



County
of Huron

Accessibility Advisory Committee



Minutes - October 18, 2006

GODERICH, ONTARIO

Goderich, Ontario
October 18, 2006

The HURON COUNTY ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE met in the Council Chambers, Court House, Goderich at 9:30 a.m. with all members present D. Wilson, C. Hoffman, and Larry C. Adams.

1. Minutes

Moved by B. Fisher

Seconded by J. Austin

That the minutes of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of August 11, 2006 be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

Citizen Concerns

Member B. Fisher addressed the following citizen concerns and requested the committee's direction.

CURB SITUATION CLINTON

Recently, there has been ongoing construction in the Town of Clinton, and some citizens have expressed their concerns with the fact that the construction isn't fully completed. The main concern is that there is only one layer of asphalt laid on the street where the street meets the curb cut. This has caused problems for people with mobility issues, specifically with walkers and wheelchairs when attempting to either access the street from the sidewalk or vice versa. A simple solution for this would be to either complete the construction on the road or put a temporary layer of asphalt down at the curb that would allow for a smooth transition.

Moved by R. Armstrong

Seconded by B. Fisher

That a letter be sent to the Municipality of Central Huron requesting a temporary layer of asphalt be applied or the project be completed before winter.

CARRIED

FIVE POINTS TRAFFIC LIGHTS

The Five Points intersection is a difficult intersection for blind people to cross at, and it was asked that a "Bird Call" be installed into the traffic lights for people who are trying to cross at this complicated intersection.

Moved by J. Austin

Seconded by S. Thompson

That a letter be sent to the Ministry of Transportation and the Town of Goderich, expressing the committee's concern and requesting that a "Bird Call" be installed at the five point intersection.

CARRIED

SEAFORTH CURBS

Currently, in Seaforth, there are areas of the town where there is no curb between the sidewalk and the street, and in such places cars have been parked on the sidewalk themselves. It has been brought to the attention of the Municipal Office that this is causing a problem for blind people who use these sidewalks because of the fact that they are running into the cars. The Town of Seaforth suggested that Mr. Fisher copy down the model and license plate of the car so that the situation could be investigated. Mr. Fisher noted that it was blind citizens who were having these difficulties and that another course of action should be taken.

Moved by B. Fisher

Seconded by G. McLachlan

That a letter be sent to the Municipality of Huron East and the Seaforth Police Board to inform them of this situation and request that cars parked on the sidewalk be ticketed.

CARRIED

The Accessibility Advisory Assistant addressed the following citizen concerns.

MEDICAL CENTRE IN CLINTON

The ramp into the medical centre in Clinton is problematic as the ramp itself is not level with the ground. This has caused problems for people in wheelchairs and is a potential danger.

Moved by L. Falconer

Seconded by G. McLachlan

That a letter be sent to the Municipality of Central Huron, Reeve, B. Dykstra, and the Medical Centre requesting the curb be level with the ground; and further that a copy be sent to Mrs. Forrest.

CARRIED

POINT FARMS PROVINCIAL PARKS

The handicap shower facilities at the Park have been out of service for some time now.

The committee suggested that Ms. Cowan contact Carol Mitchell, M.P.P., asking if there is anything she can do about this situation as the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has been contacted and believes it is a problem for Parks Ontario and not the MNR.

Moved by B. Fisher

Seconded by R. Armstrong

That a letter be sent to Carol Mitchell, M.P.P., requesting that she investigate the shower accessibility issue at Point Farms Provincial Park for a remedy in a timely fashion.

CARRIED

Member G. McLachlan began a discussion on the facilities at the new harbour front in Goderich. There is a problem of garbage containers being moved, blocking entry and causing difficulties for those with handicaps. He requested that this be investigated and suggested that the garbage containers be fastened so that they cannot be removed.

Member L. Rotteau felt that this was a simple fix and announced that she would request this be done.

2. Introduction of New Member

The Chair introduced Jeff Layton, Building Official for the Municipality of Morris-Turnberry. It was announced that Heather Williamson and Robyn Hicks will be joining the advisory committee as well. Mr. Gandon informed the committee that he will be stepping down in the New Year so the committee will be requiring another new member. A chair will be appointed at the first meeting in 2007.

3. Disability Awareness Exercise

On Friday, September 15th 2006 the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee hosted a public awareness exercise to demonstrate the difficulties that people with disabilities face in their every day lives. The exercise commenced at 11 AM, with various members of the HCAAC escorting the participants from the Warden's Task Force out of the Court House in wheelchairs. Once the participants were outside, they were asked to wheel their way to the side loading wheelchair van, which was provided by the Midwestern Adult Day Centre. Mayor Shewfelt and Warden Morley were required to wheel from the wheelchair ramp, down the walk way to the van to proceed on with the exercise. Some of the obstacles they faced included:

- Police cars were parked in the walkway
- A police car was parked in the wheelchair accessible parking space
- The side loading wheelchair van could not access the wheelchair accessible space, nor could it access the walkway to the Court House
- Various cars were parked in the walkway
- Side loading wheel chair van, had to back up in order to load participants into the van because of the space constrictions

The exercise continued as Mayor Shewfelt and Warden Morley were loaded into the van using all necessary procedures to ensure their safety. Once loaded properly, Heather Williamson drove the van to a parking space on the Square to demonstrate the size of the parking spaces is inadequate, as well as the curb cut is not accessible to the person in the wheelchair, unless he/she wheels out into traffic. There are wheelchair accessible spaces just off the Square, on side streets, but they also require the person in the wheelchair to go out into traffic to get to the curb cut. The traffic on the side streets may be less in volume, but the danger is still present for anyone wanting to access the Square from the wheelchair accessible spaces.

The exercise continued as Ms. Williamson drove the van to the Walmart parking lot to demonstrate the size of the spaces available there. The problem with the spaces in parking lots is that the size of the spaces might be wide enough for a person with cane or a walker to facilitate themselves out of their vehicle and into the store, but they are not wide enough to ensure a side loading van, like the one used for the demonstration to be able to safely load and unload a wheelchair. The provisions the committee discussed at the last meeting advise for the adjustment of the designs to include an access aisle that would facilitate all levels of disabilities to safely access the building.

The Chair invited comments from the members. A lengthy discussion ensued on curbs cuts, access streets, and signage identification.

FOR INFORMATION

4. Parking Spaces for People with Disabilities

A parking resolution was requested at the April 13, 2006 Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee and at the August 11, meeting it was "Moved by D. Layton, Seconded by S. Thompson, That the resolution be forwarded to the Committee of the Whole for endorsement and support requested from the Minister of Community and Social Services and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Carried". The resolution was drafted by a subcommittee that included Larry C. Adams, Jennifer Cowan, Phil Gandon, Lynda Rotteau, Claire Dodds; as well as representatives of the Huron County Clerks and Treasurers Association, Linda Andrew and Lori Rounds. The first draft went to the Committee of the Whole September 19, 2006 and was endorsed. Warden R. Morley requested

an additional provision for rear loading vans and consideration for street parking spaces. The resolution is attached (Appendix A).

Moved by L. Falconer

Seconded by G. McLachlan

That the resolution regarding parking spaces for people with disabilities be endorsed.

CARRIED

5. Proposal - In-vehicle Incentive Program for Service Stations

In order to accommodate persons with disabilities, as well as the aging population, we are proposing an in-vehicle incentive program that will hopefully be supported across the County and, in time, implemented by service stations throughout the Province.

The in-vehicle incentive program is designed to encourage service stations throughout the community to provide accessible in-vehicle service as an alternative to the existing self service stations.

This incentive program is to acknowledge and recognize service stations that currently provide full in-vehicle service and encourage those who do not, to make their facility completely accessible.

While we recognize that this is a program that will hopefully encourage service stations to make their services accessible, we also recognize that not all stations are willing or able to provide such service.

Jennifer Cowan requested direction/discussion on the eligibility criteria. It was noted that the main criteria is having personnel who pump the gas and receive payment. It was the committee's opinion that requesting a wireless debit service was not reasonable at this time, as the technology is not yet perfected. Developing the signage initiative is important. Planner, C. Dodds, informed the committee that through United Way and Community Matters accessible stations could be identified on the Huron County Website.

Councillor D. Layton and Member L. Falconer noted that the County has a lot of full service stations and the committee should focus on the positive. It was suggested to approach companies, i.e. Shell, to discuss the possibility of accessible logo's and placement for optimum driver visibility.

FOR INFORMATION

Member L. Rotteau left the chambers at 10:25 a.m.

6. Accessibility Activity Updates

a) M. P. P. 's Office

On August 11, 2006 the following motion was "Moved by B. Fisher , Seconded by J. Austin, That a letter be sent to M.P.P., Carol Mitchell, inviting her to meet with committee representative, Glen McLachlan, to show her first hand how her local office is inadequate as being handicapped accessible; and further that the local press be invited. Carried" and endorsed by County Council September 7, 2006.

Ms. Cowan informed the committee that it is the Municipality of Central Huron that is not allowing the M. P. P., Carol Mitchell, to put a private ramp on public property. The M.P.P. will be contacting their landlord to investigate renovations internally. Ms. Cowan was directed by the committee to contact the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario to discuss the situation.

b) Accessibility Plan

Ms. Cowan informed the committee that the ODA group met October 17, 2006 to review and prepare the 2006 Accessibility Plan. Minor amendments were made to the plan and it is ready for submission.

There was a lengthy discussion on the lower tier Municipal Activities for 2006 regarding the By-law, Building, and Operational reviews. Member G. McLachlan expressed concern over the auditing process. It was suggested to the committee that meetings be held in municipal buildings across the County in 2007 for members to become familiar with municipal facilities and lower tier staff.

FOR INFORMATION

Member S. Thompson informed the committee that she is drafting a resolution for the Canada Housing Mortgage Corporation regarding some discrimination issues. She will bring a draft resolution for the committee's review to the next meeting.

7. Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee will be held on Friday, January 12, 2007 at 9:30 a.m., Council Chambers, Court House, Goderich.

8. Adjournment

Moved by R. Armstrong

Seconded by B. Fisher

That the meeting adjourn at 10:55 a.m. and be declared a half day meeting.

CARRIED

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Chair