



# MINUTES

## Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee

### Meeting Date, Time, and Location

Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. at the Fort Erie Public Library – Centennial Branch (corner of Central Avenue and Gilmore)

### Members

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

### Staff Resources

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

1) **Call to Order**

The September 28, 2021 meeting was called to order at 4:14 p.m.

2) **Approval of Minutes**

**Recommendation No. 1:**

**Moved by:** Bev Ferris  
**Seconded by:** Councillor Noyes

**THAT:** The August 10, 2021 Minutes of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.

**(Carried)**

3) **Pool Lift – E.J. Freeland Centre**

Lori advised that she had hoped to get a pool lift put in at the E.J. Freeland Centre and the Lions had offered to help contribute to the cost. A site meeting was held on Thursday, September 16, 2021 with staff from the Boys and Girls Club Niagara (BGCN) to review options. Lori stated that the staff were amazing and very open to our suggestion for a pool lift and even possibly contributing to the lift together with the Town and Lions Club. The staff from the BGCN committed to sourcing out three different vendors that would come in and assess the pool deck to determine a best fit. Lori provided them with contact details for three companies and a preference for the type of lift that would allow persons to transfer independently into the water. Lori advised that she has also found a smaller unit that could move over the lip of the pool and into the water at a lower cost. Bev noted that the BGCN also advised that they would contact the Committee to meet with the vendors on-site, if available. Councillor Noyes advised that the new Recreation Centre in St. Catharines at the corner of Carleton and Niagara Street has a pool lift. Bev was asked to follow-up with them to see if they are happy with the lift and if they have any user feedback to share. Add to outstanding matters.

4) **Outstanding Matters**

1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

- Accessible Bus Demo (deferred until Transit Governance Study completed). Bev advised that during a recent Poverty Reduction Network meeting they had a presentation on the new Transit Governance model and Bev advised the group, after the Region had left the meeting, the AAC's feeling on the bus that the Region was considering that isolated persons with disabilities into the cargo/luggage hold area of the bus. Those on the meeting agreed that this was model of bus was not inclusive.
  
- Faith advised that the Region's August meeting had a presentation on the 2022 Canada Summer Games volunteer recruitment. Bev described our 13 by 13 Cultural Event that will be taking place at the Old Fort and link with our provincial match for the Games, Nova Scotia, building on the Acadian and Indigenous culture. Bev noted that the sailing portion of the games was to take place at the Buffalo Canoe Club but was moved to another venue. Lori noted that it was due to the fact that the Club did not meet accessibility standards. The Regional AAC meeting also had a presentation on the Customer Service Desk at Regional Headquarters and their draft Accessibility Standard Compliance Policy and Procedure.

4) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

2) Parking Concerns

Bev provided the following update from the Engineering Manager, Tim Marotta:

- Erie Road was put on hold given the ideas over changing use of the road allowance. It didn't seem prudent to work toward a solution that might become untraveled. Engineering staff will get guidance and proceed with a design if and when they know what is happening on Erie Road as it relates to future uses.
- Ridge Road is delayed by budget. Engineering staff were going to use funds in an operating budget but they are not available. To resolve this, the Manager has put forth a budget line specific for the spots. In terms of the design it is almost ready. The project will start up again when there is an approved budget.

3) Fort Erie Active Transportation Committee (FEAT)

Dennis had no new updates.

4) Community Theatre – Greater Fort Erie Secondary School

Bev verified with the Principal that the guard rails were installed. Remove from outstanding.

5) Niagara Parkway Crossing

Bev advised that this matter was brought up by Faith at the last meeting as someone she knew had tried to find a safe way to cross from the Niagara Parkway trail over to view Mather's Arch. Bev had followed up with the Niagara Parks Commission and met on site with Steve Barnhart, Senior Director Planning Environment & Culture. Steve provided a map of the accessible route presently in place which takes an individual off the pathway and up Queen Street along Central Avenue and then down Veteran's Way to Mather's Arch. This route has the proper curb cuts and, while it is lengthy and uphill part of the way, it is an accessible route. Bev advised that they reviewed several options for a safe crossing and the ideal spot would be from the pathway directly to the ring road; however, due to the traffic volumes and speeds along the parkway it was agreed that a traffic study would have to be completed. The Committee acknowledged that it would be difficult to provide a safe crossing. Bev committed to monitor funding grants to undertake this study but noted it would require Council's approval as there are many other projects that may be a priority if accessibility grant funding becomes available.

4) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

6) Audible Signal at the south side of Thomson and Garrison Road

This matter was brought up by Adam at the August meeting. Bev followed up with the Region of Niagara and they have advised that there never was a signal at this crossing but when Regional staff visited the site they did notice that the button was broken and have repaired it. This crossing is due for an update in the next 1-2 years and will have audible signals as part of the reconstruction.

7) Bollards at Optimist Park

Dennis mentioned the bollards that have been placed on the entrance to the large Optimist fields. His concern is that an ambulance would not be able to get out to the players and they do not leave enough room for him to get through or someone with a walker to get through. Following up with Signe Hansen she advised that she has not done any work at the park since 2017 but was uncertain if Sean had any details. Bev provided pictures showing that in addition to Bollards there are cement curbs placed closely together to block access. Bev will follow-up with Sean.

5) **Site Plans**

The following site plans were reviewed by the Committee:

- **405 Ridgeway Road:** A proposed 4 storey apartment building with 30 residential units, and commercial space and a residential common space on the main level. Keegan advised that there will be an elevator and residents will drive through an entrance to reach the parking lot. There is one accessible parking space and Keegan advised that there will be accessible units (10% is 3 and 15% is 4). The Committee asked if Keegan could relay to the developer the importance of having an additional accessible space (possibly stall 30 as shown on the drawings).
- **424-426 Ridge Road:** A proposed 3 storey apartment building with 18 residential units and commercial space on the main level. The building will be built out to the property lines and will also have a drive through to get to parking spaces. The building will also have an elevator and will require two units to be accessible. The plan only has one accessible parking space and the Committee encourages the developer to provide an additional space (possibly stall 17 as shown on the drawing and move the access path between stall 17 and 18).
- **The Oaks Block 82:** Keegan provided a brief overview of the townhomes in Block 82 and noted that as they are residential and house units that barrier free requirements do not apply.

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

Bev advised that she is working on the Annual Status Report to Council that is required under the AODA and she will bring a draft of the report to the next AAC meeting and then present it to Council on November 8, 2021.

7) **Other Matters**

1) Niagara Transit Governance Plan

Dennis advised that he participated in the Region's stakeholder workshop to review the Niagara Transit Governance Plan as Chair of both the AAC and the FEAT Committee. Dennis provided a brief overview of the workshop to the Committee. Dennis advised that he also noted the non-inclusive bus that the Region had been considering purchasing and one of the representatives from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee agreed that buses need to be inclusive. Councillor Noyes advised that the integration will take a number of years to complete and noted that an On Demand service is now being advertised in some of the smaller rural municipalities. Dennis questioned whether there would be a monthly rate or if it would just be pay as you go. Bev noted that Council pushed back on the Region's initial financial and governance model. Councillor Noyes remarked that in the original model it would have had the smaller municipalities covering the cost of service in the larger municipalities. Dennis advised that there will be an Advisory Group, which will have representation from each of the municipalities and he was under the impression that the individual would be designated by each Council. Bev explained that the Board would have municipal Council representation but the Advisory Group would possibly be like any of the Region's Committees, such as their Accessibility Advisory Committee, that requires individuals to submit their applications directly and local Councils have no input. Dennis asked that Bev request a copy of the power point presentation that was provided at the workshop from Janine Tessmer and forward it to AAC members.

2) On Demand Transit/AAC Committee Vacancy

It was noted that the new service provider begins on October 4, 2021, and they will be hiring a lot of the current conventional transit drivers. Dennis noted that the current provider has accessibility experience and he is uncertain if the new provider has similar experience. Steve has been a part of our AAC for several years now, representing the conventional transit provider and makes up one of the 8 AAC members, together with our Council representative. Bev advised that with the transition to On Demand she followed up with the Clerk to see about having the new provider participate on the Committee. It was noted that the Terms of Reference for the Committee does not specifically state "transit provider representative". Bev noted that when she took over the Committee, Dunn the Mover was a member "from a transit perspective" and she assumed that it was part of the Committee make-up.

7) **Other Matters, continued**

2) On Demand Transit/AAC Committee Vacancy, continued

Members discussed the importance of having representation from the transit provider on the Committee and Bev noted that the By-law would have to be changed to include this provision or alternatively, the new provider could be contacted to see if they are interested in applying when the vacancy is announced. Bev committed to reviewing the previous contract with Tokmajkian to see if that was a requirement as part of the service provision and to check with the Clerk regarding the resignation of Steve. All members thanked Steve for his participation over the years, noting the importance of having him at the table.

3) Bernard Beach - Accessibility

Councillor Noyes advised that at this afternoon's Infrastructure Business Sub-Committee meeting she was advised that accessible beach mats are being purchased for Bernard Beach as part of the 2022 Budget. It was noted that the edge to the new boardwalk has too high a lip and is not accessible to persons with mobility devices. Bev advised that the new boardwalk should have been constructed in line with the AODA's Design of Public Spaces Standard. Bev was asked to follow-up with Sean and Signe.

8) **Date for Next Meeting**

The next AAC meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 26, 2021 at Town Hall - Conference Room #1 at 4:00 p.m.

9) **Adjournment**

**Recommendation No. 1:**

**Moved by: Gary Kooistra**  
**Seconded by: Faith Sparling**

**THAT: The September 28, 2021 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 5:44 p.m.**

**(CARRIED)**

Minutes recorded and prepared by

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA, CMM III  
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Dennis Hernandez-Galeano  
Chair