

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, April 14, 2005
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor (Acting Chair)
Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Bob Romanuk	- Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee
John Reep	- Public at Large
Brenda Sidlar	- Public at Large
Gregg Dame	- Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee
Bill Dixon	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large and Ontario Cycling Alliance
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Marian Landry	- Regional Public Health
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Bill Rashleigh - Public at Large

The meeting commenced at 7:03 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The order of the agenda was revised, and with the addition of the agenda items listed below, the agenda was adopted.

Ken Forgeron requested to speak on the following items:

- Proposed joint meeting with the Hamilton and Burlington Cycling Committees
- *Line Fences Act*

Gregg Dame requested to speak on the following item:

- Safety concerns raised by a citizens group regarding the Friendship Trail.

Dave Hunt requested to speak on the following item:

- International Trails Day in June.

Paul Pattison requested to speak on the following item:

- Queenston-Lewiston Bridge

Eric Flora requested to speak on the following item:

- Niagara Road Safety Committee

Tim Whittle requested to speak on the following item:

- Invitation to participate in Police Week.

2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (March 10, 2005)

The following corrections and revisions were requested to the March 10th meeting notes:

- At the top of page 2, the motion should have the wording “as revised” added.
- Councillor Baty said that a meeting would need to be scheduled between Mr. Forgeron, Councillor Leavens and himself in order to discuss proposals for a new RNBC meeting schedule. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Pattison said that on page 4, under item 6, second paragraph the wording seems to indicate that the Niagara Parks Commission would be issuing the new bike maps and not the Region. Mr. Forgeron said that the wording should say that, “Councillor Leavens also agreed to have some discussion with the mayors of Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake on the issue of sponsoring insets of their respective areas for the new bike map as all three are members of the Niagara Parks Commission Board of Commissioners.”
- Mr. Hunt said that on page 5, under item 7, third paragraph, a correction needed to be made to the wording regarding the letter sent to the City of Niagara Falls on the Millennium Trail. The draft letter was approved at the last meeting and was sent to the Mayor of Niagara Falls. However, this letter did not include the list of benefits as indicated in the meeting notes. Mr. Hunt suggested that the wording should say, “Mr. Hunt suggested sending a second letter and enclosing the Cycling Alliance’s Benefits of Cycling document which the RNBC sent to the Regional Chair and the local Mayors last year. It was agreed to send Mr. Pattison’s letter to the City of Niagara Falls.”
- On page 7, under item 11, Jan Somerwil’s name should be added as having attended the March 1st PIC for the Merritt St. Bridge EA.

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of March 10th as revised.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Gregg Dame

Carried

3. Business Arising

The Committee was provided updates on a number of “Action Items” which arose out of the February 2005 meeting notes:

- A memo from Ron Davidson was received and distributed to the RNBC. In regards to spring and winter road maintenance, Mr. Davidson wrote that it is the Region's practice to remove snow and ice accumulations as soon as possible as well as to remove winter sand accumulations. Therefore, in his view, it is not necessary to give maintenance priority to the Regional Bicycling Network Road Network system. If there are roads requiring particular attention, please call Ron Davidson or Dave Watson.
- The "Action Item" on the production of a Public Works brochure will be discussed later in the agenda.
- Mr. Flora reported that he had no new information to add to the RNBC's request for signage at the Queenston Heights Traffic circle. This will be provided at a later date when information is available. **(Action Item)**
- An update on Councillor Ron Leaven's meeting with Patrick Gedge was deferred to later in the meeting as Councillor Leaven's was not in attendance at this time.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that the application to join the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals had been completed and submitted.
- Mr. Flora reported that he would complete the survey on Bike Pavement Markings and submit it to TAC.
- The letter to the Ministry of Transportation regarding the Niagara-GTA Corridor Terms of Reference is an agenda item and would be discussed later in the meeting.
- Mr. Flora reported that the Southern Ontario Gateway Council report PWA 54-2005 and DPD 49-2005 was approved by Council on April 7th. The Region has now officially joined the Council as resource members. Mr. Hunt reported that the resource group should be contacted in regards to the inclusion of cycling. He will discuss this issue with the Ontario Cycling Alliance. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron contacted Mr. Dickson to advise him that his nomination as an RNBC member was accepted.
- Ms. Landry said that she had contacted Stuart Green of the City of St. Catharines and requested that the off-road trail information be forwarded to Tom Bernard of the Region's Planning Department.
- The letter to the City of Niagara Falls Letter regarding the Millennium Trail is an agenda item and was deferred until later in the meeting.
- Mr. Flora reported that RNBC draft Terms of Reference would not be going to the April 19th Public Works Committee meeting as originally planned. Joe Cousins of

the Public Works Department is comparing the previous Terms of Reference with the new draft Terms of Reference. Any proposed changes which he may make will be conveyed to the RNBC. **(Action Item)**

- Mr. Whittle reported that he had spoken to the Niagara Regional Police Service Traffic Department regarding the possibility of having an enforcement blitz aimed at cyclists. However, due to the Traffic Department reorganization, it will now be difficult for this to be arranged, but he would continue to research this suggestion. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Whittle did mention that the Niagara Regional Police Service is looking into a computer based bike registration program. This would be a volunteer system with no costs incurred. The Service is hoping that a registration system will assist them in returning the hundreds of unclaimed bicycles they sell at auction each year to their rightful owners.

- Mr. Flora informed the RNBC that he had received a request from the Niagara Road Safety Committee to make a presentation to the RNBC. It is Mr. Flora's understanding that a representative from the RNBC will be asked to sit on a Niagara Road Safety Committee Sub-Committee. Paul Pattison is the RNBC representative.

4. St. Catharines Downtown Street System Conversion Study

Mr. Flora provided an update on this issue. A destination/origin survey would be completed by St. Catharines city staff the week of April 18 – 22. Two PICs would be held before the July/August break. Various alternatives will be presented in May with the preferred alternative presented shortly thereafter.

5. West St. Catharines Transportation Study

Mr. Flora reported that one PIC had been held as well as a follow-up meeting with a number of disabled persons who live in the area. A second focus group meeting is to be held in late April or mid-May. A second PIC will probably be held the first week in June. The study should be completed in early fall. The study will be developed under various development scenarios, including a possible new hospital and another without the hospital.

While this study is occurring, a proposed Regional Roads Rights-of-Way report will be going to both the Planning and Public Works Committees. Information contained in the report affect the West St. Catharines Transportation Study. The Public Works Department is advocating that any arterial roads in rural areas will need a 26 metre road width. The Planning Department has also developed model urban design guidelines for specific areas which incorporate bicycle infrastructure.

6. Niagara Falls Tourism Task Force

This item was deferred until the May meeting.

7. Improvements to Geneva St. @ QEW - Status

Mr. Flora reported that he had asked for an update from the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) as to what their plans are in terms of improvements to Geneva St. @ the QEW. This update will be provided to him at a meeting scheduled for April 15. However, Mr. Flora was able to report that in order to provide bikeway facilities under the Geneva St. @ QEW structure, it would have to be widened underneath. The cost to do this would be approximately \$350,000 to \$400,000. The Region will be advising the MTO that they will not fund the cost of adding bicycle lanes under the facility as the City of St. Catharines has advised that they will not fund any bike lanes north and south of the structure.

8. Progress on New Bicycle Map

This item was deferred until the May meeting as Mr. Pravitz was not in attendance.

9. Niagara to GTA Corridor Letter

Mr. Hunt reported that he had read the Niagara to GTA corridor documentation and only found one component which dealt with cycling. This requires some attention and he has drafted a letter for the RNBC's approval and Councillor Leavens' signature.

Motion:

To approve the letter to Ministry of Transportation regarding the Niagara to GTA Corridor, Draft EA Terms of Reference.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

Mr. Flora provided the RNBC with a timeline for the draft Terms of Reference for the Niagara to GTA Corridor. All comments need to be submitted to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) by May 6th and the MTO's comments will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment by September. An individual EA will move forward in 2006.

10. Millennium Trail – Further Comments

Mr. Hunt reported that he had received numerous comments on the draft letter of support for the Millennium Trail. The letter will have the Cycling Alliance's Benefits of Cycling list attached to it.

Mr. Romanuk encouraged RNBC members to attend the April 27th PIC in support of the Millennium Trail as Niagara Falls Council is evenly split on the issue.

Mr. Romanuk requested that a reminder be sent to RNBC members about the PIC a few days prior to April 27th. **(Action Item)**

Motion:

To approve the letter of support for the Millennium Trail and send it to the Mayor and Council of the City of Niagara Falls.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

11. Update on International Bridge Crossings

Mr. Pattison reported that there was interest on the U.S. side to have cycling over the international bridges. He said that he personally would like to have access over the Whirlpool Bridge as currently it can only be used by Nexus card holders in motorized vehicles. A copy of the letter raising cross border cycling concerns was distributed to the RNBC members. A copy of the letter has been sent to Arlene White of the Bi-National Tourism Alliance and she has agreed to bring up this issue at the next Bi-National Alliance meeting.

Motion:

To approve and send the letter regarding Cross Border Cycling to Rob Nicholson, M.P. and to approve and send the same letter, as well as a covering letter, to Mr. Del Rollo, President of the Bi-National Transportation Alliance.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Bill Dixon

Carried

12. Update on Bike-To-Work Week

Ms. Landry thanked the RNBC members for their participation at the April 1st launch. She reported that there are 31 team captains registered to date and two team captain orientations have been held. However, more team captains are required as 11 of the 31 currently registered are Regional Niagara employees.

The St. Catharines and Niagara Falls "Like to Bike" sessions have been held. The feedback received from participants has been very positive. However, the Fort Erie session may need to be cancelled as only two people have registered so far. Ms. Landry commented that it has been a challenge generating interest in Fort Erie for Bike to Work Week.

The 2005 Greater Niagara Circle Trek will take place on May 1st. Participating communities include: Thorold, Welland, Niagara Falls, Port Colborne and St. Catharines. Mr. Paul Davies and Regional Councillor Bruce Timms will attempt to walk the entire 150 kilometre route and are asking for a donation of \$1.00 for every kilometre walked.

13. 2005 Central Ontario Municipal Conference

Mr. Forgeron reported that the Region of Niagara is co-hosting the 2005 Central Ontario Provincial Municipal Conference on April 28th & 29th. The conference will be held at the Sheraton on the Falls. Mr. Forgeron intends to put up two displays: the RNBC display and the Bicycle Friendly Awards display.

14. Proposed Brochure on Bicycle Lanes

Mr. Forgeron informed the RNBC that a request had been received by the Public Works Department to have the Education and Enforcement Task Force produce the proposed new brochure. Mr. Whittle – Chair of Task Force - said that they were looking to review and revitalize a number of cycling pamphlets and could include the proposed new brochure as well. Mr. Whittle suggested the possibility of having a Fall launch for the updated pamphlets. **(Action Item for Fall-2005)**

15. Task Force Reports

Education and Enforcement

Mr. Whittle requested volunteers to help assist at the following events:

April 26 th – Fort Erie Pathfinders	May 7 th – St. Catharines Optimist Club
April 28 th – St. Christopher School Bike Clinic	June 4 th – Niagara Falls Optimist Club
May 1 st – Millennium Trail	

The Head Injury Association has donated 80 bicycle helmets. If anyone is aware of a needy youth who could use a bicycle helmet, please let Mr. Whittle know. Ms. Landry volunteered to forward the information to the elementary school nurses if Mr. Whittle would send her an e-mail with the information.

Mr. Whittle reported on the “We Caught You Using Your Head” program. This initiative encourages children to wear a helmet. Children who are “caught” wearing their helmet will be rewarded with a prize voucher.

Engineering

Mr. Forgeron reported on behalf of Eric Flora regarding the bicycle facilities on Glendale Ave. between Riverview and Pelham Road. The resurfacing will be completed in early May with final line marking to be completed after that.

Mr. Forgeron reported that the 2005 Resurfacing Program report has not yet been finalized, but this should be completed within the next month.

16. New Business

16(a) Joint Bicycling Meeting with Hamilton & Burlington Committees

Mr. Forgeron reported that one possible meeting date is Sunday, May 15th in Hamilton. He requested potential agenda items from RNBC members. The following items were suggested:

- International Trails Day
- Signage standards across regions
- Mapping out a safer alternative for cyclists to travel from Hamilton to Niagara Falls
- Cycle Ontario Alliance
- RNBC's new bike map initiative

16(b) Line Fences Act

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) sent out a Member Communication regarding the *Line Fences Act*. AMO believes that the cost of fencing should not be the sole responsibility of the municipality as outlined in Section 20 of the *Act*. Instead, the cost should be shared between the abutting landowner and the municipality. They are asking their members to pass a Council resolution supporting trail development and express their concern over Section 20.

A motion was made to send a letter of support to AMO signed by Councillor Leavens on behalf of the RNBC. However, Councillor Baty expressed his concern that doing so, the position might conflict with views being expressed by the Regional Agricultural Subcommittee on changes to the *Act*. He suggested that the RNBC's support for AMO's suggestion of sharing the cost of the fencing should be sent to the Public Works Committee and Regional Council for consideration. Mr. Pattison offered to prepare a draft memo for RNBC's approval and Chair Leavens' signature for the next meeting. Once approved, this memo will be sent to the Public Works Committee. **(Action Item)**

16(c) Citizen Concerns Regarding the Friendship Trail

Mr. Dame reported that the Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee had been approached by a citizens group who expressed some concerns about the Friendship Trail. Their concerns are as follows:

Trail Safety

This was their main concern, specifically, the areas where the trail crossed roadways. They requested that something be done to help restrict the flow of trail traffic onto a roadway. A recommendation was made to have larger stop signs installed on the trail portion.

Garbage and Litter

There is a need for garbage facilities along the trail. Both the Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee and the PC Trails and Bikeways Committee will look into having

garbage containers at roadway intersections with along the trail and will look into having them picked up regularly and emptied.

Privacy Issues

There were concerns expressed from property owners along the trail regarding trail users peering onto their property. The PC Trails and Bikeways Committee suggested that this concern be brought to the attention of the police when an incident occurs.

Rumble Strips

Rumble strips were previously installed on some roadways to warn motorists that a trail crossing is ahead. However, property owners near the rumble strips are complaining about the noise that is made when vehicles go over the rumble strips.

Suggestions from the RNBC were for the installation of either tablet (raised) platforms, which are used for traffic calming or perhaps have speed bumps installed instead. It was noted that the local residents would not likely want the speed bumps, however, they would be quieter than the rumble strips.

16(d) International Trail Days

Mr. Hunt circulated an invitation to celebrate International Trails Day. This event will take place on June 4th and promotes the area trail systems on both sides of the border. Mr. Hunt reported that volunteers are needed to act as trail ambassadors on the Canadian side. He encouraged everyone to view the website (www.binationalniagaratrails.org).

16(e) Queenston-Lewiston Bridge

Mr. Pattison reported that he was arranging a meeting with the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission. One issue to be discussed is the need for adequate signage to indicate to cyclists what they need to do and where they need to go in order to cross the bridge.

16(f) Police Week

Mr. Whittle told the Committee that he was organizing a Police Week Display once again. He volunteered to set-up the RNBC display and requested RNBC members to staff the booth. The dates are as follows: May 11th at Niagara Square, May 12th at the Seaway Mall and May 13 & 14th at the Pen Centre.

16(g) Bike Map

Councillor Leavens reported that he had received a request in regards to having a French translation made of some of the additional information included with the new Bike Map. The French translation could be included with the map as an insert. Mr. Romanuk said that he had also received, through the website, three additional requests

for the Bike Map in French. Mr. Forgeron said that he would raise this issue with Frank Pravitz. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Leavens reported that the Town of Pelham is putting together a cycling map of local walking and bicycling routes within in the Town and requested an electronic copy of the Region's Bike Map. Mr. Phil Bergen in the Public Works Department was suggested as a contact. **(Action Item)**

17. Items for Distribution

- Letter addressed to Mayor Salci and Council in support of the Millennium Trail (Phase 2)
- Letter addressed to Mr. John Slobodzian of the MTO regarding the importance of incorporating bicycle considerations in the Niagara to GTA Corridor Terms of Reference EA
- Letter to Mr. Rob Nicholson, MP regarding the importance of maintaining cycling access on international bridge crossings
- Flyer advertising a variety of cycling related actives and merchant specials for May Bike Month and June
- Greater Niagara Circle Trek flyer advertising the May 1st Trek.
- International Trails Day invitation for June 4th
- AMO Member Communication regarding their concern over Section 20 of the *Line Fences Act*.

18. Items for Next Agenda

No items were suggested.

19. Next Meeting: May 12, 2005

The next RNBC meeting will take place on Thursday, May 12, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in Committee Room #4 at Regional Headquarters.

MOTION:

To adjourn the April 14, 2005 RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Gregg Dame

Seconded by: Ron Leavens

Carried

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner

Reviewed by:
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner