

**REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES**



**Meeting of Thursday, May 13, 2004
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.**

Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large & Velo Ontario
Gregg Dame	- City of Port Colborne Trails & Bikeways Committee
Brenda Sidlar	- Public at Large
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Marian Landry - Regional Niagara Public Health

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

Mr. Forgeron asked to show a video of television program Marketplace which was sent to him by Marshall Macklin Monaghan regarding trails and bikeways safety.

A request to speak about the EA for the Decew Falls Water Treatment Plant Raw Water Supply was made by Mr. Pattison. This item would be discussed under Comments and Updates (#8).

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

2. Review of Meeting Notes of April 13, 2004

Motion:

To adopt the RNBC Meeting Notes of April 13, 2004 with one revisions as follows:

Eric Flora requested that the words “are doing” and “right now” be deleted in the 2nd line of item 6 on page 6 to read “will be undertaking.”

Moved by: Brian Baty

Seconded by: Paul Pattison

Carried

3. Business Arising

The Committee was provided updates on a number of “Action Items” which arose out of the April meeting notes.

- Mr. Flora reported that he would be meeting with the Executive Director of the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) in the upcoming week and the Executive Director indicated that he would provide an update on the Committee’s recent projects at that time. Mr. Flora also advised that a list of the GBNRTC’s activities can be accessed through their website (www.gbnrtc.org).
- Mr. Flora reported on Regional Road 20 in Fonhill. He said that Regional policy is to provide a paved shoulder with a minimum width of .5 metres. Depending on the right-of-way, the .5 metres could be increased. Mr. Flora will re-confirm this with Ralph Scholz of the Engineering Division. **(Action Item)** Councillor Leavens advised that the Regional maps appear to indicate that there are wide shoulders, but it does not say whether the shoulders are to be paved.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that he had spoken to John Rizzo, Project Manager, for the Regional Road 81 @ Fifteen Mile Creek EA project. Mr. Rizzo recommended that the RNBC should follow-up with the Operations Division of the Public Works Department regarding the need to sweep the multi-use trail as it could be a safety hazard to cyclists. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Pattison provided an update on the Thorold Tunnel and access for cyclists during the closure of the north tube. Mr. Pattison said that he had received an e-mail reporting that the shuttle service offered is functioning as a cyclist had recently utilized the service. The service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If, for example, you’re on the east side then radio contact is made and a small bus will come and pick you up to take you to the other side. Mr. Flora

credited the Ministry of Transportation for putting together the work plan for the shuttle bus service.

- Mr. Flora reported that the Regional Police Service's Safety Task Force had met with the Executive Committee and submitted a Road Safety Strategic Plan (2004-2008). A copy of the Strategic Plan will be circulated to the Education and Enforcement Task Force with a request that any comments be sent to Petar Vujic of the Public Works Department who is a representative on the Committee. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron reported that the Glenridge Avenue EA Review Sub-Committee's report on the Glenridge Avenue roundabout had been forwarded to the both the Public Works and Planning Services Committees during the past week. A motion had been made at the last RNBC meeting requesting that this be done.
- Mr. Romanuk reported that there was no new information to be reported regarding the status of the Dorchester Road EA.

At this point in the meeting Mr. Forgeron played a videotape he had received from Marshall Macklin Monaghan. The video was an episode from the show Marketplace which discussed the issue of cyclist safety using multi-use trails. Although there are minimum standards (eg. Widths) for multi-use trails, the show questioned whether the standards were reasonable when taking into consideration that walkers, inline skaters and cyclists are sharing the same trail (ie. 2-way traffic flow). A minimum of 4 metres is required to accommodate multiple users.

4. Public Works Presentations to Municipalities on BMP

Mr. Flora reported that he would be modifying Mr. Pravitz's presentation to the municipalities by adding the cost breakdown by municipality. The cost breakdown had been previously requested via Staff Direction from the Transportation Strategy Steering Committee (TSSC). Also, there was a request for individual maps of facilities to assist in coordination and budgeting. Mr. Flora said that three reports would be going forward to the TSSC. The first report would outline the final suggested network. The second report would outline the process for implementation and the third report would deal with proposed changes to the mandate and administration of the RNBC. Presently, a Bikeways Masterplan update is being prepared for the June TSSC meeting. A copy of the staff report will be available at the June RNBC meeting. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Flora explained that meetings would be arranged with Planning and Public Works Officials with the intent of obtaining their endorsement of the Bikeways Masterplan before going to each local Council to give a presentation. Ideally, he would like to bring the Bikeways Master Plan to Regional Council for approval in the Fall of 2004.

Mr. Flora requested a meeting with the Engineering Task Force to review and finalize the municipal cost breakdown and network maps. **(Action Item)**

5. Advocacy: Local Investment in Bicycle Facilities

Mr. Pravitz indicated that he had e-mailed RNBC members his draft presentation earlier in the day and asked for the Committee's comments as soon as possible. Mr. Pravitz explained that the presentation includes some generic information which would be consistent throughout all the presentations to local Councils and there would also be information included which will be very specific to each municipality.

Councillor Leavens discussed the importance of getting out to each municipality, even if the cost information is not yet ready. A number of municipalities are updating their Official Plans within which bicycle supportive policies/mapping could be included.

The purpose of the presentation is to provide Councils with an understanding of what the RNBC does (eg. goals and objectives), explains the benefits of cycling within Niagara, it introduces examples of safe cycling facilities and, finally, how the bike network impacts the community (eg. economic development).

Mr. Hunt suggested the inclusion of pictures and maps in the presentation and perhaps shortening the presentation to ten minutes. Information taken out of the presentation could still be used in handouts or as speaking notes.

Mr. Whittle asked about the Sustainable Transportation Coordinator position. He suggested that perhaps a cost sharing arrangement could be worked out with the other municipalities or with other Regional departments. Mr. Flora explained that the position was originally intended to be a permanent one, but now will be a contract position. The cost sharing suggestion for the Sustainable Transportation Coordinator could also be included in the presentation.

Mr. Flora said that the presentation and any speaker's notes should be brought back at the June for meeting the Committee's endorsement.

Motion:

To support, in principle, the draft presentation to the municipal Councils in principle.

Moved by: Brian Baty

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

6. Comments on Hartzel Rd. Neighbourhood Plan

Mr. Pravitz explained that due to time constraints he was unable to present to the RNBC for their endorsement comments on the Hartzel Rd. Neighbourhood Plan. These comments were submitted to the City of St. Catharines Council in the form of a letter signed by Mr. Pravitz on behalf of the Engineering Task Force. As well as distributing a copy of the letter, Mr. Pravitz explained that the letter requested, "... that the City of St. Catharines actively promote bicycling in the Hartzel Road Neighbourhood Secondary Plan, as well as in all other transportation components of City and community plans."

Mr. Forgeron said that a previously submitted and approved pilot project study undertaken by Marshall Macklin Monaghan recommended the provision of bike lanes on Hartzel Rd. It was his understanding that the City does intend to incorporate bike facilities in future developments within this area.

Councillor Baty suggested that the letter be sent to the Regional Public Works Committee as an attachment to the RNBC meeting notes where it can be received for information. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Pravitz said that he had written two other draft letters to the City of St. Catharines and would like the Committee's endorsement. The first letter requests, "... that the City of St. Catharines commit to the implementation of bicycle lanes on Hartzel Road planned bridge reconstruction over the CNR line." (ie. Merritt Street Bridge)

The second letter requests, "... that the City of St. Catharines commit to the implementation of bicycle lanes on City roads on bridge structures and at intersections as part of the Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) planned QEW widening project." These areas would include Lake St., Geneva St. and the service roads.

All three letters provide background information on the role of the RNBC and offers the Committee's assistance in developing any plans the City may have.

Motion:

That the letters regarding the Merritt Street Bridge and bridge crossings over the QEW be finalized and forwarded to the City of St. Catharines for their consideration.

Moved by: Brian Baty

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

7. **Brief Update on 2004 Waterfront Trail Project in Lincoln**

Mr. Forgeron reported that he had prepared a report for the April 27th Public Works Committee meeting and the April 28th Planning Services Committee meeting. Contained in the report was the approval of phase two of a three phase Regional Waterfront Trail Program. Superbuild funding was secured for 40% of the cost of the project with construction to proceed this July. The area to be constructed begins at Victoria Avenue at Prudommes and ends at the Lincoln/Grimsby boundary (ie. 12 kms of roadway).

8. **Comments and Updates on Proposed EAs for:**

Hartzel/Merritt St. Bridge

See item #6.

Lakeshore Road

A second public information centre was held and bike lanes continue to be included within the plans.

Glendale Ave.

Nothing new to report.

Dorchester Rd.

Mr. Romanuk reported that a decision on the preferred design has not yet been made and it is not known at this time when one will be.

Regional Road 81 @ Fifteen Mile Creek

See bullet #3 under Action Items.

QEW Widening

As noted above, the QEW widening project is the subject of one of Mr. Pravitz's draft letters to the City of St. Catharines.

Mr. Flora pointed out that along with Lake, Geneva and Carleton Streets, bike facilities are also being considered along Martindale Rd (Councillor Timms is particularly interested in this project as it affects the Green Ribbon Trail). Mr. Flora reported that the Martindale and Lake St. overpasses will be completely replaced and the Geneva St. overpass will be widened. He also reported that the Ministry of Transportation had received a cd copy of the Bikeways Master Plan and have been added to the RNBC meeting note distribution list.

A copy of the Queen Elizabeth Way Highway 406 to the Garden City Skyway Preliminary Design Report is available from Eric Flora should anyone wish to review it.

EA for the Decew Falls Water Treatment Supply

Mr. Pattison told the Committee that the EA had been completed for the Decew Falls Water Treatment Plant Raw Water Supply System (Options). He had reviewed the study to see if it included the raw water channel which goes from Allenburg through to the Plant and is used by both hikers and cyclists. It appears that it had not been included. Both Mr. Pattison and Mr. Forgeron said that they had spoken to John Farnworth from the Region who said that he was not aware of the pedestrian culvert under the 406. Mr. Pattison said that he had also contacted the Bruce Trail Association, City of Thorold and a group which represents Short Hills expressing concern that this access may be closed. Mr. Forgeron said that the EA recommends in parts a culvert over certain sensitive water supply areas. The public access issues were not built into the EA. The City of Thorold is interested in the entire Decew corridor and is supportive of maintaining public access.

9. Photos for New RNBC Display

Deferred until the June meeting.

10. Improvements on RR55 @ East/West Line

The Engineering Division of Public Works has confirmed that they will be adding bike lanes if possible.

11. 2004 Regional Road Reconstruction & Resurfacing Program

A list of roads which are included in the 2004 Strengthening and Resurfacing Program was distributed. A discussion was held regarding whether Regional Road 112 (Point Abino Road) from Nigh Road to Highway 3, which is included in the 2004 program, is on the Regional bikeways network. After consulting a map of the network it was determined that this section of Point Abino is not. Mr. Flora said that he would bring this to John Rizzo's attention.

Mr. Pravitz asked whether he could receive a report on what work will be done on the roads in the 2004 program. Mr. Flora said that this is just a resurfacing program and if there's already an existing shoulder where additional pavement could be included then this will be done also. However, Mr. Flora said that he would follow-up with a review of the rest of the roads on the list. **(Action Items)**

12. Start-up on Directional Signing Program - 2004

Mr. Flora requested that this item be deferred until the June meeting in order for Mr. Pravitz and himself to meet to discuss this issue. Mr. Forgeron asked if Mr. Flora had an estimate of what the cost would be to hire a consultant to work on the Signing Program. Mr. Flora said that Marshall Macklin Monaghan had approached

him on this task. However, there may not be enough money in the RNBC budget to hire a consultant.

Mr. Flora said that the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake had completed a signing study. He will have Phil Bergen follow-up with Town to obtain a copy of their study. **(Action Item)**

13. Task Force Reports

Encouragement

Ms. Landry was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment, however, earlier in the day she e-mailed a brief report which Mr. Forgeron read to the Committee.

The Bike Month flyers were distributed to all cycling related locations throughout Niagara. Bike Month displays are set-up in all the area libraries and flyers are featured at the displays as well. An interview regarding Bike Month was done for COGECO on May 4 and has aired three times. In celebration of Bike Month, Regional Councillor and RNBC Chair Ron Leavens has agreed to write a letter to the editors of the local newspaper highlighting his experiences with the RNBC to date.

Despite the rain, the Greater Niagara Circle Trek was successful. This year the City of Thorold added a new event: push the "S.S. Good Ship Thorold" up the mountain. This new event is in line with their theme "Where the ships climb the mountain". Thorold will continue to build on this unique approach to celebrating the trail.

Port Colborne raised approximately \$6,000
Thorold raised \$1,000.00
St. Catharines \$200.00
Niagara Falls (no report)

One nomination has already been received for the 2004 Bicycle Friendly Awards.

Education and Enforcement

Mr. Whittle reminded everyone that this week (May 9-15) is Police Week. He said that anyone who rode their bike to the local mall where the RNBC is set up will receive a free bike map. The RNBC display will be set-up at the Pen Centre on May 14 and 15 and he requested volunteers to help distribute maps.

Engineering

No new information to report other than what had been discussed earlier in the meeting notes.

14. **May 15th Joint Meeting - Burlington**

Mr. Forgeron distributed copies of the May 15th agenda for the Joint Meeting of Niagara, Hamilton and Burlington Cycling Committees. He also requested a “show of hands” as to how many members of the RNBC will be attending.

15. **Items for Distribution**

- Draft list of possible activities for the RNBC Task Forces from 2003 to 2006. Mr. Forgeron asked that members review the list of activities and provide him with any suggestions or changes in order to finalize the list at the June meeting. **(Action Item)**
- E-mail from Paul Pattison describing the process a cyclist would use in order to get from one side of the Thorold Tunnel to the other while the north tunnel is under construction.
- Greater Niagara Circle Route announcement listing the date, location and a summary of what is occurring at each location.
- E-mail address for the Peace Bridge Project. Mr. Flora reported that a recommendation on the design has been made, however, a decision has not been made as to whether the existing bridge will be removed.
- E-mail sent to Ken Forgeron regarding the issue of accommodating bicycles onto public transit. The e-mail described a scenario whereby a visiting cyclist from another country, found that travel by either train or by bus was difficult due to the lack of bicycling friendly facilities on public transit. Mr. Forgeron suggested that perhaps this issue could be brought up at VELO Ontario. Mr. Hunt responded that one of VELO’s members has been pursuing this issue with VIA Rail. Mr. Flora said that St. Catharines Transit has a new general manager and now may be a good time to raise this issue. He offered to forward the e-mail on to the general manager. **(Action Item)**
- Announcement of the May 30 Heart and Stroke Pedal 100 Ride.

16. **Possible Agenda Items for June RNBC Meeting**

- Update on Book 7
- Bikeway Master Plan Presentations to municipalities

Motion:

To adjourn the Regional Niagara Bicycling Committee meeting.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

17. Next Meeting – Thursday, June 10, 2004

Meeting location (including summer social) to be determined.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner

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