



County
of Huron

Accessibility Advisory Committee



Minutes - October 12, 2007

Goderich, Ontario
October 12, 2007

The HURON COUNTY ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE met in the Council Chambers, Court House, Goderich, October 12, 2007 at 9:30 a.m., with all members present except Robyn Hicks, Heather Williamson, Jeff Layton and Lynda Rotteau.

1. Minutes

Moved by B. Fisher

Seconded by J. Austin

That the minutes of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of June 22, 2007 be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

Citizen Concerns

B. Fisher raised the concern that the Goderich Town Hall front entrance steps were not visual enough for persons with visual impairments. Warden Shewfelt who was in attendance at the meeting, let B. Fisher know the work had been started. Warden Shewfelt also indicated the Town of Goderich is still looking into making their Council Chambers more accessible. B. Fisher also thanked Warden Shewfelt for the upcoming installation of audible signals at the Five Points in Goderich.

2. Website

Marian Doucette, Web Architect for the County of Huron, has been working hard on ensuring the HCAAC website is ready for its upcoming live launch. No specific date has been set to have the website up and running, however, it is anticipated all will be ready by the end of the 2007 year. M. Doucette prepared a presentation on the website, for the committee's comments.

The presentation included an overview of the background, goals, audience, and content of the website. M. Doucette took an inventory of what already exists on the County's website, to ensure there was no over-lap of information. M. Doucette looked at other municipal websites to get an idea of where the Accessibility portion is housed and determined that the information should be kept under the Administration/Clerk's section on the website, as the committee reports to the Clerk and County Council.

M. Doucette presented a breakdown of cost, based upon an integrated site as well as a comparison cost for a stand alone site. The integrated site was the most feasible and will cost a total of \$1560.00 per year.

FOR INFORMATION

3. Meeting Attendance

J. Cowan addressed the committee in relation to meeting attendance. In order to maximize productivity at committee meetings it is imperative that we have as many committee members present as possible at all meetings. Should you not be able to make a meeting, please let the Chairperson, Committee Coordinator, or County Clerk know of your absence a few weeks prior to the meeting, as most meeting dates are set in advance. Committee members who are unable to attend a majority of meetings (equivalent to three meetings per year) will be referred to the committee to determine the next steps on a per case basis.

FOR INFORMATION

4. Future Meeting Dates

The following were suggested as meeting dates for the 2008 year.

January 18, 2008; March 7, 2008; June 13, 2008; October 10, 2008

An additional meeting may be held in August, if necessary to ensure the completion of the annual Accessibility Plan on time.

L. Adams suggested rescheduling the March 14 meeting to accommodate those who are involved with the school system's March Break.

Moved by G. McLachlan

Seconded by L. Falconer

That the future meeting dates be accepted as amended.

CARRIED

5. 2006-2007 HCAAC Accessibility Plan

The annual Accessibility Plan was sent to the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the deadline on September 30, 2007.

This year, at the request of J. Cowan, each municipality was asked to complete an accessibility audit to determine the number of accessible services, and programs in each municipality. Included in the Accessibility Plan is a summary of the findings from the audit. A hard copy of the audit can be obtained from J. Cowan. The audit was taken directly from the Ministry of Community and Social Services and appears that it is directed specifically at larger urban centres. The aim of the audit information is to determine where the gaps are between municipalities and work on ensuring similar services across the County.

A discussion ensued regarding the collection of the audit information, member titles included within the plan as well as whether or not the local community is aware of the 2025 deadline for making Ontario Accessible.

L. Falconer voiced her concern that some of the reviews were fairly trivial and wondered if there is something the committee could do to promote a more thorough review process to the municipalities. S. Thompson suggested sending a member to each lower tier Council meeting to promote accessibility and offer suggestions to the municipality for the upcoming reviews. E. Bezaire noted that it doesn't appear the municipalities are putting a lot of thought into the reviews. D. Kelly suggested sending a letter to the lower tiers, asking what the intentions are for the upcoming year.

FOR INFORMATION

6. Five Points – Audible Signals

On August 10, 2007, Goderich Town Council discussed whether or not audible signals for sight-impaired citizens would be installed at the Five Points in Goderich.

Warden Shewfelt informed the committee that construction has begun on the Audible Crossing Signals at the Five Points.

FOR INFORMATION

7. Parking By-Laws within Municipalities

At the Site Plan meeting of August 29, 2007, J. Cowan gauged the group on their thoughts regarding a parking document, after hearing concerns from committee members regarding parking in some municipalities. This document would be separate from the Site Plan Control document, and would focus specifically on parking. J. Cowan requested comments from the committee to determine if this type of document would be useful, or if the information regarding parking, addressed in the Site Plan Control document is sufficient.

C. Dodds informed the committee that the parking that is addressed in the Site Plan Control Guidelines is geared towards private or commercial industries, and does not cover municipal parking. She also informed the committee that the Ministry of Transportation Ontario has issued a guideline that provides model parking by-laws and suggested using their by-laws to start the process.

S. Thompson mentioned that while most municipalities have accessible parking, it's not the location or the numbers of parking spaces we should be concentrating on, but rather the fact that there are few by-laws within the municipalities and those that exist are not being enforced by the proper authorities. North Huron was the example that was mentioned.

Moved by M. McCauley

Seconded by L. Falconer

That the lower tier municipalities receive a copy of the model by-law from the committee.

CARRIED

Moved by B. Fisher

Seconded by G. McLachlan

That a separate document be prepared for parking by-laws within the municipalities.

CARRIED

8. Accessible Businesses in Huron County

J. Cowan presented the committee with an "Accessible Business Information Package". The information package is intended to let the community know about the Government of Ontario's Customer Service Standards. The information will let the business community become aware of the 2025 deadline so they can become proactive in making their business accessible.

M. McCauley commented on the information package and suggested including an introductory paragraph about the committee itself, and suggested including a brochure into the information package.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding how to get the information out to the local community. It was decided that it would be beneficial to use resources that are already available, such as the BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Huron County Small Business Association, Huron Manufacturing

Association etc. L. Falconer thought the best way to approach the community was to present the information in person to each business.

Moved by M. McCauley

Seconded by S. Thompson

That the HCAAC contact the community through both the Huron Manufacturers Association and by contacting the businesses directly through municipal lists.

CARRIED

9. Audit – Seaforth Main Street

On September 4, 2007, at the request of the Municipality of Huron East, J. Cowan, B. Fisher and G. McLachlan met with J. McLachlan (Clerk, Huron East) to discuss the accessibility of Main Street in Seaforth.

The group looked mainly at curb cuts, parking spaces, the height of street signs and the location of existing cross walks. Currently, Seaforth has three accessible parking spaces – two located directly on the main street, and one off the main street, beside the TD Bank. B. Fisher suggested a pedestrian activated cross-walk be installed on the main street at the TD Bank location to be used as an alternative place to cross the main street aside from the current main intersection. J. McLachlan noted, there is currently no curb cut located at one of the accessible parking spaces (across from the TD Bank), and it is their intention to make a curb cut, provided the group saw fit to leave the space where it currently is.

G. McLachlan noted that many of the intersection corners are very steep for someone in a wheelchair.

Huron East is pro-active in wanting to make the main street in Seaforth accessible for all of its users. Huron East has recently raised all of the street signs along the main street and is considering adding a fourth accessible parking space should it be necessary.

FOR INFORMATION

10. Accessibility Awareness Week

J. Cowan requested suggestions from the committee on ideas for Accessibility Awareness Week. This week typically takes place the first week of June, and would therefore need to be decided upon by the March 2008 meeting.

A lengthy discussion ensued and the following were suggestions made to the committee for the Accessibility Awareness Week: Get local service clubs involved to promote education within the community; go out to schools and present them with resources such as emergency preparedness for persons with disabilities, brochure etc.; partner with the Avon-Maitland District School Board to promote accessibility within the school system; contact the new Lieutenant Governor for an accessibility reception; get a high profile volunteer to experience a physical impairment; ask the local cable station to be involved and follow the person around all day; invite someone from the province to discuss how the Customer Service Standards will affect the local businesses and invite local businesses to attend the forum; and have an information day.

FOR INFORMATION

11. Site Plan Review Group

On August 29, 2007 the Site Plan Review Group met to discuss the attached Site Plan Control document. Members present included: J. Cowan, C. Dodds, G. McLachlan, B. Fisher, S. Thompson, M. McCauley and K. Livingston (Building Official, Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh). The group discussed the implementation of the Residential Design Guideline. The group also discussed the Site Plan Control document, which addresses the building structure for private enterprises in the site plan process. Currently, municipalities issue site plan approvals/building permits based upon the Ontario Building Code only, which does not address several accessibility issues that are addressed in the document.

The group decided the steps for implementation will include:

- a) Building Officials/Municipal Clerks: Present both documents to the building officials and local clerks to allow for a thorough critique and consultation of the document.
- b) County Council/Committee of the Whole: Present both documents to County Council and/or Committee of the Whole to let them know about the document, prior to presenting to lower-tier Municipal Councils.
- c) Lower tier Municipal Councils: Present both documents to each lower tier Municipal Council and ask for adoption/endorsement of the document to be used in the site plan approval process.

The group also raised the point that the lower tier Municipalities do not realize that the committee is a resource for them as well as the County as a whole. The need to present the document to Building Officials, as well as local clerks, has lead to the committee hosting an Accessibility Forum. This forum will take place on October 29, 2007, in the Council Chambers at the Court House, Goderich. The forum will begin at 9:30 A.M., and will provide the opportunity for the committee to have an open dialogue with the local clerks, as well as the Building Officials on the Site Plan Control Guidelines, as well as the Residential Checklist Guideline.

C. Dodds explained the site plan process and the guidelines to the committee in relation to the Planning Act. The committee will have a chance to hear from the Clerks and Building Officials at the Accessibility Forum on October 29, 2007.

L. Adams informed the committee that the assessment office in Goderich has recently begun renovations and the committee will have the plans shortly for their review. There is currently an elevator reaching to the second floor, but it cannot reach the basement.

FOR INFORMATION

12. Accessibility Forum

J. Cowan has been organizing an Accessibility Forum that will take place on October 29, 2007, in the Council Chambers at the Court House Goderich. The forum is intended to provide an open dialogue with local Clerks and Building Officials on the proposed Site Plan Control Guidelines, as well as the Residential Checklist Guideline.

The purpose of the forum is to discuss with local Clerks, and Building Officials to determine if the proposed Site Plan Control Guidelines are feasible in terms of implementation at the local level prior to presentations being made to the County and lower tier municipalities.

All committee members are invited to attend the forum, and are urged to register in advance. J. Cowan is looking for volunteers for various jobs. Please notify her if you are able to help, either prior to the day of the forum or on the day.

S. Thompson has volunteered to help prepare and present the main presentation that will be used to explain the guidelines to the Building Officials/Clerks.

FOR INFORMATION

13. Additional Meeting

J. Cowan requests the committee be available on October 29, 2007, in the afternoon for a committee meeting to address the information raised at the morning Accessibility Forum. This meeting will begin at 1:30 P.M., and will include a discussion on the information provided in the morning as well as the opportunity to ensure the documents are ready to be presented to Committee of the Whole on November 20, 2007.

FOR INFORMATION

14. Correspondence

- a) Government of Ontario – Customer Service Standards
- b) AMCTO Express – Legislative Update
- c) Ontario Human Rights Commission – Transportation Standards
- d) AMO Communication – “Call for Membership on Resources Teams to Support Development of Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005”
- e) Ministry of Community and Social Services
 - i. McGuinty Government Launches Public Education Campaign to Increase Accessibility For People with Disabilities
 - ii. Making Progress Towards an Accessible Ontario
 - iii. Moving Toward a More Accessible Province for all Ontarians
- f) Toronto Star Article – Incoming Lieutenant-Governor Plans to Smooth a Path for All; Accessibility Issues will be Focus.
- g) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance Update
- h) City of Guelph Resolution
- i) Goderich Signal Star Article – August 15, 2007

FOR INFORMATION

15. Accessibility Activity Updates - Housing

S. Thompson updated the committee on her work with Quality Homes and her lobby work for the criteria for eligibility for persons with disabilities under the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Quality Homes received an award recently for their work on an accessible home. S. Thompson along with a representative from Quality Homes were interviewed and broadcast on TV in relation to the accessible home. S. Thompson also met with Minister Flaherty to discuss the criteria for eligibility for persons with disabilities under the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

S. Thompson was at the International Home Show October 5-8, 2007 in Toronto on behalf of Quality Homes. Quality Homes will be showing their accessible home in Kenilworth from October 19-21, 2007.

FOR INFORMATION

16. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee will be held on October 29, 2007 Council Chambers, Court House, Goderich at 1:30 p.m. The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee will be hosting an Accessibility Forum on October 29, 2007 at 9:30 a.m., in the Council Chambers, Court House, Goderich. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on January 18, 2008 at 9:30 a.m., in the Council Chambers, Court House, Goderich.

17. Adjournment

Moved by L. Falconer

Seconded by J. Austin

That the meeting adjourn at 11:47 a.m. and be declared a half day meeting.

CARRIED

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Chair