



MINUTES

Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting Date, Time, and Location	
Tuesday, September 27, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall – Conference Room #1	
Members	Staff Resources
Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Chair (at 4:21 p.m.) Bev Ferris, Vice-Chair Gary Kooistra Adam McLeod (regrets) Barbara McLeod (regrets) Lori Brant Veronica (Faith) Sparling Councillor Ann-Marie Noyes Ashley Greaves, On-Demand Transit Rep.	Keegan Gennings, Chief Building Official Sean Hutton, Facilities Supervisor Bev Bradnam, Manager, Strategic Initiatives Guests: Joe Kissman Lauren (PSW)

1) **Call to Order**

The Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 4:11 p.m. Joe and Lauren were introduced as members of the public. Joe is interested in potentially becoming an AAC member.

2) **Approval of Minutes**

Recommendation No. 1:

Moved By: Lori Brant
Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

THAT: The June 28, 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 meetings have taken place recently and when they were taking place via zoom they did not go well for her. Faith advised that the staff resource, Steve Murphy, has retired and she has not yet been advised of his replacement. Members will have to resubmit their applications for the next term of Regional Council.

3) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

2) Parking Concerns

Councillor Noyes advised that there was some discussion at the Infrastructure Sub-Committee meeting about parking in front of the Ridgeway Post Office. Bev confirmed that she has been working with Kurtis Bottrell on the two accessible spaces that were part of the recommendations approved by Council through the 2019-2023 Multi-Year Plan. Bev advised that there is infrastructure in the space in front of the Post Office so the accessible space will be one spot down. Council recently received emails from an elderly man's daughter about the lack of accessible parking in front of the Post Office and Bev confirmed that the Director of Infrastructure advised that he will be bringing the suggestion for a 15-minute parking spot directly in front of the Post Office to the Traffic Coordinating Committee, which should assist those that just are running in for mail.

Bev advised that Kurtis also came to see her regarding the accessible parking spot in front of the Court House on Jarvis Street. Kurtis has been reviewing some of the designs with Dennis and will send a revised mock-up of the space. Bev explained that the hand rail will be removed and a side lift van will be able to lower right on to the sidewalk and for rear-lift vehicles, there will be a curb cut behind to access the sidewalk.

3) Fort Erie Active Transportation Committee (FEAT)

Dennis advised that he was unable to make the last meeting but they did host a conference with a guest speaker from Buffalo.

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

The new pool lift received a lot of coverage, which included Lori transferring onto the lift and representation from both the Ridgeway Lions, Fort Erie Lions and Boys and Girls Club. Lori noted that it has helped raise awareness of the availability of the lift. Joe asked if there was a hoist as part of the lift and was told that it does not but that there is the water wheelchair also available for use down the ramp, which may require assistance. Lori noted that there seems to be a disconnect with the name "Boys & Girls" Club as she was unaware until the pool lift unveil that they offer all kinds of adult programming. Bev advised that the new Community Guide provides programming details. Faith noted that they are closed on the weekends.

5) Stevensville Garden Gallery

Bev advised that the letter was sent to the Stevensville Garden Gallery and a she was contacted by the Gallery to see if contractor names could be provided. Bev directed them to the business directory and also advised that google does have a listing if you put in a search "contractors that provide accessible doors in Niagara".

3) **Outstanding Matters, continued**

6) Adult size Change Table at Bay Beach

Following the June meeting, Bev followed up with Signe Hansen, Manager, Community Planning. She advised that when the adult size change table was ready to be installed there was an issue with the size in relation to the toilet and so it was not installed and returned and other options were to be considered. She will be following up to see if there are any other options that may work in the space that would be more manual in nature (the original model was a hydraulic table).

4) **Site Plans**

1) 323 Niagara Blvd. - increase the number of suites in an existing building

Keegan provided an overview of the site plan, advising that interior renovations are going to turn the 2 and 3 bedrooms suites into 1 bedroom suites which requires additional parking on site. New spaces will be added and on the south-west corner three additional spaces will require building a retaining wall. Presently there are four accessible spaces but none of the suites are accessible units as it is not an accessible building (i.e. there is no elevator and stairs leading up and down). Councillor Noyes asked if the work that is being done will trigger barrier free requirements and Keegan responded that it will not.

2) 397 Garrison Rd - Townhouse development

Keegan provided the site plan for the new Ashton Homes Development off of Arthur Street. The development balances the Province's density requirements and meets the Regional and Town Official Plans and requirements under the *Planning Act*. The development is made up of 24 units of single-owned town houses. The internal roads will remain private and be part of a condo-site and not public. Parking for visitors is up front of the development and each unit will have a garage and driveway for parking (1-1.5 spaces will be provided). Councillor Noyes asked if there will be sidewalks and Keegan responded that they will have one sidewalk on the west side of the driveway from Garrison Road. Keegan will request that one of the visitor spaces be accessible but noted that it would be quite a distance to travel into the development from the visitor parking.

3) 359, 379, 399 and 409 Gorham Road

Keegan provided an overview of the commercial development that will be built around the present ambulance centre at the corner of Dominion Road and Gorham Road. Discussion continued on the following page.

4) **Site Plans, continued**

3) 359, 379, 399 and 409 Gorham Road, continued

Keegan provided an overview of the commercial development that will be built around the present ambulance centre at the corner of Dominion Road and Gorham Road. There will be a drive through restaurant on the north side of the development with a fenced in patio area. Access to the restaurant will be at the front and there are two accessible parking spaces with hatch marks and a recessed ramp. The loading bay is away from pedestrian traffic. Keegan will request that the eating area provide accessible seating and will request another recessed ramp near the concrete sidewalk notation (shown on plan) on the south side of the building as an additional accessible passage from the main parking lot. The Committee also looked at the commercial building to the south east. Keegan will also ask for fixed seating space that is accessible in the patio area. The larger commercial building that will contain a new LCBO to the south west of the property shows four accessible parking spaces but access to the commercial space will have to cross the inner roadway, which is marked as a fire route. The Committee asked that a designated crosswalk be included from the accessible parking spaces to the building. Keegan confirmed that all buildings will be barrier free and will have power doors. If the commercial space is divided into several units, Keegan advised that they may not require power door operators but that will be a request from the AAC. Dennis questioned if there is a curb in front of the accessible parking spaces and Keegan advised that there is no curb, making it easier to cross.

Bev Ferris turned the Chair over to Dennis at 4:58 p.m.

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

Bev advised that she will be preparing the annual status report for Council and will bring a draft to the October meeting for the Committee's review.

6) **Other Matters**

1) Treat Accessibility

Bev advised that Re/Max offices throughout Ontario lead an "Accessible Trick or Treating" sign campaign that shows where houses provide barrier-free access for children that may not be able to navigate inclines, stairs or curving walkways. Bev will reach out to the local office to determine if they will be participating and, if so, will be able to provide details to the public with some Accessibility Tips. If signs are not available, the Accessibility Tips will still be provided through social media. *(Following the meeting, Bev connected with the local Re/Max office who will be getting between 19-34 signs and a social media post will go out. Accessibility Tips for Trick or Treating have been posted on the Town's Accessibility Page as well).*



6)

Other Matters, continued

2) 1243 Garrison Road – Wines with a Twist

Bev advised that she received a call from the owner of the Wines with a Twist store on Garrison Road who explained that she had a number of customers that could not easily access the store front because of a curb. The owner has reached out to the landlord but has not had any success with having the concrete at the front of the building recessed to allow for a ramp. Bev went out and met with the store owner and discussed temporary ramps that can be used and the owner was going to look into that. Bev also offered to provide a letter on behalf of the AAC to the landlord if that would be helpful.

3) Stop Gap Ramp Project

Bev advised that the new CAO has asked if the Town has ever considered participating in the Stop Gap Ramp project. Bev explained that the previous Town Solicitor felt that there was too much liability for the Town to have temporary ramps placed on municipal sidewalks. Bev noted that there could be a potential partnership between high school shop students and businesses and may be something that the Chamber of Commerce could possibly be part of. Lori suggested that the Business Improvement Association (BIAs) should play a role and it will be nice to be able to visit stores that she has been unable to visit. In the past, the Beachcombers had also mentioned their woodworking shop. Bev will look into who potential partners could be and Lori advised that she would like to work on this as well. It was suggested that a sub-committee could be formed to work on this.

4) Dollarama – scooter access

Bev advised that she received a complaint from a resident that they were not allowed in Dollarama with their small scooter. Bev corresponded with the head office in Quebec who provided confirmation that they were able to enter the store with the scooter. Bev provided a letter to the resident that included the e-mail confirmation from Dollarama head office. Bev received a follow-up call thanking her.

5) Vandalism of accessible washroom

Sean described the vandalism of the Ferndale Park washrooms, which took place during the first week of school. The regular-size washroom was vandalized initially and then one week later the accessible washroom was damaged. The washrooms are now locked and repairs will take place over the winter. Dennis advised that he had to use the inside washroom in the Club House and asked if there were any plans to put an accessible washroom inside. Sean advised that the Club House is only used by the soccer club and their long term plan is to eventually relocate to the Optimist Park. Dennis will follow-up with the Club.

6) **Other Matters, continued**

6) Strong Fort Erie Neighbourhood

Bev had circulated details related to the accessibility improvements at St. Michael's Hall and invitation to participate in a community event on September 21. Bev was on vacation and could not attend the event and no other members were able to participate. Bev advised that she passed on details about the Enabling Accessibility Fund Grant to both the Strong Fort Erie Neighbourhood group and the Ridgeway Legion for their fundraising efforts for their elevator. The Town does not have any projects at present to apply for and felt that it best to have community organizations access the funding, noting that the AAC could provide a letter of support. Joe advised that the Legion's elevator has been fixed but it was down for 3-5 weeks.

7) Ontario Making it Easier to Apply for and Renew Accessible Parking Permits

Bev had circulated details to the Committee regarding the new online options for renewing accessible parking permits that is supposed to be simpler and faster, making services more accessible. Gary noted that he renewed their permits online.

8) 238 Bertie Street Parking Lot

Gary had asked that the parking lot at the 238 Bertie Street Medical Centre have the massive potholes filled. Bev had followed up with the Community Health Services Coordinator who arranged to have the property owner patch the holes. Gary advised that they did not do a very good job.

9) Accessible Beach Mats at Bay Beach

Bev advised that a "contact us submission" was received by the Town through the website asking why the accessible beach mats were put away so early as the month of September still had nice weather. Lori agreed that it would have been nice to still access the beach using the mats. Sean explained that the mats are removed the second week of September. The AAC asked that consideration be given to leaving the mats out longer next year if the weather is still nice. It was noted that it would be dependent on staff resources as the summer students are finished around Labour Day.

10) Dog Tag cost for Service Animals

Councillor Noyes was asked why dog tags are not half price for service animals. Bev Ferris explained that if the animal is sprayed or neutered it is supposed to be half price. Keegan will follow up with By-law Enforcement. The Committee agreed that service animal tags should be free because of the service they provide.

6) **Other Matters, continued**

11) Transit Service

Joe described the difficulty he has with accessing transportation independently during the times that he wants to utilize transit and that he has spoken with Councillor Dubanow who was going to bring his issues before Council. Joe advised that he is legally blind and when he wants to go to a friend's house he cannot just be dropped off at a bus stop to find his way and questioned why he couldn't be dropped off and picked up at his friend's home. Councillor Noyes explained how the On Demand service worked and advised Joe that he should be using the FAST service for door-to-door transportation. Joe advised that he has been told it can be up to a two week wait to book the FAST service and he has been cancelled twice. Joe also stated that he wished both services ran later (11:00 p.m. or 11:30 p.m.) and on Sundays. Joe advised that the Mayor has told him that when transit is taken over by the Region that they may look at expanding service hours. Ashley advised that the On Demand does not go to people's homes as there may be many people sharing the ride and it is a matter of privacy. Ashley explained that door-to-door service is only provided in the rural areas. Councillor Noyes advised that the FAST service is not that busy right now and she will follow-up with them on timelines. Lori noted that the Committee has talked before about those that have been pre-approved for FAST utilizing the On-Demand for pick-up and Ashley explained that it is the way the Town has set up the booking system (geo-fenced). Joe advised that in Welland if someone is out later than the transit runs, Welland Transit pays for them to get home. Bev noted that Fort Erie is supposed to have three accessible taxi cabs (as per licensing by the Region) but there are none. Lori asked how the On Demand figures out the distance for bus stops and Ashley advised that it is usually based on points of interest and if not close to a bus stop that when they call they are asked for the nearest intersection. Lori advised Joe that in the winter she tried to access the On Demand but was unable to get to a bus stop and had to cancel her appointment. Ashley noted that the FAST contract may be up soon and there may be the possibility to merge services. Joe stated that when the new Transit Commission starts that they need to consult with persons with disabilities and he would like information on how to be on that Committee. Councillor Noyes noted that 5,800 people accessed Fort Erie transit during the month of August and 33% are using transit as their only mode of transportation.

12) Wendy's Restaurant

It was noted that Wendy's does not have accessible doors and the Committee asked if a letter could be sent encouraging them to install automatic doors. Keegan was asked if this would trigger any other barrier free requirements such as washrooms and he advised that if it is only the door then it would not trigger any other requirements.

7) **Date for Next Meeting**

The next AAC meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at Town Hall - Conference Room #1 at 4:00 p.m.

8) **Adjournment**

Recommendation No. 2:

Moved by: Lori Brant
Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

THAT: The September 27, 2022 meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 5:57 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by:

Minutes approved by:

Bev Bradnam, DPA, CMM III
Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Dennis Hernandez-Galeano
Chair