

# REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, July 8, 2004  
Committee Room #4  
7:00 p.m.

## Present:

Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor (Acting Chair)
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large & Velo Ontario
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large
Dwight Alguire	- Public at Large
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

## Regrets:

Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)

## 1. Adoption of Agenda

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

Ken Forgeron requested to speak on the following items:

- A bike tour request by Peter Warwick
- Photo album by RNBC member Jan Somerwil
- Pedal 100 Bicycle Ride

Paul Pattison made a request to speak on the following issue:

- Traffic signals at Elderwood and Martindale roads

### ***Motion:***

***To accept the agenda as amended.***

***Moved by: Bob Romanuk***

***Seconded by: Paul Pattison***

***Carried***

## 2. Review of Meeting Notes of June 10, 2004

### ***Motion:***

***To adopt the RNBC Meeting Notes of June 10, 2004.***

***Moved by: Dave Hunt***

***Seconded by: Paul Pattison***

***Carried***

### 3. **Business Arising**

- Frank Pravitz had a question about Regional Road 20 in Fonthill. The June meeting notes indicated that an Ad Hoc Committee in Pelham had met with Ralph Scholz from the Region and Delcan and a number of compromises were reached. Mr. Pravitz asked what the compromises were in terms of the bicycle lanes. Councillor Baty said that they were not about cycling issues. He also reported that the Town Ad Hoc Committee preferred to have a three lane cross section with boulevards and trees from Station St. to Rice Rd. in order to accommodate bike lanes. However, the Region was looking to have a four lane cross section. Mr. Forgeron explained that as Regional Road 20 is not on the proposed Bikeways Network the Regional Public Works Department and the consultant were arguing that bike lanes did not need to be included.

Mr. Whittle questioned why the Region would say no to the inclusion of a three lane cross section through an area of the Town if it is the Town's preferred design.

Councillor Baty suggested continuing the discussion later in the meeting. He also mentioned that since Regional Road 20 is the most direct route to get to Niagara Falls, if the inclusion of bicycle lanes is not going to be supported then perhaps signage should be included to direct cyclists to an alternate route.

- Mr. Forgeron reported that background information would be provided to Marshall Macklin Monaghan on the Regional Niagara Bicycling Map for their work in Ottawa. It had been indicated at the June meeting that the City of Ottawa was interested in producing a map modeled after the Region's map.

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

- Mr. Forgeron distributed a list of Major Projects/Activities to be undertaken by RNBC Task Forces for 2003 – 2006. As the list had been reviewed previously, he requested that a motion be made to accept the contents and to forward the list on to the Public Works Committee for information and approval.

Mr. Whittle suggested that the "RNBC web-site presence" listed as an activity for the Education and Enforcement Task Force be moved to the Encouragement Task Force. Mr. Forgeron agreed to make this change to the list.

**Motion:**

**To approve the amended list of Major Projects/Activities of RNBC Task Forces (2003-2006) and to forward the list to the Public Works Committee.**

**Moved by: Bob Romanuk**

**Seconded by: Dave Hunt**

**Carried**

- Mr. Forgeron said that there was a Motion made at the June meeting to send a memo to Public Works staff requesting that roadways on the Regional Bikeways Network be given priority in terms of sweeping and maintenance. He reported that the memo had not yet been completed and requested a volunteer to assist him in the drafting of the memo. He also suggested including supporting documentation in the memo, for example, the memo could mention the possible liability issues that may result if the roadway is not swept and a cyclist should fall due to the debris. Mr. Whittle volunteered to help in the drafting of the memo. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron said that a member of the Planning Department could assist Ms. Landry in the completion of a joint report on the Walkable Communities in Niagara Web-Cast Workshop. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron said that he had received a request from the Planning Department asking for a report to be submitted to the Planning and Public Works Committees on the highlights of the Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike conference in Victoria in September. As Mr. Romanuk will be attending this conference, he agreed to provide a report. **(Action Item)**
- Frank Pravitz said that it was his understanding that the Dunnville Spur Line was part of the proposed Bicycle Master Plan, but he noticed that the June meeting notes suggested that the Dunnville Spur Line was to be sold to abutting land owners. Mr. Forgeron said that a report would be going to the Planning Services Committee on the subject of both the Dunnville Spur Line and a proposed new trail along the abandoned railway right-of-way in the Township of Wainfleet. The Planning Department is recommending that the Region support the Township of Wainfleet's request for funding. In the case of the Dunnville Spur, the Township of West Lincoln no longer views it as a priority and only wants to protect a small portion through Smithville. Mr. Forgeron suggested that one reason why West Lincoln may not be interested in developing the Line was because a couple of bridges along the trail would need to be upgraded and the cost would be significant. Another issue involves potential financing.
- Mr. Forgeron referred the RNBC to an e-mail from Eric Flora. As Mr. Flora was unable to attend the July meeting, he provided the RNBC with a

summary of the discussions held at the June 15, 2004 Municipal Liaison meeting where the issue of the QEW widening was discussed.

Mr. Flora reported in his e-mail that there will be space provided for cyclists on Martindale Rd. when the QEW crossing is reconstructed. It appears that Lake St. may be wide enough now to accommodate cyclists although it may not be called a bike lane. It is not likely that Geneva St. will be widened under the new QEW widening proposal in order to accommodate cyclists.

Dwight Alquire said that in terms of Lake St. and Martindale Rd., decision makers should be made aware that there is a need for bike facilities. Mr. Forgeron said that three letters discussing the QEW widening and the need for cycling facilities had been sent to St. Catharines City Council with copies being sent to the City of St. Catharines, Ministry of Transportation staff representatives and Regional Council. Eric Flora attends Municipal Liaison Committee meetings and advocates the need for accommodating cycling over the QEW crossings. He also believed that more input can be provided on the issue at future Public Information Centre (PIC) open houses. A system is also in place to notify RNBC members and the Freewheelers of the PICs.

Mr. Pravitz said that he could put together a presentation on this issue and present it to the local Councillors. Also, when the time comes for the PICs, all cyclists need to be encouraged to attend. Mr. Alquire suggested that there may be support from the schools close to Lake St. and suggested going to the schools' parent/teacher groups.

It was suggested that dates for future public involvement on the QEW widening process in St. Catharines should be investigated. **(Action Item)**

#### **4. Report on the New Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee**

Greg Dame distributed a copy of the Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee's By-law which outlines the Terms of Reference. He reported that the Committee contains a broad range of members such as business owners, cyclists, interested citizens and political appointees.

Some of the current projects the Committee is looking into include:

- Adopt-a-Trail Program - The Committee is approaching groups and businesses looking for their support in adopting a portion of the Friendship Trail. Once a portion of the trail is adopted it would need to be kept clean and patrolled for vandalism. The adopter would also be responsible to try and ensure that any areas of concern or any areas of improvement that the community would like to see are looked after.

- Through the local papers, citizens are being asked to identify their favourite cycling routes. This information will help the Committee identify how cyclists get to the routes. The Committee can work with the City to identify the most popular routes and then proper signage and maintenance could be completed on these routes.
- Bicycle Friendly Awards – The Committee is interested in having Port Colborne businesses become more aware of the awards program. Some businesses in Port Colborne have asked for bike racks and are promoting cycling. It would be good to recognize the businesses that take these initiatives.
- Lake-to-Lake Bicycle Event – Mr. Dame reported that many Port Colborne citizens are not aware of the race even though the starting place currently is in Port Colborne. The City really does not receive any benefit from having it there. The Committee would be interested in supporting a group who would like to organize a trade show the night before the start of the race with a live band, music and overnight camping for cyclists. The marina has both shower and washroom facilities to accommodate cyclists. Mr. Pattison asked if there was a possibility of alternating the start and finishing locations of the race every other year. One year the start would be Port Colborne and the finish would be Port Dalhousie and the next year the race would start in Port Dalhousie with the finish being in Port Colborne. Mr. Dame responded that this was a good idea. However, the only problems might be the staging area in Port Dalhousie and the uphill climb of the Escarpment. Mr. Whittle said that currently there is difficulty getting space at Port Dalhousie for the final, but if Port Colborne says that the whole park could be used for the event then perhaps there is potential to do this.
- The Committee will get involved in reviewing road construction projects throughout the City. One pet peeve the Committee has is that the City has signs indicating that cycling is not allowed on the sidewalks. The Committee would like to have proper signage indicating to cyclists where they should be riding.
- They are continuing to monitor the East/West Trail through Fort Erie. Only one block of the Friendship Trail has yet to be completed. As well, they are contacting Township of Wainfleet on the development of the western route. Mr. Forgeron reported that the Wainfleet proposal is for a stone dust trail and not a paved trail.

Mr. Forgeron said that the City of Port Colborne is currently revising its Official Plan and now would be a good opportunity for the local Committee to encourage the City to include supportive cycling objectives and policies. **(Action Item)**

**5. Photo Gallery Development**

Mr. Forgeron reported that he had met with the Region's Corporate Communications Division regarding the development of a bicycle photo gallery. Photos are needed to update the RNBC display as well to provide enhancement to the bike map. Mr. Forgeron requested Bob Romanuk's help in putting together something for the website asking people to send in photos. Mr. Romanuk agreed to help. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Pattison asked where the RNBC stood in terms of using photos submitted. Do the people who submit the photos need to sign off on them indicating that they have no objections to us using them? It was reported that if there are people in the photos and they are recognizable then we probably cannot use the photo without a signed release. Mr. Romanuk asked if the Region has any policy in place indicating what is considered recognizable or if there are any guidelines governing the use of photos. Mr. Alguire suggested asking the Freewheelers for photos as well. Mr. Romanuk suggested that if an e-mail is sent to Freewheelers asking for photos then we should indicate that any people in the photos should not be recognizable. Mr. Forgeron said that he was also interested in having photos of Niagara scenery. Mr. Pattison suggested putting a sample release form on the web page so that if someone wants to submit a picture then they could also sign the release form. Mr. Forgeron said that he would check with the Corporate Communications Division regarding the release form. **(Action Item)**

**6. Progress on Presentation at Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike Conference in Victoria**

Deferred until the September meeting.

**7. Bike Month in Niagara: Post Analysis**

Deferred until the September meeting.

**8. Bicycle Transportation and Official Plans**

Dave Hunt discussed with the RNBC a draft letter he had previously e-mailed to members for comments. The purpose of the letter is to encourage municipalities to incorporate supportive policies for bicycling within their Official Plans. The letter would be sent to all local municipalities as well as to the Region itself as they are currently working on some revised long range planning policies. The letter listed reasons as to why cycling should be included in Official Plans and considered in long range planning. Two attachments would be included with the letter as well. The first attachment lists some of the benefits of cycling. The second attachment lists some suggested objectives and policies as recommended in the proposed Bikeways Master Plan. Mr. Hunt asked members to e-mail him

any comments they may have and once finalized the letter will be signed by RNBC Chair Ron Leavens. Ken Forgeron can look after its distribution. **(Action Items)**

## 9. Review of Bike Map Distribution

### Ottawa Request

This issue was discussed under Business Arising.

### NETC Follow-up

It was reported that 25,000 copies of Regional Niagara Bicycling Map were printed and 18,000 maps have been distributed to date. Gary Hardy from the Niagara Economic and Tourism Corporation will draft a letter to send out to everyone who had been distributed maps. The letter will ask for suggestions on improving the map, whether more maps are needed and if they are collecting donations. One project for this winter will be to start editing the current map and to consider other possible enhancements.

Mr. Pravitz said that the RNBC should be at all major cycling events in the area to distribute maps. One upcoming major event is the Grape and Wine Squeezer in September. Organizers for this event expect approximately 2,000 riders and onlookers. He reported that the RNBC has been offered a booth near Montebello Park free of charge for the day of the race.

Mr. Whittle suggested that besides having the maps distributed at the booth, the maps could also be included in the race registration package. He suggested that the RNBC could give the organizer 1,000 maps and in return request that a \$500.00 donation be made to the RNBC. This would provide the organizer with a bit of deal as normally \$1.00 per map is requested. Dwight Alguire and Frank Pravitz offered to speak to the Squeezer organizer about Mr. Whittle's suggestion of including the maps in the registration packages. Mr. Whittle asked that the meeting notes indicate that volunteers are needed to staff the RNBC booth and requested that this item be brought up at the September meeting in order to confirm the details. Councillor Baty said that it appeared that there was a consensus amongst the Committee to go ahead and confirm our attendance at the Squeezer as well as to look into putting bike maps in the registration package. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Forgeron reported that there were six major cycling venues throughout the year and he would like to have other members take over the task of organizing the RNBC's participation at some of these events. He offered to continue to organize the RNBC's participation at the Toronto International Bike Show which is held annually in February/March.

It was reported that the Pedal 100 is scheduled for August 14<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Pravitz's opinion was that he wasn't sure that this event required the RNBC to set-up a booth. Mr. Pravitz suggested that putting out the maps beside a donation jar would suffice. Mr. Whittle said that there are approximately 200 people at the Pedal 100 and most are local riders or Freewheelers who have already had access to the map.

#### **10. Directional Signage Program Start-Up**

Deferred until the September meeting.

#### **11. Task Force Reports**

##### Encouragement

As Ms. Landry was unable to attend the evening's meeting, she had previously forwarded Mr. Forgeron an e-mail update on Encouragement Task Force initiatives. Mr. Forgeron reported the following:

- Currently developing a poster presentation for the Bicycle Friendly Awards based on the criteria set out by the Pro Walk/Pro Bike Conference
- Nominations for the Niagara-area Bicycle Friendly Awards are beginning to arrive. Ms. Landry encouraged RNBC members to submit nominations.
- Ms. Landry has been asked to participate in an advisory capacity to the Central West Heart Health Project. This is a new initiative promoting Walkable Communities.

##### Education and Enforcement

Mr. Whittle reported on the "We Caught You Using Your Head" program. This initiative encourages people to wear a helmet and also provides an opportunity to build good rapport between police and kids. Children who are "caught" wearing their helmet will be rewarded with a prize voucher. The Brain Injury Association is also donating 25 bike helmets which are distributed to needy children.

Port Colborne has had good luck with their initiative to provide bicycle education and promote the use of helmets through the local schools. Some schools in the City of Welland are now interested in starting a similar program.

Mr. Whittle provided a report on the OWL Program. Under this program fluorescent tape was distributed to offshore workers who use bikes as their primary means of transportation. Enough tape was distributed to be affixed to 300 bikes. Two local church organizations distributed tape for approximately 200 bikes and Community Policing distributed the remaining tape to 100 bikes through the bike rodeo program.

Mr. Whittle requested the authorization to have 2,000 copies of the Lighten Up! pamphlet printed as the current supply has been depleted.

***Motion:***

***To authorize the printing of 2,000 copies of the Lighten Up! Eh pamphlet.***

***Moved by: Paul Pattison***

***Seconded by: Dwight Alquire***

***Carried***

Engineering

Mr. Pravitz requested that the RNBC send a letter to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake supporting their Master Plan. In the letter he would also like to encourage the Town to develop signage and trails as well as request that they consider paved shoulders for any arterial roads. Mr. Forgeron asked about the timing of the local Masterplan and how urgent it is to get the letter to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. He also suggested having Eric Flora or Phil Bergen make a presentation at the September meeting discussing what is contained in the Masterplan as many RNBC members are unsure as to its contents. Councillor Baty suggested that the RNBC find out what the final recommendations are on the Masterplan through a presentation at the RNBC September meeting. Then we should proceed with finalizing the letter. If the letter should be sent sooner, then please contact Ken Forgeron or RNBC Chair Ron Leavens.

Policy

As previously discussed in the meeting, the Policy Task Force has been working on drafting a letter to the Region and area municipalities regarding the inclusion of supporting cycling policies in Official Plans.

Mr. Hunt asked whether there would be an opportunity for the RNBC Policy Task Force to review each Official Plan as each municipality goes through the process of having it updated. Mr. Forgeron said that there would be time as there could be early drafts circulated before a final amendment is prepared and adopted by the municipality. It then would be sent to the Region who is the approval authority on such matters. Mr. Forgeron said that he would provide a copy of draft Official Plan policies for bicycling as he receives them. **(Action Item)**

**12. Items for Distribution**

- E-mail from Eric Flora re: E-mail link to the Peace Bridge's Technical Evaluation report.
- July 7<sup>th</sup> Hamilton Spectator article titled, "Cycling map of Scenic Niagara is 'DIY tour organizer' This article features RNBC member Frank Pravitz and discusses the new Regional Niagara Bicycling Map.

- Regional Niagara Media Release, "Region Takes Over Responsibility for Land Ambulance Services". Besides having ambulances, the fleet also includes 8 bicycles.
- June 11<sup>th</sup> Niagara This Week article titled, "Hiking, Cycling Trails Link Niagara End-to-End," The article discusses both the Waterfront Trail and the Greater Niagara Circle Route.
- Letter from Minister Jim Bradley (Tourism and Recreation) to Corwin Cambray thanking him for both the report about bicycling and a copy of the Regional Niagara Bicycling Map.
- June 24<sup>th</sup> Toronto Star article titled, "Bicycles own as much road as cars do in Copenhagen." The article discusses the 300 kilometres of bike lanes throughout the city and how cycling is a way of life for many people with over 1/3 of the city's population riding to work daily.
- June 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Catharines Standard article titled, "Ferry carries rich history across canal." The article discusses the Port Robinson ferry service.
- June 5<sup>th</sup>, St. Catharines Standard article titled, "Yesterday and Today." The article shows a picture of cyclists from 1886 and a picture of a group of Freewheelers. The writer would like to know the names of the Freewheelers in the photo. **(Action Item – All)**
- June 7<sup>th</sup>, MacLean's Magazine article titled, "When Memory Fades to Black." The picture with the article depicts a number of soldiers with bicycles heading to Juno Beach in WWII.
- May 17<sup>th</sup> Hamilton Spectator article titled, "Cyclists ring your bells: The Alternative is a \$105 traffic ticket." The article discusses how the Hamilton police are enforcing the by-law that bicycles need to be equipped with a horn or a bell.
- June 12<sup>th</sup> Hamilton Spectator article titled, "City adds more bike lanes." This article states that the City of Hamilton will be spending \$1.1 million dollars this year and next on new reserved bike lanes, bike racks in shopping areas and on other support for biking.
- Summer issue of TAC (Transportation Association of Canada) News. An article on the first page titled, "Bicycle Traffic Pavement Marking Guide to be Prepared," talks about how a project aimed at developing a national guide on the design and application of bicycle traffic markings will be launched in the near future.

#### **12a) Request from Peter Warwick**

Mr. Forgeron told the RNBC about a request he had received from Peter Warwick. Mr. Warwick requested that the RNBC consider organizing an annual four day bike event to link with the Fort Erie Friendship Festival from July 1 to 4. Mr. Forgeron reported that he wrote Mr. Warwick and indicated that the RNBC Terms of Reference do not allow the RNBC to organize rides. Regional Council has set other priorities for the RNBC. He said that he suggested that Mr. Warwick contact

the Freewheelers organization who may be better equipped to undertake such a worthwhile effort.

**12b) Photo Album**

Mr. Forgeron passed around an album of photos taken by RNBC member Jan Somerwil. Mr. Somerwil's album contained photos of both off and on-road bike paths and roundabouts in the Netherlands.

**12c) Pedal 100 Bicycle Ride**

The ride will be held on August 14<sup>th</sup> out of Henley Island. There will be a number of different links and rides with all money being donated to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

**12d) Traffic Lights**

Paul Pattison asked about the traffic signals at Elderwood and Martindale roads. He wondered who designed the signals and what thought was put into the design in terms of allowing pedestrians and cyclists to cross. A cyclist either has to wait for other automobile traffic to approach in order for the lights to change or else they need to press the push button to change the lights. In some places the push buttons are not very accessible to pedestrians or cyclists. For example, you need to get off your bike and go a considerable distance in order to press the button. This is very inconvenient and discourages use. Mr. Forgeron suggested that Mr. Pattison contact Nick Rosati in the Public Works Department. **(Action Item)**

**12e) Highway 20 through Fonthill**

This topic was discussed earlier and re-visited at this point in the meeting. Councillor Baty asked the RNBC how they wished to proceed in terms of having bike lanes included on Regional Road 20 through the Fonthill. Mr. Forgeron's opinion was that if the Town of Pelham wished to re-open the issue of having a three-lane cross section with bike lanes instead of the Region's preferred option, which is a four-lane cross section, their support would be required and may carry a lot of weight. However, if the time period has passed to get the EA bumped up then there is no opportunity to change the design. Councillor Bay said he would confer with RNBC Chair Ron Leavens to see about re-visiting the issue before it is settled. **(Action Item)**

**13. Next Meeting September 9, 2004**

The August RNBC was cancelled. The next scheduled meeting will be September 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Regional Niagara headquarters building.

Meeting Notes Taken by:  
Julie Bittner

Reviewed by:  
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner