

Meeting Date, Time, and Location

Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in Conference Room #1 at Town Hall

Members

Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Chair (at 5:18 p.m.)
 Bev Ferris, Vice-Chair (Bev chaired meeting)
 Gary Kooistra
 Adam McLeod
 Barbara McLeod
 Lori Brant (regrets)
 Faith Sparling
 Steve Gucciardi, Transit Representative
 Councillor Ann-Marie Noyes

Staff Resources

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

Guest:
 Signe Hansen, Manager, Community Planning (to 5:34 p.m.)

1) **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:11 p.m. Bev Ferris chaired the meeting.

2) **Beaver Creek Playground and Stevensville Mini Park Playground**

Signe Hansen, Manager, Community Planning, provided a presentation to the AAC on the Beaver Creek and Stevensville Mini Park Playground proposals. Signe noted that a number of playground installations are planned for 2020 including the above two and the Sugarbowl and Ferndale Park playgrounds in the fall.

Signe explained the process in designing playgrounds:

1. Issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) based on previous input from the AAC and Terms of Reference based on legislation;
2. Public Open House to comment on proposal submissions;
3. Review proposal submissions with the AAC;
4. Playground Evaluation Committee (Signe, Sean and Bev B.) review submissions and comments from Open House and AAC;
5. Council awards the project; and
6. Staff works with the successful proponent on negotiating any changes.

2)

Beaver Creek Playground and Stevensville Mini Park Playground, continued

Signe advised that the legislation that governs playgrounds is the CSA, the AODA and the Design of Public Spaces. Consideration is also given to the requirements agreed to by the AAC. Signe also stated that an accessible playground looks at features related to cognitive, physical, quiet retreat and social play.

Beaver Creek Playground

The site will contain benches, garbage and shade trees provided by the Town. The site is also located near a wetland. Three designs were submitted and some included swing sets as well as features complimentary to the location. 130 notices were sent out to the neighbourhood and only one family attended the public open house and stated how happy they were to have a park developed for the neighbourhood. The three options were reviewed by the Committee and members were asked to provide Bev with comments and/or preference prior to Wednesday afternoon's Playground Evaluation Committee meeting.

Dennis joined the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

Stevensville Mini Park Playground

The site presently has a playground, which is in very rough shape. The AAC has conducted audits of this playground in previous years and one of the biggest comments was the path down to the playground. Signe advised that the playground location will be shifted slightly to address previous low-lying, wet areas and the Town will also be putting in an asphalt pathway all the way down to the gazebo and playground area. The site is also located near a creek/wetland. The Town will also be planting shade trees and adding picnic tables. The design was to include two separate areas, one for the swing set and one for active play and the pathway will pass through the middle of both areas to provide greater access. All of the submissions received include swing sets and all with an inclusive seat. The Public Open House was well attended and one individual had requested consideration for a wheel-chair platform swing that flips up to secure the chair. The swing discussed has not been CSA approved and staff will be looking at other options. Signe advised that the cost was quite high for this type of swing and it was noted that the Lions Club had offered to be involved in fundraising for accessible features in parks. Councillor Noyes stated that at the Open House discussion took place about the wood chips and it was noted that the rubber material is cost prohibitive. Signe advised that a great deal of money will be spent on paving the pathway into the park but noted that a rubberized surface is being considered for the Sugarbowl Playground, which is more visible. The three options were reviewed by the Committee and they were asked to provide Bev with comments and/or preference prior to Wednesday afternoon's Playground Evaluation Committee meeting.

Signe was thanked for her presentation and left the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

3) **Approval of Minutes**

Recommendation No. 1:

Moved by: Barbara McLeod
Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

THAT: The January 28, 2020 Minutes of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.

(CARRIED)

4) **Outstanding Matters**

1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

- Accessible Bus Demo – Bev read the response from the Region of Niagara, as follows: “Niagara Region has deferred this decision until after the transit governance review as we did not want to bring on another new make/model of bus. For all intents and purposes, this issue is closed for the foreseeable future”. Steve noted that the bus was definitely not reflective of an accessible bus that was inclusive.

2) Parking Concerns

Councillor Noyes advised that the addition of accessible parking spaces in Ridgeway and Crystal Beach was well received by Council. Bev advised that she has also responded to the individual who initially requested an accessible space in front of the Ridgeway Post Office. Engineering staff will now work on the design of the spaces.

3) Fort Erie Active Transportation Committee (FEAT)

Dennis advised that Chris Millar will be making a delegation to Town Council for the Active Transportation Master Plan. Dennis suggested that AAC members may wish to show support and he will advise Committee members of the date. Dennis will be speaking on behalf of the AAC at the meeting and Richard Paterak will be speaking on behalf of FEAT.

4) Letter to 660 Garrison Road re Life Labs

Work to be done in spring. Discussion took place regarding placement of accessible spaces. Remain on outstanding.

5) Community Theatre – Greater Fort Erie Secondary School

Keegan advised that the hand rails were to be installed by the end of February and he will follow-up with the School Board. Remain on outstanding.

4) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

6) Accessible Taxi Cabs

Councillor Noyes advised that she called a cab company and it was located somewhere far away. She also checked on the website and it did not list Fort Erie as a location that they serviced. Councillor Noyes will follow-up with Councillor Dubanow, who represents the Town on the Region's Transportation Committee. Councillor Noyes noted that some of the accessible taxis you may see in Town could possibly be those paid for by insurance. Remain on outstanding.

7) 238 Bertie Street – Request for Funding

Keegan advised that a building permit has been applied for and covers the construction of 2 washrooms, one which is accessible. Remain on outstanding until work is complete.

8) Hand Rail – Town Hall

Nothing new to report. Remain on outstanding.

5) **Site Plans (if applicable)**

Keegan confirmed that the previous site plan reviewed by the AAC for the Stevensville Conservation Area will have labs, an education component and be fully accessible.

Three site plans were reviewed by the Committee:

1) South Coast Village – Phase Two

Keegan noted that the second phase of the development backs onto the treatment plant lands and will be made up of 72 townhouse units. Attention was drawn to the private club house that will have apartments above. The clubhouse will be accessible. The AAC asked if the Town was able to ask the developer to provide accessible units and Keegan responded that he does not have the authority to force them to provide accessible units but the actual home owner can specify during construction/design. Keegan confirmed that the development's sidewalks will have curb cuts and tactile warning plates.

2) Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre – addition to child care facility

Keegan advised that the AAC previously dealt with the new child care facility that was recently constructed and this site plan covers the addition of a kitchen and 6 additional parking spaces. The facility is full accessible. The AAC had no further comments.

5) **Site Plans (if applicable), continued**

3) 344 Ridge Road North

Keegan described the new building that will be built in front of the existing building and will have three commercial units on the main floor and two apartments above. Keegan advised that there will also be an elevator to access the upper floor. Keegan stated that one of the apartments will be accessible as a certain percentage of the units have to be. There will be parking in the back of the building, including 1 accessible space.

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

The AAC continued with the review of the comments received as part of the MYAP consultation. The On-line survey responses (numbers 13 to 22) related to barriers to municipal services was reviewed and the following comments were recorded:

| COMMENTS RECEIVED | AAC COMMENTS/DIRECTION |
|--|---|
| 13. Sidewalk snow removal bylaws need to be in place for people with canes walkers or wheelchairs. | One of the recommendations contained in the MYAP relate to the Town of Fort Erie pro-actively inspecting, maintaining and clearing sidewalks and curb cuts to ensure a smooth path of travel for all residents. The AAC noted that some of the newer sidewalk clearing machines are wider than some of the older sidewalks and are digging up dirt or leaving tread marks. Councillor Noyes noted one even drove over flags. |
| 14. I live on Shannon and need a parking spot in front of my place that is handicapped accessible because I have a metal plate in my right hand and walk with walker or cane due to a nerve taken out of my left foot. The driveway I have is too narrow to get out of the car with a walker or cane. I want my independence and to keep that I need a parking spot for handicap in front of my house. | Suggestions included modifying their driveway. Keegan noted that some of the properties on Shannon Road do not have enough room but noted that the road is very narrow and providing a designated spot would not be feasible. |
| 15. Performing Arts Theatre in GFESS, no railings inside theatre nor push buttons/automatic doors in theatre; downtown Ridgeway no handicap parking spots, especially in front of Post Office; no crosswalk marks at corners for those with scooters/wheelchairs to cross safely; local business handicap parking spots are not wide enough for vehicles with ramps. | The railings in the theatre are close to being installed and additional accessible spots are being developed in downtown Ridgeway. It was noted that movie theatres have doors that close and are not automatic, possibly having to do with interrupting performances. Discussion took place regarding crosswalks. Councillor Noyes advised that she will follow-up with the Traffic Coordinating Committee to determine what constitutes a cross walk and if an overhead warning light is required. It was agreed that any crosswalks can be hazardous for pedestrians without some type of warning lights or signage. |

6) **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023, continued**

| COMMENTS RECEIVED | AAC COMMENTS/DIRECTION |
|---|---|
| 16. Sidewalks, roads, ramps. | Addressed in the recommendations of the MYAP. |
| 17. Public transit not easily available. | Steve noted that there are new schedules that are out and very easy to read. |
| 18. Being able to talk to a Councillor. | Many options are available to communicate with Councillors, including contact us submissions. Bev noted that the Customer Service Unit also has contact information for each member of Council that they regularly provide. |
| 19. Lack of ramps outside public buildings and lack of handicap parking. | All municipal facilities have accessible entrances into buildings and the prescribed amount of accessible parking available. This comment could relate to privately owned buildings that are open to the public. |
| 20. Steep incline at the entrance to Town Hall. | The AAC agrees that the incline is steep into the Town Hall and has requested that the railing, that was removed and provided assistance on both the left and right side of an individual, be reinstated. Keegan asked if a landing partially up the ramp would assist but it was noted that it would make the second portion even steeper. Councillor Noyes suggested a pathway that would not be as steep and a more scenic route into to Town Hall. Keegan noted that any pathway would have to be 43" in width. |
| 21. I feel that parking is a major concern. I am disabled and need a handicap parking spot in front of my place but have been denied. With that being said, it makes it very difficult to keep my independence not having a parking spot in front of my location. | As noted previously, the Town does not provide individualized spaces in front of homes. |
| 22. I would love to see the path that wheelchairs can get out on the beach with. | The AAC has been successful in their funding request for accessible beach mats and Town staff has included additional accessible mats for Bay Beach as well as other waterfront locations in the 2020 Budget. |

7)

Other Matters

1) Request from Councillor Dubanow re Sidewalk Curb Cuts

Bev read an email from Councillor Dubanow, as follows:

“.. wondering if you might be able to bring up to the AAC the issue of sidewalks with curbs that drop to the road rather than transition with a ramp. I had a constituent on Murray Street contact me the other day saying that there were numerous sidewalks in the area that ended at a curb rather than a ramp to the road, and she needed to physically lift her granddaughter’s stroller when crossing the street. I could see this being a significant concern for those with mobility issues or whom use devices as these transitions would not be accessible and a barrier to them using the sidewalks. I’m not sure if there is a list of these across town that are being worked on and if this is something AAC is already aware of, but I thought I would bring it up regardless”.

Bev read her response to the Councillor:

“Thank you, Councillor, for your question. As you may recall, our recently passed 2019-2023 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan included public comments from our consultation and a large number of individuals commented that sidewalks still remain a barrier in some parts of Town. Council passed the recommendations contained in the Plan, which included the following, specific to sidewalks:

That: the Town of Fort Erie pro-actively inspect, maintain and clear sidewalks and curb cuts to ensure a smooth path of travel for all residents.

The Fort Erie Active Transportation Committee has also looked at sidewalk travel so I have also copied in Chris Millar. I have viewed Murray Street on Geopedia and there does seem to be a few at the eastern end that have quite a drop. I know with any new reconstruction we always ensure that the curbs are cut and have the proper tactile warning (either blind cuts or actual tiles depending on location and width of sidewalk). I have copied in our soon to be Roads Supervisor, Nic Chevalier, as I believe he was also responsible for the sidewalk contract in his role as Construction Supervisor and may have more details on how we pro-actively inspect our sidewalks. Thank you for bringing this barrier to our attention”.

2) Events at St. Paul’s Anglican Church

As part of the fundraising taking place for the 2021 anniversary celebration, Faith advised that St. Paul’s Anglican Church is hosting a Trivia Night on March 7th. Faith is also part of the Adult Literacy Council and they are hosting a Trivia Night on April 18th. Both events have been posted on the Town’s event calendar. Faith also noted that the Church hosted a pancake supper this evening.

8) **Date for Next Meeting**

The next AAC meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in Conference Room #1.

9) **Adjournment**

Recommendation No. 2:

Moved by: Adam McLeod

Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

THAT: The February 25, 2020 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does not hereby adjourn at 6:58 p.m.

(CARRIED)

Minutes recorded and prepared by

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Bev Ferris
Vice-Chair