



# MINUTES

## Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee

<b>Meeting Date, Time, and Location</b>	
Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall – Conference Room #1	
<b>Members</b>	<b>Staff Resources</b>
Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Chair (at 4:26 p.m.) Bev Ferris, Vice-Chair * Gary Kooistra Adam McLeod Barbara McLeod Lori Brant Veronica (Faith) Sparling Councillor Ann-Marie Noyes Ashley Greaves, On-Demand Transit Rep.	Keegan Gennings, Chief Building Official Sean Hutton, Facilities Supervisor (regrets) Bev Bradnam, Manager, Strategic Initiatives  Guests: Joe Kissmann Justin, Personal Support Worker

\* The Vice-Chair acted as Chair for the meeting.

1) **Call to Order**

Prior to the meeting beginning, Niagara College students filmed the Committee in action on behalf of Community Living Fort Erie for a promotional video showcasing the organization in the community and “at the table”. The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

2) **Approval of Minutes**

**Recommendation No. 1:**

**Moved by: Gary Kooistra**  
**Seconded by: Lori Brant**

**THAT: The September 27, 2022 Minutes of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed.**  
**(CARRIED)**

3) **Outstanding Matters**

1) Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

Faith advised that no Regional AAC meeting took place. She is waiting to hear details about applying for the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee for the next term of Region Council.

2) Parking Concerns

No update on the accessible parking spaces in downtown Ridgeway.

3) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

3) Fort Erie Active Transportation Committee (FEAT)

Dennis advised that FEAT reviewed their annual report and had their last meeting before the next term of Council.

4) Stevensville Garden Gallery

Councillor Noyes was asked to visit the Stevensville Garden Gallery to see if the automatic door has been installed following Bev's e-mail correspondence with Gallery staff.

5) Adult Size Change Table at Bay Beach

Signe Hansen, Manager, Community Planning, has her staff investigating options to replace the adult size change table that was removed.

6) Treat Accessibly

Bev confirmed that she had reached out to Ray Rosettani – Re/Max and they did receive 17 accessible trick or treat signs and had requested additional signs. The accessibility tips for trick or treating and a link for the signs was posted on social media. AAC members agreed that the tips provided some great advice for making trick or treating accessible.

7) Stop Gap Ramp Project

Bev advised that she spoke with Luke Anderson from the Stop Gap Ramp Project on October 19, 2022. Luke described some of the challenges they have faced during COVID and advised that they are presently working with many municipalities, including the City of Brampton. Working with lawyers during the pandemic, they now have single step entry agreements between the business owner and Stop Gap and orders can be requested through their website. They did discuss encroachments on municipal sidewalks but noted that these are "interim" – temporary ramps that are taken out to allow access and then brought back in. Bev shared the Chief Building Official's concern that the ramps may be perceived to be Ontario Building Code compliant, which they are not. Luke advised that there is a lot of awareness raising/education to describe the nature and use of the ramps that goes in to a successful campaign. Bev told Luke about the great advocacy work that Lori has done on behalf of the AAC for the beach mats and pool lift and our thoughts about partnering with the local high school or community organization.

Due to the legal agreements that have to be entered into, Bev shared her thoughts with the CAO and Director of Finance to determine if a 2023 budget request could be made. There was also discussion about a cost-sharing program, similar to a Community Improvement Plan. Costs for a ramp range from \$250 to \$450 per ramp (plus HST and delivery). The height of the step has to be between 2" and 9". Bev advised that she would like to request an initial budget for 20-25 ramps.

3) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

7) Stop Gap Ramp Project, continued

The AAC agreed that if the Town covered the cost more businesses would be willing to be part of the project.

Lori advised that her hairdresser puts a ramp out for her to enter the building and there may be many stores that would be willing to. Social media could be utilized to post where the ramps are available. Ashley noted that there should be training for the business owners as well to familiarize them with the use and, once installed, they should be showcased on the Town's website, which would provide a form of free advertising. Keegan advised that we do have a Business Directory and perhaps the ramp could be linked with business licencing, such as a yellow flag beside the business to show that it has a Stop Gap Ramp feature. When asked how someone would know that the ramp was available, Lori explained that a sticker would be placed in the window of a store advising that they offer the Stop Gap Ramp and a phone number to call.

The AAC agreed to conduct tours of the down town areas, followed by meetings with the BIA's. Bev had advised Luke Anderson that we would not be considering moving forward until early 2023, which fits in with their timelines.

The following recommendation was passed by the Committee:

**Recommendation No. 2:**

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

**THAT: a 2023 Budget request be submitted in the amount of \$7,200.00 to start a Stop Gap Ramp program Town-wide, which will include:**

- **Visiting stores to determine interest and eligibility;**
- **Covering the cost of the ramp for the first 20-25 businesses that are interested in participating in the program;**
- **Meeting with the Business Improvement Areas;**
- **Conducting training on the use of the ramps and raising awareness through social media;**
- **Flagging the accessible feature on the Town's Business Directory.**

**(CARRIED)**

3) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

8) Dog Tag cost for Service Animals

Keegan advised that he spoke with the By-law Enforcement team and they are redoing the Animal Control By-law and will capture the reduction in dog tag fees for service animals. It was noted that spayed/neutered dogs are supposed to already receive a reduction in the fee and staff will check with other municipalities to determine the fee for service animals in order to make an informed decision.

4) **Site Plans**

1) 3700 Dominion Road

Keegan provided an overview of the site plan showing the addition to Dominion Dental, which includes a ramp and landing area, barrier free washroom, an accessible parking space and aisle on the south side of the parking lot close to the entrance ramp. Keegan noted that all treatment rooms are on the main floor.

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

Bev provided a page by page review of the Annual Accessibility Status Report. Councillor Noyes advised that the comment related to generators at the Not-for-Profit buildings has resulted in the purchase of two generators. Bev updated the draft at the meeting to reflect Councillor Noyes' comment. The Committee agreed that a lot was accomplished.

**Recommendation No. 2:**

**Moved by: Lori Brant**  
**Seconded by: Gary Kooistra**

**THAT: The Accessibility Advisory Committee approves the draft Annual Accessibility Report that will be presented to Council at the November 21, 2022, Council-in-Committee meeting.**

**(CARRIED)**

6) **Other Matters**

1) Fourth Review of the AODA by Rich Donovan – October 18, 2022 virtual Town Hall

Bev provided an overview of the discussions that took place during the virtual Town Hall on October 18, 2022 and encouraged members to participate in one of the remaining three virtual Town Halls being offered for feedback on the Fourth Review of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

6)

**Other Matters, continued**

2) Response from Transit Supervisor on concerns shared at the September 2022 meeting

Bev read the following response from the Transit Supervisor based on Joe's concerns shared at the last meeting:

"I have told Joe that due to his needs that riding FAST is the most appropriate for him. This system will pick him up at his house and drop him at the exact address he needs to go. Unlike the On-Demand where you must be able to make it to a Bus Stop or Point of Interest (POI) within the urban zones, or an address in the rural zones. From what Joe described in his email to me, he was travelling within the urban zones, which means he would need to be picked up and dropped off at a stop or POI if he is using the On-Demand. Both systems can accommodate wheel chairs though. The FE FAST system is better designed to meet his needs at this time.

When it comes to booking rides, the following are the parameters that have been laid out with BTS (this was done within the contract in 2018 and I sent an email this morning reminding them of the parameters for FE):

1. Must be a registered/approved user of the FE FAST by way of approved application from a medical professional.
2. We prefer to book at least 48 hours in advance, however, bookings can happen less than 48 hours. Riders booking less than 48 hours should know that their optimal time may not be achieved, due to other riders that have already booked.
3. Fort Erie does **not** have a maximum booking time frame of 2 weeks or anytime really. If someone wants to book a month out, they can. Riders should have the ability to book as far in advance as the system will handle. (Their system may only be able to handle bookings a certain time out, but I know it is more than 2 weeks. I have stated that at least one month out is reasonable).

The On-Demand System can be booked for ASAP rides or riders can pick an approximate time that will work for them (knowing there is a 30-minute pick up window from the time requested). Riders can also book well in advance for their rides as well. We have been finding most people if they need a regular ride each day, will do 1-2 weeks at a time.

The Niagara Region's Specialized Service (NST) uses the same provider as Fort Erie. This may be causing some confusion from their dispatch team (especially if they have some new employees) and riders. NST has a maximum booking window of 2 weeks on their side due to the higher volume of riders that they have booking. So, if trips are going outside Fort Erie, then they will be subject to this parameter. However, inside Fort Erie we do not have this rule. If Joe was trying to book for his event and it is not in Fort Erie this may be where he is hearing the 2 weeks maximum booking window".

6)

**Other Matters, continued**

2) Response from Transit Supervisor on concerns shared at the September 2022 meeting, continued

“I have also heard from some riders that they would like transit to go later at night and Sundays. Unfortunately, we are on a steady state for transit at this point until the transfer to the Niagara Transit Commission (NTC) and no one is allowed to make any changes to their systems. Later hours and Sunday service may happen when the system transfers over, but not in the first year. Everyone will remain in the same steady date until the new NTC can ensure that they have a handle on all the services, their needs and budget considerations.

In the future, there is a possibility that the On-Demand Services and the Specialized Services will be co-mingled and users with special needs will be accommodated on the system as they now are on FAST or NST. You may be riding with other able-bodied users as well. This is something that is being considered, but not necessarily what will actually happen. This may take a couple of years before being implemented.

The FE FAST contract is expiring at the end of 2023 at which time the NTC will decide how to deliver the specialized services moving forward in Fort Erie.

The NTC will have a Transit Advisory Committee that will form, most likely, in the new year sometime and there will be a position on there for a Specialized User. I do not have info on this committee yet or how to apply. I am sure that when that is released Bev can pass that along to anyone interested from the Committee.

Bus stop distances are added at an industry standard of 400 m apart. We try to cut that down a bit where we can, but that is the standard. For On-Demand we have also added POI's in areas that have high use, businesses, parks, or intersections of high request. We do not prefer to drop riders in front of their homes for safety reasons. After dark we will try to get a little closer to a safe and lighted area for walking for folks as well”.

Ashley advised that there are not many updates on the new service but there has been some discussion about a new fare structure. Adam advised that for him to travel from Fort Erie to the Morrison/Dorchester Hub costs \$6 and then he transfers. A whole day of travel for him costs \$12, representing almost a full hour of work. Ashley also noted that if it is dark outside or the rider is younger, the On-Demand driver does try to get them closer to home. Councillor Noyes advised that a lot of medication gets delivered to the door and she does not understand the concern about privacy with dropping someone off at their door.

6) **Other Matters, continued**

3) Submitting Application for the next term of Council

Bev Ferris asked when members need to reapply for the Committee. Councillor Noyes explained that previously members were asked to submit their application before the election but, with the term date moved up to November 15<sup>th</sup>, Council will be seeking applications sometime in December or January. Bev confirmed that the AAC members remain in place until the new Committee is established by Council.

7) **Date for Next Meeting**

Two dates were provided to the AAC for the next meeting: the original being the last Tuesday of the month OR a Tuesday in December so that a Christmas meal could take place. Joe advised that he has already requested assistance for the November 29<sup>th</sup> date in order to be at that meeting. The Committee agreed to have the next meeting take place on November 29 and will have a Christmas dinner at a later date.

The next AAC meeting will take place in Conference Room #1 – Town Hall at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 29, 2022.

Details regarding the Christmas meal will be sent to AAC members under separate cover.

8) **Adjournment**

**Recommendation No. 3:**

**Moved by: Adam McLeod**  
**Seconded by: Dennis Hernandez-Galeano**

**THAT: The October 25, 2022 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 5:38 p.m.**

**(CARRIED)**

Minutes recorded and prepared by:

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA, CMM III  
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Bev Ferris  
Acting Chair/Vice Chair