

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, March 10, 2005
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
John Reep	- Public at Large
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large and Ontario Cycling Alliance
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Bill Rashleigh	- Public at Large

The meeting commenced at 7:06

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.

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

Dave Hunt requested to speak on the following item:

- Niagara to GTA Corridor EA

Ken Forgeron requested to speak on the following item:

- Niagara Falls Circle Trek event to be held on May 1.

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

- Paul Pattison clarified to the RNBC that on page 8 the letter in question should go to Rob Nicholson, MP, and the Bi-National Tourism Alliance and not necessarily to the Bruce Trail Association as was noted in the meeting notes.

- Ken Forgeron requested that on page 4, under 3.7.2, Quorum, the information regarding the Quorum needed to be clarified. This will be discussed under agenda item No. 10.
- Item 11 in the February meeting notes should read, “Phil Bergen reported that Regional Council has approved the Regional Public Works 2005 Transportation Studies account (Parent Project ID ZRE0503). Regional Public Works staff will allocate \$10,000 towards the 2005 RNBC budget under a line item to be titled “Bicycling Initiatives,” similar to the process followed for 2004.”

Motion:

To accept and approve the meeting notes of February 10th.

Moved by: Bob Romanuk

Seconded by: Jan Somerwil

Carried

3. Business Arising

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

- Mr. Flora would like the Signage Task Force to meet before contacting Marshall Macklin Monaghan. The RNBC agreed to wait until after the map update has been completed before commencing the Signage Task Force.
- Mr. Watson will respond by the end of the week regarding sweeping and maintenance of Regional roadways on the bicycling network. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Hunt brought another copy of the brochure produced by the City of Toronto on the proper use of bike lanes. The RNBC will speak to Eric Flora regarding what steps are to be taken next to produce a similar brochure. **(Action Item)**
- It was reported that Public Works staff were reviewing the request for signage at the Queenston Heights traffic circle. **(Action Item)**
- Chair Leavens will schedule a meeting with Patrick Gedge of the NETC to discuss promotion strategies for trails, bikeways and bicycle tourism in Niagara. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron reported that he, Bob Romanuk, Paul Pattison and Tim Whittle will be available to assist with checking the accuracy of the map when their help is needed by Frank Pravitz.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that, as directed, he had completed the application form for membership in the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals. However, there is some confusion as to what account the money should come from. Once it has been sorted out the application will be sent out. **(Action Item)**

- Mr. Flora has asked TAC to extend the submission deadline for completing the Survey on Bicycle Pavement Markings. TAC has agreed and Mr. Flora will complete the survey within the next couple of weeks. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Hunt kindly volunteered to draft a letter addressed to the Ministry of Transportation regarding the Niagara to GTA Corridor EA study. He will be asking that consideration be given to cyclists and cycling routes. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Forgeron reported on the proposed Southern Ontario Gateway Council and he suggested to Mr. Hunt that the Cycling Alliance should be represented as a resource group. Mr. Hunt said he will contact George Nicholson from the Region's Planning Department in order to get more information on the Council. Mr. Forgeron also suggested that the letter being sent to the Ministry of Transportation regarding the Niagara to GTA Corridor should also be sent to the Southern Ontario Gateway Council. **(Action Item)**

- Mr. Forgeron reported that he had sent a letter, on behalf of the RNBC, to the Accommodations Working Group regarding the inclusion of wellness and accessibility considerations – as outlined in the February meeting notes -- for the new Regional headquarters building. Mr. Leavens assured him that he will advocate at Regional Council for the RNBC's suggestion for inclusion of bicycling support facilities at the new Regional headquarters building.

4. 2005 RNBC Meeting Schedule

Regional Council recently approved a new meeting schedule of Council and Standing Committees. Under the new schedule standing committees would meet every three weeks instead of twice per month.

Ken Forgeron had some advanced discussion with Councillor Leavens, Councillor Baty and Eric Flora. Councillor Baty's preference would be to go to a six week RNBC meeting cycle, with additional meetings called where necessary. Task Forces may meet as needed.

The RNBC discussed the possible impact on its work if it were to meet every six weeks rather than monthly. As the RNBC agenda is normally very full, and Committee comments need to be timely, it would be more desirable to continue meeting every month. As the RNBC meeting dates for June, September and October conflicted with Regional Council meetings the dates were changed to the following:

- June 23
- August meeting – cancelled
- September 15

- October 6

Julie Bittner will prepare a revised meeting schedule for the April 14th meeting. **(Action Item)**

5. RNBC Membership Request

Councillor Leavens indicated that Mr. Bill Dickson would like to serve on the RNBC. The RNBC was in agreement with this suggestion. Mr. Forgeron will contact Mr. Dickson. **(Action Item)**

Motion:

To accept the nomination of Mr. Dickson as a new member of the RNBC.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

6. Progress on New Bicycle Map

Mr. Forgeron reported, on Frank Pravitz's behalf, that discussions have taken place amongst John Docker -- GIS/graphics person hired to work on the map -- and Public Works, Planning and NETC staff in regards to the changes that need to be made. Currently, additional information is being assembled and funneled through Frank Pravitz to give to Mr. Docker. There are approximately 150 changes to be made to the map.

Mr. Forgeron asked Councillor Leavens to discuss the issue of mapping and promotion with Patrick Gedge of NETC. 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 the new maps by the Niagara Parks Commission. **(Action Items)**

Due to the lack of space, urban inset maps probably can only be accommodated in the following areas:

- St. Catharines/urban section Thorold
- Pelham/Welland
- Niagara Falls.

More discussion will occur on this issue as the project develops.

Official off-road trail locations have been requested from all the municipalities for inclusion on the map. Ms. Landry reported that she had sent an e-mail to all the municipalities defining what criteria needs to be met before information will be included on the map. So far, only Pelham has responded. Mr. Pattison expressed surprise that she had not received a response from the City of St. Catharines and suggested re-sending the e-mail to the attention of Mr. Stuart Green. Ms. Landry agreed to Mr. Pattison's suggestion. **(Action Item)**

7. Millennium Trail: RNBC Response & April 27th Public Meeting

Mr. Pattison reported that he had drafted a letter of support (attached) for the Millennium Trail, in particular, Phase II of the project, on the RNBC's behalf. He requested the Committee's approval of the letter in order to forward it to Mayor Ted Salci and members of Niagara Falls Council.

Ms. Landry said that Healthy Living Niagara was also looking into sending a letter of support for the Trail and that Mr. Bob Bolibruck is attempting to obtain Dr. Robin Williams as a speaker for the April 27th public meeting.

Mr. Hunt suggested enclosing with the letter the Benefits of Cycling document which the RNBC composed and sent to the Regional Chair and the Mayors last year. It was agreed to send Mr. Pattison's letter to the City of Niagara Falls along with the Benefits of Cycling document. Also, the RNBC will send another letter of support after their April 14th meeting. Mr. Hunt agreed to draft the second letter. **(Action Items)**

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: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

8. Ontario Trails Council Conference (April 29 – May 1)

Mr. Forgeron reported that the conference would be held this year in Haliburton and some of the topics to be discussed include:

- Trail building
- Planning policies
- Sharing the Trail
- Trail Etiquette
- Steps to developing a multi-use system

The complete agenda can be found at: www.ontariotrails.on.ca/conference

9. Highlights from the Toronto International Bicycle Show

Mr. Forgeron thought that while the overall attendance numbers were down slightly, we still had a lot of people stop by the booth. The booth location is excellent and will be booked for next year. A lot of people are interested in going on tours. There continues to be significant interest in rides that take place in Niagara, wineries, B&Bs and natural areas.

It was suggested that event organizers (eg. Pedal 100, Squeezer, etc.) should be contacted in January of 2006 to see if they are interested in providing printed material to be distributed at the Bicycle Show.

Mr. Hunt commented that the RNBC display seemed “light” from the point of the table to the top of the display in terms of visual attraction. He suggested the addition of a large banner saying “Regional Niagara” to help improve the display.

Finally, between \$500 - \$600 was raised in donations for the Niagara Bicycle Map which continues to be extremely popular.

10. Final Draft Terms of Reference for RNBC 2005-2007

Mr. Hunt reported that he had incorporated the suggested changes from the February meeting and sent out a revised draft Terms of Reference to RNBC members via e-mail on March 1st.

The changes include:

3.3.1 Long-term Goals

The following additional long-term goal was added in order to broaden the RNBC’s scope in order to show that we can become involved with other agencies’ projects and not just the Region’s.

“(m) To provide input and advice on cycling matters for any project or activity, public or private that may have implications on the Regional Bikeways Master Plan and cycling in Niagara.”

3.3.2 Short Term Goals

Additional wording was added in order to broaden the short term goals to indicate that the RNBC would assist with provincial, municipal and other agencies bicycling projects and initiatives.

3.4 Membership

Changes were made to reflect that the total RNBC membership would be determined by the responses received to the invitations sent to various elected representatives, special interest groups, public-at-large, local municipal appointees, etc. The total number of invitations which could be sent is 37.

3.4.2 Non Voting Member Positions

Niagara Economic and Tourism Corporation is not a Regional department and should be listed under the heading of Other Agencies and Government.

3.7.1 Schedule

Wording will be changed to indicate that the RNBC meetings will be held, “... once per month, generally, on the second Thursday of each month.”

3.7.2 Quorum

The RNBC decided that a quorum will be determined by the Chair at the beginning of each meeting. As well, approval of each motion will be 50% + 1 of the voting members present.

3.7.4 Chair

Wording will be added indicating that in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, a voting member would be asked to chair the meeting.

3.14 Conflict of Interest

In terms of "Conflicts of Interest" the wording "either actual or perceived" will be added to the paragraph.

Motion:

To forward the revised Terms of Reference to the Public Works and Utilities Committee for approval.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

11. City of St. Catharines Merritt St. Bridge EA

Mr. Pattison attended the March 1st PIC and provided the following report. The designs displayed at the PIC did not show any bike lanes either on the bridge or on the approaches to the bridge. Mr. Pattison requested the RNBC's approval on a draft letter he had written to the City of St. Catharines commenting on the EA. The letter requests side clearance space on the bridge be a minimum of 1.5m and that this clearance extend beyond the limits of the bridge to include the total length of the roadway to be reconstructed. He also requested that this entire clearance be designated as a bike lane.

The letter also suggests that the "bump outs" should be reduced at the transition points where the roadway changes from the existing roadway to the newly constructed area so cyclists are not immediately forced out into traffic.

Motion: To approve the letter prepared by Mr. Pattison on the Merritt St. Bridge EA for submission.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Jan Somerwil

Carried

12. Task Force Reports

Bike-to-Work Week

Ms. Landry reported that the T-shirts for Bike-to-Work Week are on order. Healthy Living Niagara has agreed to purchase the T-shirts and Heart Niagara will sell them. Healthy Living Niagara is also giving us 20 free T-shirts with 15 of the 20 going to the first 15 team captains registered. The remainder will be given to the celebrity speakers at the April 1st launch.

Ms. Landry invited all RNBC members to attend the April 1st launch. A request has been sent to both Regional Chair Peter Partington and RNBC Chair Ron Leavens asking them to say a few words at the launch. Celebrity guests will include Gord Singleton (former Canadian cycling champion) and Jenny Brown (two-time winner of the Lake-to-Lake Classic and a Women's Sunflower Team leader). The cost of the refreshments will be underwritten by the Public Health Department.

All team captains will be invited to the launch and will receive their Team Captains Kit. Education sessions are scheduled for the team captains. Also, Bike-to-Work Week T-shirts will be sold and the prizes will be displayed. A media release will be sent out before the launch and Ms. Landry will be participating in interviews on the Bike-to-Work Week on both COGECO and on local radio.

Ms. Landry requested a motion to approve funding for printing the 2005 Bicycle Friendly Award pamphlets.

Motion: To approve the funding for printing the 2005 Bicycle Friendly Award pamphlets.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

Ms. Landry told the RNBC that Bike Month flyers would need to be printed also. However, as the Bike Month information will be posted on the RNBC website, not as many flyers will be needed as in previous years. She indicated that she would like to have the flyers printed before the April 1st Bike-to-Work Week launch in order to include them in the team captain's kit.

Motion: To approve the funding for printing 1,000 Bike Month flyers.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

It was suggested by several RNBC members that some additional events should be included on the Bike Month flyer and the Bike-to-Work Week brochure. One event relates to the International Trails Day event scheduled for June 4 in Buffalo and Fort Erie. Other events include the June 5 – 11 Commuter Challenge and Environment Week events.

Enforcement

Tim Whittle indicated that he is still looking for volunteers from the RNBC and Freewheelers to work with children on bicycling skills for the Bicycle Rodeo to be held on May 1st in the City of Niagara Falls.

Mr. Whittle is continuing to advocate for a bicycle safety enforcement campaign for April or May. This safety blitz is a response to concerns raised by Bill Dickson at previous RNBC meetings.

Mr. Whittle advised the RNBC that the Trails Etiquette brochure needs to be updated in 2005. Perhaps the Education and the Enforcement Task Force could undertake this project.

Mr. Whittle also indicated that the Lighten Up Eh! brochure needs to be reprinted. Funding will be requested from the RNBC to reprint the brochure.

13. New Business

International Bridge Crossings

Mr. Pattison drafted up a proposal for consideration by the RNBC. The RNBC decided to defer discussion on this issue until the April 14th meeting.

Regional Website

Mr. Romanuk indicated that the RNBC website renewal is now due for payment. Our yearly rate is \$177.89.

Motion: To renew the RNBC website at a cost of \$177.89.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

International Trails Day

Mr. Hunt, Mr. Pattison and Mr. Whittle provided additional details on International Trails Day, which is scheduled for June 4th. This is a international event focusing on the Buffalo and Fort Erie areas. Events will be held in Mather Park where displays will be available, speeches will be made and local bicycle rides will begin. Mr. Hunt indicated that two or three local rides will be established for people participating in the event. One of the issues to be emphasized is cycling access over international bridge crossings. There is some question as to whether or not the Town of Fort Erie will be participating in the event. Apparently, the cities of Port Colborne and Niagara Falls are participating. Regional Niagara representatives also have been participating. One of the major issues still to be discussed involves liability insurance requirements for the event.

14. Items for Distribution

- Flyer in conjunction with the Great Lake-to-Lake Classic. This is a citizens race from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario

- A discussion paper on mandatory helmet legislation (Revision 2 February 14th, 2005).
- An e-mail from Eric Flora providing further information about the QEW Widening Project.
- Memo to Sam Sidawi of the Public Works Department re: Wellness and Accessibility Considerations: Accommodations Working Group.
- A PIC notice regarding the April 27th, 2005 Millennium Trail meeting. This PIC will be held at the Niagara Falls Optimist Club (4751 Dorchester Rd., Niagara Falls)
- A Toronto Star article on Cycle Ontario Alliance activities, Ontario Bicycling Route, Ontario Cycling News "How to Protect Yourself After a Crash, etc."

Next Meeting:

The next RNBC meeting will take place on Thursday, April 14 at 7:00 p.m. in Committee Room #4 at Regional Headquarters.

MOTION:

To adjourn the March 10, 2005 RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner

Reviewed by:
Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner