken.

4) Niagara Parks Commission annual Accessibility Public Information Centre

The Niagara Parks Commission invited the AAC to attend their annual Accessibility Public Information Centre for their Multi-Year Plan being held on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. at Legends on the Niagara. Bev F., Gary and Dennis will be attending the session. The Commission’s accessibility coordinator has also advised that she will provide a copy of the presentation following the meeting.

5) Letter of Support for Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program Funding

Bev advised that she is working on a funding application for the E.J. Freeland YMCA facility and requested a letter of support from the AAC on the importance of the community facility.

The following recommendation was passed by the Committee:

6) **Other Matters, continued**

5) Letter of Support for Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program Funding, continued

**Recommendation No. 3:**

**Moved by: Gary Kooistra  
Seconded by: Barbara McLeod**

**THAT: The Town of Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the Town of Fort Erie’s application for funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Community, Culture and Recreation stream for improvements to the E.J. Freeland YMCA facility and provide a letter of support outlining the importance of the facility to the community and to persons with disabilities.**

**(CARRIED)**

7) **Date for Next Meeting**

The next AAC meeting has been scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 3 – International Persons with Disabilities Day and will be followed by a Christmas meal at 5:30 with the Fort Erie Active Transportation Committee in the Town Hall Atrium.

8) **Adjournment**

**Recommendation No. 4:**

**Moved by: Barbara McLeod  
Seconded by: Gary Kooistra**

**THAT: The October 29, 2019 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 6:31 p.m.**

**(CARRIED)**

Minutes recorded and prepared by:

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA  
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Dennis Hernandez-Galeano  
Chair