Minutes of a meeting of the Region of Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee (RNAAC), Ontarians with Disabilities Act held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on Tuesday, July 25, 2006, commencing at 12:40 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Jocelyne Gagne, Chair; Ian Greaves, Niagara Falls; Jean Bennett, Grimsby; Krystine Donato, St. Catharines; Geoff Eden, Welland; Brian Kon, Niagara Falls; Anita MacKenzie, Niagara Falls; Grazyna Witlib, Port Colborne; Grazyna Witlib, Port Colborne; Janet Genge, Welland; Tony DiPaloa, St. Catharines; Mary Lou Whitty, Port Colborne.

Staff: Anne Hepplewhite, Corporate Services – Clerks Office; Diana Lecinski, City of St. Catharines; Nancy Winslow, Planning Department; Steve Murphy, Community Services; Eric Flora, Public Works; Catherine O’Leary, Public Health; Larry Bousfield, Public Works; Lisa Ricci, Corporate Services – Clerks Office.

Regrets: Carol Walker, Diann Krieger

Guests: Kerry Grandfield (Interpreter)

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

30. Moved by Ian Greaves
    Seconded by Jean Bennett

    That the agenda be approved as amended to include Other Business.

    Carried.
MINUTES

31. Report 4-2006

Moved by Mary-Lou Whitty
Seconded by Geoff Eden

That Report 4-2006, being the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of Tuesday, June 13, 2006, be approved.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

32. Moved by Ian Greaves
Seconded by Jean Bennett

That communications listed in the Correspondence Summary be received.

Carried.

Members requested electronic copies of all correspondence be issued prior to the meeting.

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS ADDITION

33. Mr. Larry Bousfield provided the committee with the following updates:

- The addition to the Regional Headquarters has been designed taking into consideration the Region's Accessibility Design Standards. One of the features includes a Family Washroom that will be accessible to all adjacent to the new Cafeteria area.

- Staff met with three Architect Firms to discuss modifications to the existing Council Chambers to permit a person in a wheelchair or scooter to approach the podium safely. The various proposals will be reviewed by staff with recommendations to Senior Staff and Regional Council. The recommendation will also be presented to the AAC for information and comments.
• A recent change to the Ontario Building Code requires new and existing public buildings to have strobe emergency lights to indicate when a fire alarm is sounding for those who are hearing impaired. The new addition as well as existing headquarters will have strobe lights installed in main corridors and other public meeting places. Staff will be installing similar lights in other Regional owned and leased facilities where the public frequent.

• Before the end of 2006, we will be reviewing all of our Regional Facilities which are considered “public buildings” and determine the deficiencies regarding accessibility and establishing a long range plan to correct those deficiencies. The plan will be presented to the AAC once available.

REGION OF NIAGARA ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

34. Staff members (Steve Murphy, Nancy Winslow, Catherine O’Leary, Larry Bousfield, and Eric Flora) were on hand to provide the Committee with updates as to the progress made thus far respecting their departments 2005/2006 commitments to the Accessibility Plan.

Catherine O’Leary also provided Committee members with a Power Point presentation which overviewed Public Health’s Services and Programs and read to Committee, the below noted e-mail update from Sean Bertleff, Program Manager Emergency Management:

• Emergency Mgt Plan is updated annually and posted on our website at www.regional.niagara.on.ca/emo. This plan is the corporate management structure for responding to any major emergency situation.

• Public Awareness & Education for Special Needs – We are now able through Paula-Marie to investigate opportunities to work with the committee to develop information on how special needs populations can prepare themselves for emergency situations. We would be pleased to host a meeting between the stakeholders to get the process moving, establish a strategy, timelines, product option etc. We would also like to look at how the Committee can assist us prepare information for emergency responders specific to responding to special needs cases.
• Evacuation Planning for Special Needs – Evacuation / Shelter Management is a shared responsibility between emergency services (local Fire / Regional Police) and the Community Services Department. Specifically the emergency services are the one’s who make the evacuation order, conduct the evacuation and Community Services Department runs the shelters in co-operation with groups such as the Canadian Red Cross and Salvation Army. Emergency Management staff would be pleased to make the connections between the above groups and the Committee and establish a process to develop a special needs assessment and look at ways to improve our plans to accommodate special needs.

Diana Lecinski thanked all members of staff for their continued support and advised that she would include these updates in to the “Draft” 2006/2007 Accessibility Plan. Diana also stated that she would forward the Draft 2006/2007 Accessibility Plan to everyone’s attention via e-mail; and that the “Draft” plan would also be the main focus point of the next RNAAC meeting scheduled for September 5, 2006.

OTHER BUSINESS

35. Past RNAAC member Thank you notes

Anne Hepplewhite advised members that Thank you letters had been issued to past members thanking them for their contribution and dedication to the Region of Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee during their term.

36. Inter-Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting – Fort Erie

Jocelyn suggested to Committee members the possibility of inviting other Regional Committee’s (e.g. Niagara District Health System, School Boards, LHIN etc.,) on Accessibility to the October scheduled Inter-Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting.

37. Absences

Committee members wanted it formally noted in the minutes that it was Councillor Collins third absence.
ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 2:45 p.m. to meet again on Tuesday, September 5, 2006 at 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Committee Room #4.

Jocelyne Gagne
Chair
Lisa Ricci
Acting, Legislative Assistant