

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, January 12, 2006
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Bob Romanuk	- Acting Chair and Public at Large & Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee
John Reep	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large & Cycle Ontario Alliance
Gregg Dame	- Public at Large & Port Colborne Trails & Bikeways Committee
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Dianne Coppola	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Guests:

Alison Braithwaite	- Walker Industries
Nathalie Baudais	- iTrans Transportation Planning & Traffic Consultants

Regrets:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor
Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor

The meeting commenced at 7:03 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

- Heritage Trail (Jan Somerwil)
- Cycle Ontario Alliance Annual General Meeting (Dave Hunt)
- Bike to Work Week (Dianne Coppola)
- RNBC website update (Bob Romanuk)
- Waterfront Trail sign audit (Ken Forgeron)

Motion:

To accept the agenda of January 12th as revised.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

2. Review of Previous Meeting Notes (November 17th, 2005)

The following corrections and revisions were requested to the November 17th meeting notes:

- On page nine, under the heading “Proposed New Bicycle Route”, Welland Canal Parkway should be changed to read Welland Canals Parkway

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of November 17th as revised.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Jan Somerwil

Carried

3. Business Arising

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

- Mr. Flora reported that the Region was moving forward with the detailed design of Regional Road 20. Mr. Forgeron said that he had spoken to Brian Hughes of the Region’s Public Works Department who indicated that there would be consideration for side clearances on Regional Road 20, over Highway 406, which could be used by cyclists. Refer to Agenda Item 10.
- Councillor Leavens said at the last RNBC meeting that Manfred Fast would be invited to a future RNBC meeting after the strategic planning session was held.
- Ms. Coppola said that she would contact Councillor Baty when they are ready to pursue his suggestion of seeking the involvement of E. L. Crossley Secondary School for Bike Month 2006
- Mr. Whittle reported that it would be at least a year before the new Niagara Police Services computer system is up and running. It will likely be at least two years before a system will be in place to register bicycles.
- Mr. Pattison will provide Mr. Forgeron with the technical guide for the RNBC reference library. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron indicated that the list of trail descriptions to be included in the 2nd edition of the bike map had been checked for accuracy and was no longer an action item.
- The presentation of the Bicycle Friendly Awards was deferred from the December 15th Regional Council meeting to the January 19th meeting.
- Ms. Coppola suggested that Bike to Work Week for 2006 be scheduled for the week of May 29th to June 4th. A Bike to Work planning session will take place on January 23rd at 3:00 p.m. in the Public Health building. It was reported that a few cycling shops have expressed interest in attending the planning session. As more information becomes available it will be provided to the committee. Mr. Forgeron asked Peter Davies to forward the information on the Bike to Work Week planning session to the Freewheelers for their participation.

- An action item on the strategic planning session was deferred as it is also an agenda item and will be discussed at that time.
- Mr. Pattison told the RNBC that he had no new information at this time on the QEW widening through St. Catharines. Mr. Flora indicated that a Municipal Coordination meeting would be held on January 26th and one issue at the meeting will be the proposed Martindale Road channelized off ramp lane design. If anyone has any questions that they would like brought up at the meeting they should let Mr. Flora know before the 26th.

4. Presentation by Walker Industries

Ms. Alison Braithwaite, from Walker Industries, explained that the existing landfill site has almost reached its approved capacity and will need to be closed in approximately four years. During the past three years, Walkers Industries has been working on an Environmental Assessment (EA) report pertaining to alternatives for providing new waste capacity in Niagara Falls for solid, non-hazardous waste. Input has been received from various agencies including the Region of Niagara, City of Niagara Falls, local neighbours and other stakeholders. Also through the EA process a number of impact assessment reports were completed, for example, traffic, groundwater and odour (the impact assessment reports can be viewed on Walker's website). Walker Industries has determined that the preferred option is to expand the landfill into the south quarry.

Ms. Nathalie Baudais, Transportation Planner from iTrans Consulting, explained that a Traffic Impact Assessment report was completed and it is estimated that the landfill will result in only a 2-3% increase in traffic. There will be an additional 40 trips in and out for a peak traffic day for hauling. Five haul routes and four entrances were assessed for the long distance haulage trucks and the preferred route is via Highway 58, Thorold Stone Road and along Taylor Rd. to the proposed new eastern entrance. This route would have the trucks pass the fewest number of businesses, is the shortest route and will have the least environmental impact. Currently, the draft Traffic Impact Study report has been submitted to different agencies for a review. It also has been peer reviewed by another traffic consultant, Cansult.

Mr. Whittle said that he recalled that a few years ago, when the RNBC agreed to move the designated bike route from Thorold Stone Road to Taylor/Mountain Rd., Walker Industries was not granted permission to relocate their entrance to Taylor Road by Regional Council or the Ministry of Natural Resources. It was his understanding that former RNBC Chair Brian McMullan brought a motion forward to Regional Council on this issue. Mr. Flora will look into this issue and provide a report at the next meeting.
(Action Item)

Ms. Baudais said that iTrans Consulting recommends signalization at the proposed Taylor Road entrance to the proposed new landfill site. However, the peer review suggests that acceleration lanes may be warranted. There is some concern that truck acceleration lanes would conflict with bike movements when trucks are trying to merge.

Mr. Forgeron asked about the maintenance of the bicycle lanes as the expansion will cause additional dust and dirt to accumulate on the bicycle lanes. Ms. Braithwaite said that a sweeper will be used on roads within the landfill site itself as well on roads near the site. The use of the sweeper is more for dust control, but would have a safety benefit for cyclists as well.

Mr. Forgeron suggested that a small technical committee comprised of RNBC members review the draft EA traffic report and put together a list of comments and concerns for the February 23 meeting. Peter Davies, Tim Whittle and Jan Somerwil volunteered to undertake this task. **(Action Item)**

5. Active 2010 Funding: Communities in Action

Ms. Coppola advised that a Provincial initiative called Active 2010 – Communities in Action has awarded \$145,000.00 in grant money to Heart Niagara. The idea behind Active 2010 is to encourage people to be more physically active. Heart Niagara will be launching a Niagara on the Move campaign. There are three components to the Niagara on the Move campaign. They are:

- Development and production of a map showing walking trails in Niagara
- Development of a pedometer campaign which will target the women in the work place.
- Increase awareness of utilizing school facilities for physical activity.

Bike to Work Week – Update

Ms. Coppola reported that Ms. Landry, from the Public Health Department, has had a number of discussions with many of the area municipal parks and recreation departments about offering the Like to Bike courses. A number of departments have expressed interest in this idea and have been directed to speak to the course provider Anne Davies.

Ms. Coppola requested feedback from the group as to whether we should plan Bike Month activities over and above the activities scheduled for Bike to Work Week. Mr. Whittle reported that, traditionally, Bike Month activities highlight already existing events, for example, International Trail Days. Ms. Coppola asked to be provided with the details of any of these events. **(Action Item)**

Ms. Coppola asked for volunteers to help revise the Bicycle Friendly Awards program. If anyone is interested in volunteering, please let her know.

6. Progress on New Bicycle Map

Mr. Forgeron reported \$6,000 has been collected in advertising so far with the anticipation that more advertisers will be purchasing space on the map. A target of about \$10,000 has been estimated.

Mr. Forgeron requested the assistance of four or five members to review the map and look for any errors or omissions. Upon discussion members decided to meet on January 19th at Regional Headquarters (cafeteria) as an awards presentation will be made to the Bicycle Friendly Awards winners that evening as well. Several members agreed to attend.

Mr. Pravitz suggested that the RNBC's website address should be featured very prominently on the map and asked for possible suggestions. Mr. Forgeron indicated that he would include this on the map.

7. Proposed Strategic Planning Session

Ms. Coppola reported that six to eight requests had been sent out to various consultants and facilitators to help develop a strategic plan for the next three year RNBC term. However, only one submission was received and the cost was more than what had been intended to be spent in terms of the budget. As well, several of the facilitators were not available for either the January 21st or the 28th. Ms. Coppola reported that Councillor Leavens has suggested that the session be moved to a date further in the year. In the meantime, the RNBC will continue to do what it can for 2006. RNBC members suggested the planning session be held before spring, but not during the March break. The dates of February 25th and the March 25th were suggested. Ms. Coppola asked members for the names of any facilitators as well as for any other potential dates for the strategic planning session. Ms. Coppola offered to send out an e-mail listing the names of all the facilitators who were contacted so that members do not send her duplicate names. **(Action Item)**

8. RNBC Budget

Mr. Flora reported that there was \$4,000 remaining in the 2003 budget, \$7,400 remaining in the 2004 budget. An additional \$10,000 was identified by the RNBC for the 2005 budget, but to date, no specific account has been set-up. In 2006 budget monies will be tied to the strategic planning session.

9. Bike Racks on Buses

Mr. Flora reported that an Ontario Community Transportation Association (OCTA) meeting will be held on January 19 to discuss the issue of bike racks on buses. Under the *Public Vehicles Act* a bus cannot transport a bicycle if it is crossing municipal boundaries. OCTA would like to discuss what they need to do to change the *Act*. Mr. Flora will represent the RNBC and provide an update at the next meeting. **(Action Item)**

10. Regional Road 20 EA

Mr. Flora said that the Region was moving towards a detailed design study. The area of the study is from Station Street in Fonthill to Highway 406. Councillor Leavens may want to address this topic at the February 23rd RNBC meeting.

11. St. David's Road Pedestrian/Cycling Needs Study

Mr. Flora reported that the consulting firm of Matrix Partners has been retained to undertake the St. David's Road Pedestrian/Cycling Needs Study. The area to be studied is from Glenridge Ave. to Burleigh Hill. The study is being funded equally by the cities of St. Catharines and Thorold and the Region. The City of St. Catharines is the lead on the study. Matrix is undertaking data collection at the moment.

12. QEW/Glendale Avenue Interchange

The MTO has agreed to look at pedestrian and cyclists needs when crossing the QEW ramp. One possible option is having a clear zone on the west side of the structure. Mr. Flora will provide an update at the next meeting. **(Action Item)**

13. Bicycle Friendly Award Presentation on January 19th

Ms. Coppola announced that the Bicycle Friendly Award presentations would take place on January 19th. A small reception will be held at 6:30 p.m. in Committee Room #3 and the award presentations will take place at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Everyone is encouraged to attend to support the winners.

14. Proposed Regional Brochure on Bicycle Lanes

Mr. Forgeron raised the issue of having the Committee publish a brochure on the proper use of bicycle lanes. The RNBC had previously received a copy of a similar brochure published by the City of Toronto which we are hoping to adapt to suit Niagara. Mr. Flora said that Public Works would be working on a Bikeways Facility Policy and could incorporate the new brochure in it. Mr. Forgeron will send the City of Toronto's brochure to Mr. Whittle to review. **(Action Item)**

15. Task Force Reports

Education and Enforcement

Mr. Whittle requested funding to have an additional 2,000 copies printed of the Lighten Up! brochure.

MOTION:
To fund the reprinting of 2,000 Lighten Up! bicycle brochures for public distribution.
Moved by: Paul Pattison

statistics at the next meeting. **(Action Item)**

Policy

Mr. Forgeron announced that there is a proposed new Niagara-on-the-Lake Zoning By-law. It is still in the review stages, but if it passes then Niagara-on-the-Lake would be the first community in the Niagara Region to include provisions for bicycle parking for businesses. Mr. Forgeron will advise the RNBC when the by-law is approved by Niagara-on-the-Lake Council. **(Action Item)**

The RNBC suggested that if the by-law passes perhaps the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake should be considered for a Bicycle Friendly Award under the Government Institution category.

Engineering

Mr. Pravitz suggested that once the 2nd edition of the bike map was completed work should be begin on the issue of signage. Mr. Pravitz had previously written a paper on the issue of signage and created a number system for the entire bicycle network.

Mr. Flora explained that the McLeod Road Traffic Operations Study will be initiated around April or May of this year. The study area will be from Pinoak Drive to where it connects to Portage Road and extend into the Village of Chippawa.

16. New Business

Heritage Trail

Mr. Somerwil reported that the Upper Canada Heritage Trail runs from King Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake to about York Rd. Parts of the trail are used quite extensively by the many off-shore workers in the area. He noted that parts of the trail are being encroached upon by farmers whose fields abut against the trail. He suggested that some action should be taken to stop this from occurring. Mr. Reep also commented that, in his experience, tourists enjoy the Heritage Trail as it is very scenic and free of traffic although it is quite rough.

There was a discussion as to whether the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake or the Region of Niagara actually owns the trail. Before any other steps are taken, Mr. Forgeron will investigate who owns the trail. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Flora will review the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Transportation Master Plan to see if there is anything written in the plan about the Heritage Trail. **(Action Item)**

Cycle Ontario Alliance

Mr. Hunt reported that the Annual General Meeting would take place on February 18th. The location is still to be confirmed.

Hamilton Trails Master Plan

Mr. Forgeron reported that the City of Hamilton is developing a trails master plan and have requested comments from the RNBC. The master plan can be viewed on the City of Hamilton's website.

RNBC Website

Mr. Romanuk said that 109,000 hits were made on the RNBC website in 2005 and approximately 30,000 people viewed our site. Currently, we are only using 12% of our available webspace. Since we have the space available to put additional information on the website, he suggested perhaps including photos or have a section on the site where members favourite bike rides within Niagara could be included.

Waterfront Trail Sign Audit

Mr. Forgeron explained that a sign audit for the Niagara portion of the Waterfront Trail needs to be completed in the spring and summer of this year. The RNBC and Niagara Freewheelers can assist by identifying areas where directional signage is needed. Mr. Davies was requested to raise this project with the Freewheelers for a possible spring project in partnership with the RNBC. **(Action Item)**

17. Items for Distribution

- Excerpt from Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law which identifies the proposed new bicycle parking provisions.
- Regional Navigator newsletter, November 2005 edition which includes an article discussing the history of the map and role GIS will play in the completion of the 2nd edition map.
- Information sheet sent out to potential advertisers of the 2nd edition bike map. It contains advertising rates, ad specifications and lists what the 2nd edition map will feature in terms of new elements.

18. Items for Next Agenda

- Walker Brothers EA

19. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on February 23rd in Committee Room #2.

MOTION:

To adjourn the January 12, 2006 RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Peter Davies

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

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
and
Eric Flora, P.Eng., CET
Acting Associate Director Transportation Systems