



MINUTES

Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting Date, Time, and Location	
Tuesday, June 28, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall – Conference Room #1	
Members	Staff Resources
Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Chair Bev Ferris, Vice-Chair Gary Kooistra Adam McLeod Barbara McLeod Lori Brant (regrets) Veronica (Faith) Sparling Councillor Ann-Marie Noyes (regrets) Ashley Greaves, On-Demand Transit Rep.	Keegan Gennings, Chief Building Official Sean Hutton, Facilities Supervisor Bev Bradnam, Manager, Strategic Initiatives Guests: Natalie Bianco, Employment Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton/Niagara Region, Community Living Ontario (to 4:46 p.m.)

1) **Call to Order**

The June 28, 2022 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 4:17 p.m.

2) **Approval of Minutes**

Recommendation No. 1:

Moved by: Bev Ferris
Seconded by: Adam McLeod

THAT: The May 31, 2022 Minutes of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.

(CARRIED)

3) **Ready, Willing and Able (RWA)**

Natalie Bianco, Employment Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton/Niagara Region, Community Living Ontario provided the Accessibility Advisory Committee with a power point presentation that described the inclusive hiring, employment and accommodation services provided by the Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) program. The RWA program is active in 20 communities and is funded by the Government of Canada to help persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder and intellectual disabilities find meaningful employment.

3) **Ready, Willing and Able (RWA), continued**

In January, RWA expanded to 10 new communities, including Hamilton/Niagara. Natalie advised that she also works with Patrick at Transition To Employment who recently presented to the AAC about their employment services. Natalie described the pre-hire support, recruitment support and ongoing collaboration that they provide. Natalie also described some of the misconceptions in hiring an individual with a disability and also discussed the positives, related to productivity and performance. Since 2014, RWA has connected with over 14,000 Canadian businesses and supported Canadian businesses in hiring for over 3,500 jobs. They have also developed nation-wide partnerships with 15 national employers, many of which have been recognized as Canada's Best Diversity Employers. They have also received an award from Zero Project at the United Nations in Vienna in 2017.

Natalie explained RWA's ongoing commitment and process as:

- 1) Building awareness and understanding;
- 2) Real work for real pay;
- 3) Taking a flexible, creative and collaborative approach; and
- 4) Taking an individualized approach to support employees with disabilities.

Natalie advised that RWA also provides a complimentary website that is free to employees and has an e-learning series to help hire inclusively.

Gary asked what types of jobs they help find and Natalie responded that some are entry level/retail and others can be software engineers.

The full presentation with speaking notes is attached as Appendix "1" to the Minutes.

AAC members thanked Natalie for her presentation.

Natalie left the meeting at 4:46 p.m.

4) **Friendship Trail Crossing Recommendations**

Deferred.

5) **Outstanding Matters**

- 1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

Faith advised that the last Regional AAC meeting was cancelled.

5) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

2) Parking Concerns

No update was provided.

3) Fort Erie Active Transportation Committee (FEAT)

No update was provided.

4) Pool Lift - E. J. Freeland Community Centre

Motion Specialities has confirmed that the site assessment is complete and core scan and drilling is scheduled for July 21-29 with installation taking place during that time frame. A photo opportunity will be scheduled once the lift is installed and representatives from the Ridgeway-Crystal Beach Lions Club and Fort Erie Lions Club will be asked to participate.

6) **Site Plans**

1) 30 Courtwright Street

The AAC reviewed plans for a condominium with 26 dwelling units and commercial on the main floor. The development will have some parking at an inside courtyard on the ground floor. There are 30 parking spaces on site. Only 1 accessible parking space is required and it will be located inside, closest to the lobby to access commercial units as well as the elevator. From the drawings it looks like the units may be two levels. There does not seem to be any barrier free suites. Keegan was asked to find out more details on the suites and if any will be accessible units. Keegan advised that he will forward additional plans if received.

Keegan reminded members that the AAC reviews site plans and can suggest items if there is no legislation to require a developer to do so but they are strictly suggestions at that point. Keegan noted that tactile warning plates is a good example where they are not required but most developers will install them when they are suggested.

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

No new updates were provided.

8)

Other Matters

1) Election Polling Station Inspections

Bev advised that inspections were done with Election staff at the Crystal Ridge Community Centre, Fort Erie Legion and the Black Creek Community Church. Faith participated in the inspection at the Church and Bev noted that she called Dennis regarding the Legion's entrance as there was a lip at the front door. Dennis advised that this is his polling station and he does have to "pop" his chair over the entrance. The Election staff advised that they would purchase a temporary threshold ramp for use during the election. Dennis advised that they also may be able to move the mat over the lip.

2) Stevensville Garden Gallery – Accessibility concerns from resident

Bev described a complaint received by an individual that there are no power operated doors at the Stevensville Garden Gallery and the individual witnessed someone with a walker trying to open the door by himself and he was falling over and the individual had to assist him. The individual also advised that there are 4 bathrooms and none of them are accessible for guests in wheelchairs due to the limited space.

Bev read her response to the individual:

"Thank you for caring about persons with disabilities and their right to be able to access stores and washrooms. Though the Gallery was built at a time when none of these requirements were necessary, the Accessibility Advisory Committee of the Town of Fort Erie has had success in working to improve access in our community by encouraging improvements such as automatic doors and accessible washrooms. Our next meeting is June 28th and I will bring this matter forward. In the past the Committee has written letters to commercial property owners and provided some data on the discretionary spending by persons with disabilities (i.e. if you make it difficult for someone with a disability to shop or visit your restaurant then chances are their families and friends won't either). The washroom may be difficult for the Gallery to accommodate given their current space. The business does not have to take the Committee's advice but we have found that we have worked well with trying to get the business to do what is right. As there is an LCBO in the building, which is contracted by the Province, we also usually see that this has an impact. Again, thanks for letting us know your concerns and hopefully we can get the Stevensville Garden Gallery to make some improvements".

Keegan noted that a building permit would be required to install an accessible washroom. Bev F. advised that she has used a side entrance in the past to enter the building. The Committee felt that with the LCBO being through the main entrance, automatic doors would not only assist persons with disabilities but it would also assist patrons with carrying their goods as the doors are very heavy.

8)

Other Matters, continued

2) Stevensville Garden Gallery – Accessibility concerns from resident, continued

The Committee passed the following recommendation:

Recommendation No. 2:

Moved by: Barb McLeod

Seconded by: Adam McLeod

THAT: a letter be forwarded to the Stevensville Garden Gallery advising of the importance of accessible entrances and requesting that they consider installing automatic doors at the main entrance, especially as they are hosting a provincial agency in their building; and further

THAT: If any internal renovations take place that consideration be given to constructing an accessible washroom for patrons.

(CARRIED)

3) Adult Change Table at Bay Beach

Bev advised that a complaint was received from a visitor to Bay Beach requesting the consideration of an adult size change table in the accessible washroom. Bev advised that she had followed up with Sean as the initial plan included an adult size change table. Sean advised that there was some problem with the table and asked that Bev follow-up with the Manager, Community Planning. Add to outstanding.

4) EV Charging Station

Bev shared an article from the Municipality of Clarington that had installed mobility device charging stations at a local park, next to a bench. AAC members advised that there is a similar charging station at the Fort Erie Legion and may be one by the market in Ridgeway.

5) Sidewalks

Adam noted that he walks everywhere and there are many sidewalks that are raised that could cause him injury with his cane. Adam asked if it was against the law for him to take neon spray paint and mark the areas of concern. Bev asked if there was a particular area as there are sidewalk improvements taking place throughout Crescent Park. Adam advised that the worst one is on Daytona by the empty lot near his home. Adam will send Bev a picture so she can follow-up with staff.

Gary and Bev F. also advised that along the Niagara Parkway there are several sidewalks at the bottom of Gilmore, Emerick, Phipps and Dufferin that have quite a high lift at the curb and she has difficulty in her chair crossing safely. Bev B. will put in work orders for the sidewalk concerns.

9) **Date for Next Meeting**

The next AAC meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 27, 2022 at Town Hall - Conference Room #1 at 4:00 p.m. If Signe Hansen needs the AAC to review any playground designs, a special meeting will be called. AAC members will be asked to participate in the August photo opportunity at the E.J. Freeland Centre when the pool lift is installed and ready to be unveiled.

10) **Adjournment**

Recommendation No. 2:

Moved by: Adam McLeod
Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

THAT: The June 28, 2022 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 5:25 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by:

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA, CMM III
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Dennis Hernandez-Galeano
Chair