

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, November 14, 2002
Committee Room 4, Regional Headquarters
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Brian McMullan	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large
Wray Benner	- Public at Large
David Hunt	- Public at Large
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Hank Bauer	- Public at Large
Jan Somerwil	- Public at Large
Bill Crux	- Public at Large
Dave Arnott	- Public at Large
Frank Pravitz	- Ministry of Transportation
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health Service
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Doug Pease	- Regional Niagara Planning (co-op student)
Bob Johnson (Transportation)	- Regional Niagara Public Works
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

1. Adoption of Agenda

With the addition of a few agenda items discussed later in these meeting notes, the agenda was adopted, as revised.

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Dave Arnott

Carried

2. Review of Meeting Notes of October 10, 2002

Ken Forgeron had a question regarding page 4 of the last meeting notes. On that page there was a list of priorities that were to be forwarded to Marshall Macklin Monaghan, Regional Niagara's consultant on the Bikeways Study, as well as to the Smart Growth Steering Committee. As Ken was not at the last meeting, he was wondering what the discussion was that led to the Action Item listed.

It was explained that a list of utilitarian cycling ideas were prioritized and the committee accepted them.

Dave offered to provide Ken with a copy of the prioritization and Ken said he would make sure that it goes on as an agenda item for the Regional Niagara Smart Growth Steering Committee.

Motion:

To accept RNBC Meeting Notes of October 10, 2002.

Moved by: Jan Somerwil

Seconded by: Bill Crux

Carried

3.E-mail from Regional Councillor Bruce Timms

Ken Forgeron distributed an e-mail forwarded to him from Regional Councillor Bruce Timms. The information originated from a member of the Niagara Falls Bikeways Committee who expressed concerns and frustrations over the lack of on-road bicycling facilities in Niagara Falls. New local and Regional road re-construction work is not incorporating dedicated bike lanes. Bob Romanuk commented that they are all feeling frustrated on the Niagara Falls committee. When they started talking to Regional Councillor Bruce Timms, it was to modify the Greater Niagara Circle route to include the Millennium Trail. However, they ran into difficulty in getting the Millennium Trail developed. It became a case of "not in my back yard."

Ken Forgeron said that Bob Bolibruck has asked the City's Engineering Department for their comments on projects involving the possible establishment of bike lanes on various roadways (eg. Dorchester Road) over the next five years. Perhaps we could get a representative from municipal works to attend the next meeting.

4.Business Arising

As there were a number of new attendees present at the meeting, introduction of Committee members was provided.

Marian Landry reported that 1,000 Bicycle Friendly Award brochures for 2003 had been printed. More will be printed as they are needed.

5.Local Bicycle Facility Implementation: Dorchester and Beaverdams Roads in Niagara Falls

Dorchester Road is currently going through an environmental assessment review from Thorold Stone Road to Lundy's Lane. There have been two public meetings; however, public turnout was low. The City's Engineering Department does not seem to be supportive of bike lanes. There will be more public meetings and a presentation to the Niagara Falls Bikeways Committee on the first Thursday in December.

Bob Johnson spoke to Jeff Holman (Niagara Falls Engineering) regarding Beaverdams Road and methods of calming the traffic from Thorold Stone Road to Lundy's Lane.

Consultant John Vandermark was brought in to look at planning and design issues such as methods of reducing speed, making it safer for kids at a nearby school and new subdivision, and cars using Beaverdams as an alternative to Thoroldstone Road. The Engineering Department believes that the narrowing of Beaverdams Road (and no bike lanes) will be a way to calm traffic. Questions on this approach were raised.

Ken Forgeron will follow up with Marshall Macklin Monaghan to see if there is any benefit of bike lanes on traffic calming. If anyone has evidence that can confirm this, it would be appreciated. **(Action Item)**

6. Status of Regional Bicycle Master Plan

Tim Whittle, Dave Hunt and Jan Somerwil had not received copies yet of the draft Master Plan. Bob Johnson responded that he would make sure that they received copies by Monday at the latest.

Ken Forgeron said that while only four hardcopies would be going out to the Task Force Chairs, the report will be posted on the Regional web site.

Bob Johnson distributed a report, which went to the Transportation Strategy Steering Committee, which summarized the components and some key conclusions found in the Regional Niagara Bikeways Master Plan Study Draft Final Report.

Frank Pravitz reported that from what he had read so far the plan seemed comprehensive. What he would be looking for in the plan is the implementation of the low cost solutions for sections of the road in terms of signage and retro fittings where the existing infrastructure is sufficient. The plan addresses expansion of the network and other issues that had been brought forward, eg. ferry crossings. We may want to look more closely at mechanisms in terms of bringing signage on the roads. It was addressed to some degree in the plan. With respect to the Mud/Fly Road area he would be interested in knowing at what point we should sign that roadway as a bike route. He did not see anything in the plan that addressed partially shouldered roads and at what point do you sign the road – at 50%, 75%? Also, the plan seemed to focus on the network. There was not much on short sections that cyclists may use frequently (eg. go on Regional road, but then get off to cross, for example, a ravine).

Bob Johnson said that a distinct “made in Niagara” sign should be developed.

Tim Whittle said that the City of Hamilton has changed their network and the link between Niagara and Hamilton is no longer at Mud Street. Regional Niagara’s network should be changed to reflect this.

Bob Johnson suggested that any comments Committee members may have on the plan should be submitted in written form through the Task Force Chairs. The Task

Force Chairs should send the comments to Eric Flora who will send all the comments to Marshall Macklin Monaghan.

Bob Ronamuk commented that the link for the Bikeways Master Plan from the Regional Niagara web page does not indicate a place for comments by the public at large.

It was agreed that the link would be modified so that comments could be made and sent to Eric Flora.

Frank Pravitz had a question on the process. He thought that there might be a meeting with the consultants and the committee chairs prior to the December 12th meeting.

Bob Johnson said that he didn't foresee a problem in setting up a meeting between the consultants and the four committee chairs.

Both Marian Landry and Frank Pravitz felt that the report did not go far enough in talking about saved health care dollars. Marian Landry volunteered to provide comments on cost savings and the health benefits associated with increased bicycling opportunities.

7.Task Force Reports

Encouragement Task Force

Marian Landry handed out a complete listing of all the 2002 winners of the Bicycle Friendly Awards and reported that at the last Regional Council meeting Regional Chair Debbie Zimmerman and Regional Councillors Brian McMullan and Rob Gabriel presented the awards. Marian thanked Ken Forgeron for his helpful advice.

Marian displayed the new plaque, which is now mounted on a wooden backing with a colour logo featuring a bicycle friendly cyclist. Marian also passed around a sample certificate and reported that a digital picture showing the group of winners with their awards was also sent to the award recipients.

A copy of the 2003 Bicycle Friendly Awards pamphlet was handed to the Committee and everyone was encouraged to start promoting the awards program for next year. Councillor McMullan reported that he received positive comments from other Regional Councillors on the awards program and that the presentation would heighten awareness of cycling in Niagara. Councillor McMullan thanked both Marian Landry and Ken Forgeron for their hard work.

Engineering Task Force

Frank Pravitz reported that the Engineering Task Force would be having a meeting soon. At the last meeting a proposal was brought forward to produce a new Regional map for cyclists.

Frank has a variety of maps that he will utilize when recommending the map format for cyclists.

Regional Councillor McMullan inquired if the Committee had a budget that could be used to develop the map. Bob Johnson said that the RNBC does have money in the budget. Perhaps we could use Regional resources for printing. Bob suggested revisiting the mapping proposal once the master plan has been completed.

Education Task Force

Tim Whittle distributed and reported on the 2002 Bicycle Collision statistics. The number of accidents is on par with other years; however, the biggest concern relates to the 45 people who have gone to the hospital with injuries. Only 27 charges were being laid. Also, the collisions resulting in injuries (45) and collisions at sidewalks/crosswalks (48) are high.

Better bicycle facility infrastructure probably would have reduced the number of collisions.

Bob Johnson expressed frustration with the fact that while the information is available, we do not have the staff resources to properly interrogate the causes of the collisions. We need to try and integrate what the police do in central records with what Public Works staff does.

The Education Task Force will meet and will discuss the draft Master Plan before the December 12th meeting.

8. Other Business

Bicycle Show

Ken Forgeron spoke to NETCorp about the upcoming bicycle show in Toronto. They have reserved space next to the booths for the cities of Hamilton and Burlington. The Committee will need to discuss what we will showcase at our booth.

Cycling Map

With the World Cycling Championships being held in Hamilton in 2003, the Committee will need to discuss the preparation of a joint cycling map with Hamilton. This map would be handed out to people coming to the area in order to try to direct them to Niagara to cycle. Bob Johnson suggested that since we're working with Hamilton, perhaps we should also approach our contacts in Buffalo in order to make a connection with them.

Web Site Domain Name

Bob Romanuk spoke about the cost to park the RNBC web site domain (RNBC.info). For 50 megs of web space and domain registration it would cost \$200, per year.

Councillor McMullan agreed to speak to Regional IT staff about the Region owning the domain name and using a Regional server to host the page. **(Action Item)**

Bike Signs at Glendale Avenue/Welland Canal Parkway in the City of Thorold

Bob Johnson spoke with Tom Doherty (Thorold Public Works Director) about the concerns of banning bicycles on Flight Locks Road. From Tom's perspective, he feels it is a safety issue as it is a narrow platform. He believes you should not have both cars and cyclists on the road. However, this is a city road and, therefore, a city issue. Councillor McMullan will bring this issue up at a future Regional Public Works meeting. **(Action Item)**

9. Information Items Distributed

Ken Forgeron distributed the following items:

- E-mailed newspaper article regarding the 2003 World Cycling Championship being held in Hamilton.
- New and innovative bicycling parking structure designs which are being used in Holland (submitted by Jan).
- E-mail regarding the economic benefits which could occur when the World Cycling Championships are held in Hamilton in 2003.
- Article on Eating Healthy and Active Living (eg. bicycling) as a Regional Council priority.
- Land Use and Transportation Planning and the role that bicycles can play in the system. This article addresses funding issues and the types of vehicles we drive these days
- Non-support of road closing proposal from Regional Planning (bicycle-related issues).
- St. Catharines Standard article advocating the need for bicycle lanes and policy development in the City of Thorold.
- Regional Newsletter article prepared by Brian Hughes on 2002 progress to provide bicycle facilities in Niagara.

10.Next RNBC Meeting

The next meeting will be held December 12 at 6:30 in the Planning Department Boardroom. The only agenda item will be – Discussion and Final Comments on the Bicycle Master Plan. Our consultants, Marshall Macklin Monaghan, will be attendance at this meeting.

Please bring something to share with others at this, our Christmas social.

Meeting Notes Taken by:

Julie Bittner

Reviewed & Revised by Ken Forgeron, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner