

REGIONAL NIAGARA BICYCLING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES



Meeting of Thursday, October 14, 2004
Committee Room #4
7:00 p.m.

Present:

Ron Leavens	- Regional Councillor (Chair)
Paul Pattison	- Public at Large
Dave Hunt	- Public at Large and Velo Ontario
Marian Landry	- Regional Niagara Public Health
Gregg Dame	- Port Colborne Trails and Bikeways Committee
Tim Whittle	- Niagara Regional Police Service
Al Gummo	- Guest from Regional Niagara Planning
Peter Davies	- Niagara Freewheelers
Bob Romanuk	- Public at Large and Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee
Ken Forgeron	- Regional Niagara Planning
Eric Flora	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)
Julie Bittner	- Regional Niagara Public Works (Transportation)

Regrets:

Brian Baty	- Regional Councillor
Brenda Sidlar	- Public at Large

The meeting commenced at 7:10 p.m.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

Motion:

To accept the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Gregg Dame

Carried

Ken Forgeron requested to speak on the following items:

- West St. Catharines Transportation Study
- Proposed November 6th joint meeting with Hamilton and Burlington Cycling Committees

Mr. Forgeron also advised that Items 4 and 5 on the agenda have been deferred until the November 9th meeting.

Mr. Forgeron also requested the opportunity to make a presentation to RNBC member Tim Whittle for completing the 740 kilometre Waterfront Trail from end-to-end.

Mr. Forgeron introduced Alan Gummo to the RNBC. Mr. Gummo is the Senior Policy Co-ordination Planner in the Planning Department and attended the meeting to get an idea of what projects the RNBC is working on.

Mr. Hunt requested to speak on the following:

- Recent Velo Ontario activities
- Ontario Trails Council Cross Border Initiatives

Mr. Pattison requested to speak on the following:

- Pearson Park and the lack of parking
- *Line Fences Act* article which was distributed at the September meeting.

2. Review of Meeting Notes of September 9, 2004

Motion:

To adopt the RNBC Meeting Notes of September 9, 2004.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Dave Hunt

Carried

3. Business Arising

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

- It was reported that, although the memo to the Public Works Operations Division regarding the sweeping and maintaining of roadways on the Regional Bikeways Network has not yet been completed, it will be completed as soon as possible in order for the recommendations contained within the memo to be implemented next spring. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora reported that discussion on a QEW Widening through St. Catharines Municipal Liaison meeting with the MTO would be held on October 15th and cycling related highlights would be circulated to the RNBC. **(Action Item)**. Mr. Flora reported that the MTO has agreed to fund the bikeway improvements on Lake St. (local authority) and Martindale Rd (Regional road). He also reported that the MTO is looking at redesigning the Geneva St. structure. Mr. Flora also said that currently the MTO is not looking favourably at having a pedestrian bridge crossing over the QEW near Geneva St. Any costs for a pedestrian bridge would need to be paid by the Region and/or City of St. Catharines. It was also reported that the next Public Information Centre (PIC) would be for the High Mast Lightening addendum (to the Transportation Environmental Study Report) only. Mr. Pattison previously raised the issue of a pedestrian crossing over the QEW that would connect the Terry Fox Trail on the south side of the QEW to the commercial area on the north side.

- Mr. Forgeron reported that a booth was set-up at the Grape and Wine Squeezer and was staffed by Paul Pattison and Frank Pravitz. Money collected was minimal and Mr. Pattison said that the people who did buy maps were waiting for participants to finish the race. Once the participants were finished, they were not interested in purchasing a map. As well, race participants did not carry money on them. It was suggested that in the future, if copies are available, it would be best to have the maps inserted in the packages given to participants when they are registered.
- See Item #6 of this month's agenda.
- Mr. Pattison provided an update regarding his concerns about the triggering and timing of the traffic lights at Martindale Road and Elderwood. There is not much traffic on Elderwood and the majority of the traffic that does travel on that road turns right and does not trip the light into changing. In order for a cyclist to change the light, he needs to press the push button, which is situated on the corner of the opposite side of the roadway. Mr. Pattison spoke to Nick Rosati of the Region's Public Works Department regarding this issue. Mr. Rosati said that the push button being situated on the opposite corner was not a design oversight, but actually a safety consideration due to the large volume of traffic which makes the right turn. Mr. Whittle asked if there was technology available to accommodate these types of situations. Camera's used previously at DeCew Road/Merrittville Hwy. seemed to work well. Mr. Hunt recalled a recent TAC study on this type of situation and offered to send it to Mr. Flora. Mr. Flora said that he would speak to Joe Cousins, Director of Transportation Services, about how the RNBC currently provides input in the area of traffic signal rehabilitation. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Flora provided an update on the Glendale Avenue EA. He reported that the Environmental Study Report (ESR) will be filed with the Regional Clerk on October 18th. A Notice of Completion will be advertised in local newspapers in October. A staff report has been approved by Council. The report stated that the preferred design solutions include the following improvements:
 - Mountain St. to Merritt St. – realign and reconstruct a five lane urban cross-section with bicycle lanes. Installation of traffic signals at Mountain St. and Glendale Ave. Installation of traffic signals at Merritt St. and Glendale Ave.
 - Merritt St. to CN Railway – Reconstruction of the existing two lane urban cross-section with the addition of bicycle lanes.
 - Bessie St. – Alteration of the intersection to a two-way stop from the existing four-way stop.
 - CN Railway to Welland Canals Parkway – Reconstruct to a three lane (shared centre turning lane) urban cross-section with bicycle lanes.
 - Welland Canals Parkway and Glendale Ave. – intersection to be realigned.
 - CN Railway – grade separation (when traffic warrants are met)

- A question was raised at the September meeting by Jan Somerwil regarding the lack of cycling facilities on Glendale Ave. in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Mr. Flora reported that he had contacted the Regional Project Manager who said that the project did go through the EA process and the RNBC provided comments.
- In regards to the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge projects, Mr. Flora reported that he had spoken to both the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission Field and Operations Manager and the consultant Project Manager. There are actually two projects taking place. One project is the bridge's fifth lane project and the second project is the plaza re-design. The tendering for the fifth lane project closes next week and the construction is slated to start next March and end in December 2005. During that period there will be two lanes, one in each direction. The Bridge Commission has made provisions with the toll captains at each side of the border to take cyclists across the bridge 24/7 in a shuttle van service.

The portal design – section from the Parkway to the actual bridge - is currently in the conceptual design stage with the actual design to be started soon. Mr. Flora reported that he had made a request to the consultant to allow the RNBC to provide comments on how to accommodate cyclists.

Paul Pattison expressed his concerns about the ability of cyclists to access the bridge from the Parkway during the construction process. Mr. Pattison will contact the consultant to discuss this issue further. **(Action Item)**

- Mr. Flora reported that a final draft of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Master Plan has been developed and a Technical Steering Committee meeting will be held on October 15th. From a cycling perspective, information was taken from the Regional Master Plan and additional trail and parking strategies have been added as well. The cycling routes in the NOTL Master Plan will dovetail with Regional Niagara's Master Plan.
- Mr. Flora reported that further discussions with the GBNRTC on the topic of a joint cycling map with Niagara has been deferred until the new year.
- Road Safety Committee – Mr. Flora said that a representative from the RNBC would be asked to sit on any sub-committee which may be formed. An update will be provided at the next meeting. **(Action Item)**
- Mr. Forgeron presented a certificate of recognition to RNBC member Tim Whittle for completing the 740 kilometre Waterfront Trail from end-to-end.
- Mr. Forgeron provided an update on the Dunnville Spur Line. He also distributed copies of a report in which the Planning Department recommended that the Region provide funding for a trail through part of Wainfleet. The report had recommended that no further action on the purchase and development of the abandoned Dunnville

Spur Line be taken and the Township of West Lincoln did not want to pursue its purchase or development. Port Davidson Road is a good alternative route. However, Mr. Forgeron reported that Regional Council was supportive of providing funding for the Friendship Trail in Wainfleet, but did not support Planning's recommendation to take no further action on the Dunnville Spur Line.

- Mr. Flora reported that the Notice of Study Commencement for the West St. Catharines Transportation Study had been advertised in local area newspapers. He announced that stakeholder meetings would take place within the next couple of weeks and a Public Information Centre would be held in November. Perhaps First St. Louth should have bike lanes if a new hospital is built at Fourth Avenue.
- Mr. Forgeron reported that a joint meeting with the cities of Burlington and Hamilton would be held on November 6th. He asked if anyone had any agenda items for the meeting. The following agenda items were suggested:
 - Signage – is there some common signage for bicycles lanes and routes
 - Traffic signals – how the issue of bicycles not being able to trigger some traffic lights is dealt with in other areas.
 - Waterfront Trail program – what has been happening in Burlington, Hamilton and Niagara
 - Ontario Trails Council – Cross Border Initiatives

If anyone has anything further to add to the agenda please e-mail Ken Forgeron.

4. Presentation: Bicycle Safety Issues

Mr. Forgeron reported that Mr. Dickson was unable to attend and this agenda item was deferred until the November 9th meeting.

5. Presentation

Niagara Falls Bikeways Master Plan

On the evening of November 25th, a stakeholder meeting will be held. Paul Pattison volunteered to attend the meeting on behalf of the RNBC. Mr. Forgeron noted that the Terms of Reference requested representatives from the Region's Public Works Dept., Planning Dept. and the RNBC. Mr. Flora and Mr. Forgeron indicated that they would attend. Bob Bolibruck from the Niagara Falls Trails and Bikeways Committee will be invited to attend the November 9th RNBC to discuss the Master Plan.

Activities of the Niagara Falls Trails and Bikeways Committee

Deferred to November 9th.

6. Winter Co-op Student Projects

Mr. Forgeron initiated a discussion on the possibility of hiring a co-op student for the winter term. The three main projects for the student would be: preparation of a revised bike map, preparation of the new RNBC display and the directional signage program for cycling. It was reported that there was just under \$8,000 in the RNBC account which could be used towards hiring a student. There was some concern in regards to whether some of the money in the budget would be needed to print additional existing bike maps for the Toronto International Bike Show and other events until the new map can be printed. Upon discussion the RNBC decided that additional copies of the bike map should not be printed. The remaining 1600 maps will be distributed at various events until the supply is depleted.

Mr. Flora reported that \$5,000 was budgeted in the 2003 Transportation Studies capital account. Subject to the monies still being available, Mr. Flora suggested obtaining the services of Marshall Macklin Monaghan and have them provide us with some preliminary information on a directional signage program. Mr. Flora will follow-up with Marshall Macklin Monaghan regarding their work program and provide the RNBC with more information at the November meeting. **(Action Item)**

Mr. Flora questioned whether the RNBC needed the Public Works Committee's approval if the money for the student already is in the budget. Councillor Leavens suggested that it may be a case of simply informing the Public Works Committee of our intent to hire a student.

Motion:

That a memo be prepared for the Public Works Committee advising Council on the RNBC's intention of hiring a co-op student for the winter term, to be funded from the approved 2004 Bicycling Activities account.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

7. Ribbon Cutting: Regional Waterfront Trail Projects

Mr. Forgeron encouraged all RNBC members to attend the Regional Waterfront Trail Projects Ribbon Cutting Ceremony which is to be held on October 30th. Mr. Forgeron reported that he had spoken to the Freewheelers organization about having a ride with cyclists starting in both Lincoln and Port Dalhousie and converging on the ceremony in Jordan. He also indicated that representatives from all levels of government will be in attendance, as well as Ron Matsushita, President of the Freewheelers.

8. Highlights on the Pro-Walk/Pro-Bike Conference

Ms. Landry reported that she had the opportunity to attend a workshop on How to Have a Successful Bike-to-Work Week while attending the conference in Victoria, British Columbia. As the Public Health Dept. already has contacts in place with the Workplace

Wellness Program in Niagara, there is an opportunity to have a Bike-to-Work Week here in Niagara. Ms. Landry reported that City of Victoria has a budget of \$60,000 and a full-time staff person specifically designated to work on the Bike-to-Work Week program. Also, Saskatoon has an \$80,000 yearly budget and 1.3 staff persons designated to work on their Bike-to-Work Week. Ms. Landry suggested borrowing some of the ideas presented and applying them to the Region.

It was discovered that some of the most common barriers to people becoming physically active are:

- Time
- Cost
- Safety

However, the biggest barrier to not cycling was the perception that it was not a safe activity. To overcome this perception, in the months preceding Bike-to-Work Week, Victoria puts on free Can-Bike courses through various workplaces. In Saskatoon one of the reasons why people did not want to bike to work was due to "helmet hair," so a course was offered on how to address this concern.

Another way to encourage people to cycle to work was to offer incentives, for example, "Bike for Bagels". During Bike-to-Work Week some workplaces offered everyone who biked to work during this week a free coffee and bagel.

Ms. Landry said that she had given some thought to the safety issues and had held a meeting with staff from Injury Prevention and they are now looking at their mandatory guidelines to see if some hours can be assigned to Bike to Work Week. She will also be speaking with a Can-Bike instructor.

Mr. Romanuk, who also attended the conference, made an excellent PowerPoint presentation on highlights from the conference. His presentation is attached to the meeting notes.

9. Post Analysis of Bike Month in Niagara

After having attended the ProWalk/ProBike Conference, Ms. Landry questioned the effectiveness of having a Bike Month flyer as the information is available off the RNBC website.

As the RNBC Terms of Reference indicate, the RNBC cannot organize events, but Ms. Landry said that we should continue to post information on cycling events that are organized by others on our website. The RNBC should continue to promote Bike Month and look at organizing a Bike-to-Work Week. We should also continue to develop resources to help others organize events in order to make the community more cycling friendly. Mr. Forgeron suggested that the following people may be interested in helping

to plan out Bike-to-Work Week: Brenda Sidlar, Brenda Tanfara and Virginia Hatch Stewart.

10. Coordination and Participation at Annual Bicycle Events

Mr. Forgeron asked the RNBC to re-consider how many events it wishes to attend as we do not want to spread ourselves out too thin. It was suggested that perhaps a booth could be set-up at one of the fall county fairs. This type of venue would reach a large number of people. As suggested by Councillor Leavens, we may need to participate only in a few events, but those public outreach events that we do participate in should be done well.

11. Progress on Obtaining Bicycling Related Photos

Mr. Forgeron reported that photos are continuing to be gathered from various sources. Unfortunately, the photos received do not represent all areas of the Region. Mr. Forgeron requested that a call be put out to the Freewheelers asking for photos. The photos need to be identified, permission needs to be received to use the photo and photos are needed for all areas of the Region.

12. Task Force Reports

Encouragement

Healthy Living Niagara and the Go for Green pilot project on Active Transportation will focus on educating communities on active transportation. The goal is to create an environment that supports walking and cycling. Presentations were given to Pelham, Niagara Falls and Thorold and all three communities agreed to participate in the pilot project. A public forum will be held in each community to educate the stakeholders followed by two days of workshops. A public forum will be held on November 15th in Thorold, November 17th in Niagara Falls and December 1st in Pelham. Workshops will take place the following two days after each public forum. All RNBC members are encouraged to participate if possible **(Action Item)**

Bicycle Friendly Awards

The winners of the 2004 Bicycle Friendly Awards are:

Government Institutions:

Gold – Niagara Falls Trails & Bikeways Committee

Silver – Ministry of Transportation, St. Catharines

Bronze – Welland Canals Parkway Committee – Thorold Task Group

Workplaces:

Gold – Canadian Tire Financial

Silver – Region of Niagara

Education:

Gold – St. Christopher Catholic School, St. Catharines

Silver – Niagara College

Bronze (tie) - Woodland Public School and Brock University, St. Catharines

Small Business:

Gold – Liberty! Bicycles

Motion:

To accept 2004 Bicycle Friendly Award winning nominees as presented.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

The awards will be presented at the November 18th Regional Council meeting. A small reception will be held in Committee Room #3. Ms. Landry requested a motion for the authorization of funds in order to have refreshments available at the reception.

Motion:

To authorize the purchase of refreshments up to \$50.00 for the reception to be held after the Bicycle Friendly Awards are presented on November 18th at Regional Council

Moved by: Dave Hunt

Seconded by: Bob Romanuk

Carried

Bicycle Friendly Display

The Bicycle Friendly Display is available for use through the Public Health Department. The display would most likely be used at health fairs or anywhere where you want to promote physical activity.

Enforcement

Mr. Whittle reported that there are approximately seven community policing organizations and a proposal was made to have them start promoting and organizing events such as the bike rodeos.

Mr. Whittle said that although he has not “crunched” all the numbers it appears that the bicycle collision statistics for 2004 will be higher than in 2003. However, so far in 2004 there have been no bicycle fatalities. Mr. Whittle will provide another update in December. **(Action Item)**

Policy

Mr. Hunt reported that the Policy Task Force would work on a redraft on the RNBC Terms of Reference. Once completed, the redrafted Terms of Reference will be brought back to the RNBC for consideration. Mr. Flora said that over the short term, the RNBC membership makeup should not reflect the recommendations outlined in the Bicycling Master Plan.

Discussion on the Terms of Reference was deferred until January 2005. However, Dave Hunt will distribute copies of his draft for review. **(Action Item)**

13. Velo Ontario

Dave Hunt reported that Velo Ontario held a general meeting on September 25/26. Also, new maps are available showing the Ontario Bicycle Route Network. Finally, Velo Ontario provided comments to the Province on Provincial Planning initiatives and emphasized the importance of cycling and walking.

14. Cross Border Trail Meeting

In early October both Mr. Hunt and Mr. Pravitz made presentations in Rochester on the work of the RNBC and Velo Ontario. There is an initiative underway to create a cross border trails committee to discuss issues and opportunities for trail development. Cross border bridge access is one common issue to address. On November 20-21 another meeting will be held in Ontario sponsored by the Ontario Trails Council. It may be a good opportunity for bicycle tourism promotion.

15. Line Fences Act

This item was deferred to November 9th.

16. Pearson Park

Paul Pattison expressed his concern about possible angle street parking at Pearson Park (Carleton St. in St. Catharines) impacting on bicycling along the roadway. The City does not want to use parkland for car parking. Mr. Flora agreed to discuss the issue with Kris Jacobson at the City to discuss possible alternatives. **(Action Item)**

17. Items for Distribution

- Invitation to the ribbon cutting ceremony for the completion of ten major projects on Niagara's section of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail. The ceremony commences at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 30.
- July 14th Planning Report re: Review of Trails Related Funding Possibilities In Wainfleet and West Lincoln

- E-mail from Nick Rosati, Public Works Department to Paul Pattison re: Pedestrian & Cyclists Being Able to Access Signal Activator at Martindale @ Elderwood
- Yes Magazine Fall 2004 Issue article titled, "Getting There On Less", re: redesigning the transport system so we can travel without burning more oil
- USA Today article titled: "Studies tie urban sprawl to health risks, road danger"
- Toronto Star, October 12th article titled: "Look Who's Walking".
- Toronto Star, October 12th article titled, "Hip cycle of work." Article discusses the advantages of cycling to work.
- Toronto Star, September 16th article titled, "Following new paths". Discusses a cyclists three day trek on the Greater Niagara Circle Route.
- The Standard, September 23rd article titled, "Region sees tourism potential in old canals
- The New York Times, August 1st article on mountain biking

MOTION:

To adjourn the October 14th RNBC meeting.

Moved by: Paul Pattison

Seconded by: Peter Davies

Carried

The next scheduled meeting will be **Tuesday, November 9th** at 7:00 p.m. in the Regional Niagara Headquarters building.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Meeting Notes Taken by:
Julie Bittner

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