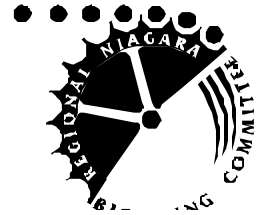


REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, April 6, 2006
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Clyde Carruthers	- Guest
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large/Cycle Ontario Alliance
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Peter Davies	- Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club
John Reep	- Public at Large
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large & Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Dianne Coppola	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Gregg Dame	- Public at Large & Port Colborne Trails & Bikeways Committee
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service

The meeting commenced at 7:08 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

With the addition of the agenda items listed below, the agenda was adopted.

- St. Catharines one-way street conversion (Paul Pattison)
- Signage for Queenston-Lewiston Bridge (Paul Pattison)
- Announcements (Ken Forgeron)

Motion:

To accept the agenda of April 6, 2006 as revised.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Jan Somerwil

Carried

2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (February 23, 2006)

Mr. Somerwil requested that the motion on page 3, which deals with the Upper Canada Heritage Trail, be amended to indicate that the area to be maintained is between John St. and East/West Line. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake should do more to ensure that abutting landowners do not encroach on the public trail.

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of February 23, 2006 as revised.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

3. Business Arising

The Committee was provided updates on a number of "Action Items" which arose out of the February 2006 meeting notes:

- Mr. Hunt agreed to contact the City of Ottawa/Carleton to request more information on their bike racks on buses program. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron reported that he had provided to Mr. Whittle a copy of the Toronto brochure on how to properly develop and use bicycle lanes. A sub-committee will be formed to design a similar brochure for Niagara in partnership with the Public Works Department. **(Action Item)**
- Ms. Coppola will contact Mr. Whittle if there is an opportunity to incorporate his collision statistics and proper cycling techniques into the Bike to Work Week campaign.
- Councillor Leavens reported that the Planning and Public Works Committee approved the Public Works report recommending that the Region cost share on the installation of bike lanes on portions of East/West Line between Lakeshore Road and Regional Road 55. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake will be reconstructing this section of the roadway this summer.
- Councillor Leavens requested that the Action Item on the search for a facilitator for the RNBC Strategic Planning Session be deferred until the next meeting. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron reported that a solution as to how to distribute to the RNBC members relevant information, which he receives from the Association of Pedestrian & Bicycle Professionals, is still being reviewed.
- It was reported that the feedback form on the St. David's Rd. Pedestrian and Cycling Needs Study was completed by Mr. Pattison and faxed to the project consultant.

4. Release of Niagara Bicycle Map (2nd Edition)

Mr. Forgeron reported that the release of the 2nd edition of the Niagara Bicycle map has generated significant interest from the media. Requests for interviews have been received from both Cogeco and the television station CHCH/TV in Hamilton. As well, newspaper outlets have expressed interest in writing articles on the map once the cycling season gets underway.

Mr. Forgeron said that Gardy Hardy from NEDC is looking after the distribution of the map. Mr. Hardy indicates that the map is being distributed to all the map sponsors as well as to the wineries and the municipal Parks and Recreation Departments. The maps sent will include a cover letter which talks about the value of the map and where any donation money received should be sent. Mr. Hardy is hoping to collect about \$30,000 from bicycle map donations which will be used for future reprinting purposes.

Mr. Pravitz has spoken to the organizers of both the Squeezer and Lake-to-Lake bicycling events regarding distributing the bike map. Both organizers have agreed to include the maps in the packages distributed to participants as long as they are free of charge. The organizer of the Lake-to-Lake event said that he would be willing to provide free registration to an RNBC member who wished to partake in this event if the individual would be willing to sit at a booth on the Saturday before the Sunday event and distribute/speak about the map. This is the day when many pick up their race and registration packages.

The RNBC had a discussion regarding the value of putting a free copy of the map into the bag distributed to registrants. Some RNBC members said that they have found that participants tend to take what they need out of the bag and throw the rest away. Mr. Pravitz said that he will look into a scenario for distributing the map at these events and seeking a donation instead (**Action Item**).

5. Highlights from the 2006 Toronto International Bike Show

Mr. Forgeron reported that the event went very well and estimated that \$1200 to \$1500 was raised in donations for the Niagara Bicycle Map. All of the tourism information was distributed by 10:30 a.m. Saturday. Councillor Leavens said that he will suggest to Patrick Gedge that more copies of the Niagara Economic Development Corporation "Seasons" magazine be available for next year's show as the magazine has proven to be very popular. Also, more information about wineries and bed and breakfasts is desirable.

6. Possible Summer Student Project

Mr. Pravitz suggested that a GIS student be hired to work on multiple RNBC projects including linking photos to various areas on the electronic version of the new bike map. The student could also ensure that the base information is accurate for the proposed new signage project. Another suggested project could be to have the student partner with the Freewheelers and create a library of loop bicycle rides. The Freewheelers have approximately 300 loops within the Niagara area. The student could work on putting the loop rides on the RNBC website with a description of each loop or even classifying each loop based on difficulty. A GIS student might be available from Niagara College at no cost as it would be considered part of their fall co-op work term.

Mr. Pravitz asked if there was an opportunity to form a partnership between the RNBC bicycle map and the proposed recreation map which is being developed by the Public Health Department. Ms. Coppola said that a meeting on the development of the new recreation map will take place on April 27th. Mr. Pravitz said that he would try to attend to see if there are any areas of cooperation between the RNBC and the developers of the recreation map.

7. Proposed Bicycle Network Signage Project

Mr. Pravitz distributed a copy of a proposal to develop a "Made in Niagara" bicycle network signage program. He discussed how the proposed bicycle network signage project could be implemented throughout the Region. He suggested having a pilot project in the first year and if a decision is made to sign the network, this could probably be done over a period of about 10 years. Criteria would need to be developed to help guide decisions on which network routes would be signed first. For example, unsafe areas could be signed first.

Mr. Davies added that we should be thinking of who the signage applies to, for example, tourists or locals who we want to encourage to cycle.

When the RNBC has had previous discussions on the signage project Mr. Flora had mentioned the hiring of a consultant. The RNBC had discussed whether a consultant is necessary as local riders, for example, the Freewheelers, would be a good resource in terms of the best routes for signage to be placed. Councillor Leavens said that the RNBC needs to take into consideration what the Region will be going to require in order for the signage project to move ahead. Before the Region will commit any money to this project, they will likely want to see a solid plan from a professional consultant. Councillor Leavens suggested that perhaps a round table meeting could be arranged between any consultant hired and RNBC members/Freewheelers.

8. Ideas & Priorities for the 2006 RNBC Budget

Before the meeting, a list of possible 2006 RNBC spending priorities was distributed. This list was put together by Frank Pravitz, with contributions from RNBC members Dianne Coppola, Ken Forgeron and Dave Hunt. The list is a compilation of ideas and priorities for the RNBC in 2006 and, where possible, a cost estimate was provided.

Ms. Coppola said that originally \$2600 was budgeted for the Bike-to-Work campaign, but due to the possibility of a \$1200 cost recovery, the amount budgeted was reduced to \$1250.

Mr. Forgeron said that although he is not aware of any impending conferences or workshops \$500 has been budgeted for this purpose. Mr. Hunt said there would be a ProWalk/ProBike conference this fall. Perhaps the money in conferences/workshops could be used to pay for the registration of an RNBC member to attend this event.

Under Memberships, \$100 has been budgeted. This will cover the cost of renewing the RNBC membership in the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals and the Cycle Ontario Alliance.

There is \$1000 allocated for the printing of brochures and \$300 to cover travel expenses for those who volunteer at the Toronto International Bike Show.

In terms of hiring a student, Councillor Leavens asked where the money would be coming from: the RNBC budget or out of a departmental budget? Mr. Forgeron said that it is his understanding that there are no available funds to hire a student in the Planning, Transportation or Information Management Systems departmental budgets. It was estimated that approximately \$6,000-\$7,000 would be needed to hire a student for about 16 weeks in the summer. Ms. Coppola told the RNBC that Human Resources Development Canada does provide some funding, but the Region would have to top up that amount. The deadline for applying for HRDC funding has passed for this year, but it may be something to consider for 2007.

In terms of reprinting future bicycle maps, is it important that at the end of each year the map donations account be protected by requesting it be held in reserve. In that way the donations can continue to accumulate for future use when needed. **(Action Item)**

Finally, Councillor Leavens offered to invite Joe Cousins to the next meeting to discuss RNBC work priorities and budgeting issues. **(Action Item)**

Motion:

Allocate those funds for bike to work week.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

9. Municipal Class EA – Collier Rd./Richmond St. in Thorold

Mr. Pattison reported that back in September he attended a public information centre on this project. At that time, bike lanes were not mentioned as being included in the study. Mr. Pattison said that he did point out to the study consultant that this local road is included on the regional bicycle network and he spoke to the Mayor of Thorold about this as well and provided written comments. He said that he was advised on March 31 that the Environmental Study Report would be addressing the inclusion of bike lanes in accordance with regional standards.

Mr. Forgeron said that he also had spoken to the project consultant who inquired as to the whether the Region might cost share on the provision of bike lanes. Mr. Forgeron responded by indicating that each project needed to be considered on its own merits and that any funding must be approved by Regional Council. The consultant will be recommending in his report to the City of Thorold that a request be made to Regional Council for cost sharing on the bike lanes. Mr. Forgeron suggested that the RNBC send a letter to the City of Thorold supporting the inclusion of bike lanes.

10. Agenda Items for Joint Meeting of Bicycling Committees

On May 13th the joint meeting of Niagara/Hamilton/Burlington cycling committees will take place. The meeting will be held in the Town of Pelham with a tentative location set for the Pelham Library. The meeting will be from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and it will be followed by a bicycle tour of the area. One suggestion for the ride was to the Welland Canal Parkway

between Thorold and Welland. Mr. Hunt suggested that the Freewheelers be invited and Peter Davies was asked to pursue this with them.

Mr. Forgeron asked for agenda items and for a volunteer to put together the bike ride after the meeting.

Some possible agenda items are:

- Hamilton/Burlington's experience with bicycle signage
- Hamilton/Burlington's experience with their cycling budget
- Completion of the new Niagara bike map
- Regional Road 20/406
- Pros and cons of critical mass rides
- Traffic calming – what attributes make a road calmer than others

11. Final Comments on Walker EA & Bicycling

Tim Whittle wrote a memo to the RNBC in which he provided his assessment on the proposed new entrance off of Taylor Road to access a proposed landfill expansion by Walkers. Mr. Whittle's report discusses the current status, including road width, speed, traffic control, lane configuration and signage. It also suggests a number of recommendations including:

- Mountain Road to be widened 7 metres with an additional 1.5 metres of paved shoulder on each side from the end of the new construction to the eastside of the QEW overpass
- Support for the recommendation that signalized "on demand" traffic control be included at the new Taylor Road entrance. Walkers is recommending that a light be installed even though it does not meet regional engineering warrants. The Region appears to agree with the installation as long as Walkers pays for it.
- Only one lane in each direction should continue. Current and future paved shoulders should be designated as bicycle lanes which would prevent vehicles from parking on the lane while waiting for the landfill to open in the mornings.

As comments on the EA are due on April 7th, Mr. Whittle's letter will be considered in Regional Niagara's response to the MOE with a notation saying that the letter will be considered at the next Planning and Public Works Committee meeting. Regional Council will consider this issue at its May 4, 2006 meeting. Mr. Whittle was thanked for his considerable work on assessing this very difficult safety issue.

Motion:

To approve Tim Whittle's comments and recommendations pertaining to the Walker Environmental Assessment on the basis of a "best case scenario."

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

12. Cycle Ontario Alliance (COA)– Call for Volunteers

The RNBC was told that the new Cycle Ontario Alliance Board has been selected, but there is still one vacant seat if anyone from Niagara is interested. By being on the Board you will be exposed to province-wide issues.

Mr. Hunt distributed a COA Trillium Grant Project status report to the RNBC. The form lists many categories including a description of the project, what progress has been made on the project as well as the amount of grant money spent/amount of grant money remaining. Mr. Hunt provided the report in case anyone who would like to participate on the COA they would be able to see what projects are currently being worked on.

13. Task Force Reports

Encouragement

- Ms. Coppola distributed a copy of the Bike-to-Work-Week registration form. The first 50 team captains to register will receive a free t-shirt. Ms. Coppola also brought a sample copy of a Bike-to-Work-Week poster which could be hung in the workplace.
- The Clerk's Department will be in charge of selling the t-shirts. They will charge a small fee for this service, which has been built into the cost of the t-shirts.
- Public Health has been working on developing a trails resource package which would include information on healthy eating, hydration and helmet issues. Public Health would like to incorporate some of the information from the RNBC trail etiquette brochure into the proposed Health Department brochure. The trail etiquette brochure would be phased out of use. The RNBC suggested that Ms. Coppola contact Tim Whittle who we understand will be developing a new one.

Engineering

- Mr. Pravitz said that Eric Flora had provided him with a list of upcoming regional construction projects. The list was also given to Mr. Pattison and Mr. Forgeron to review.
- Mr. Pattison reported that he had attended the Lakeshore Road EA public information centre and said that bike lanes will be included on the section between Read Road and the Port Weller Bridge.
- The Region's new roads rights-of-way policy was approved by the Planning and Public Works Committee on April 5th.

Policy

No report.

Enforcement and Education

No report.

14. New Business

Queenston-Lewiston Bridge

Mr. Pattison asked what the status is in having bicycling access signage erected for the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge. **(Action Item)**

Downtown St. Catharines

It was announced that St. Catharines Council passed a motion to revert from a one-way street system to a two-way street system on selected roadways in downtown St. Catharines. Mr. Pattison said that he does not feel that it is possible to include bicycle lanes on St. Paul Street. He suggested the installation of both "Take the Lane" signage and some type of signage indicating no cycling on the sidewalk. Councillor Leavens suggested speaking to staff regarding what the appropriate type of signage would be in this situation. Mr. Romanuk also suggested speaking to Tim Whittle about this issue because once you start adding signage, it should be enforced. **(Action Item)**

Signage Audit

While some gaps still exist, the Waterfront Trail has been substantially built in Niagara. The Waterfront Trust would like to arrange a meeting with the volunteers who have agreed to ride the route and provide input on the installation of directional signage. The meeting will take place on May 2nd at 6:15 in the Planning Department boardroom. RNBC members are encouraged to attend.

Announcements

Mr. Forgeron announced that the Waterfront Regeneration Trust will be riding the Trail from end to end and will be in the Niagara area on April 24. Marlaine Koehler from the Waterfront Trust has extended an invitation to any RNBC members or other interested parties to participate in the ride with them. The purpose of this ride is to evaluate progress to date, evaluate road conditions including signs and to discuss how gaps can be bridged.

Bi-National Trails Day will be held on June 3rd, however, due to bridge maintenance, you will not be able to go across the Peace Bridge this year.

Mr. Forgeron announced that he had received a letter of resignation from Bill Rashleigh. Mr. Rashleigh is trying to find another representative from the west Niagara area to sit on the RNBC. Mr. Forgeron indicated that he had spoken to Mr. Rashleigh personally and thanked him for his support, contributions and participation over the years.

15. Items for Distribution

- Article titled, "New cycling map deemed roadworthy", St. Catharines Standard, March 13, 2006
- Article titled, "Map highlights regional attractions," The Tribune, March 6, 2006
- Article titled, "New cycling map out," The Tribune, March 8, 2006
- E-mail from Frank Pravitz to Ken Forgeron, March 14, 2006 re: Student Contract Terms of Reference
- E-mail from Marlaine Koehler of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, April 3, 2006 re: 2006 trail managers end to end tour
- St. Catharines Cycling Club flyer listing some of the club's upcoming events
- Councillor Leavens' speaking notes for the 2nd Edition Bicycle Map release which was presented to Regional Council on March 2, 2006
- Niagara Region media release re: Niagara Positioned as Canada's Premier Bicycling Destination
- Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee Library Reference Materials – Contents, February 2006
- Memo from Tim Whittle containing comments and recommendations on the proposal by Walkers to expand the landfill operation in Niagara Falls.

16. Items for Next Agenda

- Highlights from the March 3rd Obesity Forum (Dianne Coppola)
- Invite Joe Cousins of the Transportation Division to the next RNBC meeting. The committee would like to find out from Mr. Cousins the types of projects the Public Works Department would like to see the RNBC move forward with as well as the kind of projects or events that the RNBC could use budget money for.

17. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on May 18th in Committee Room #4.

MOTION:

To adjourn the April 6, 2006 RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner
RNBC Recording Secretary

Reviewed by:
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner