



**The Municipal Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie  
Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes**

**March 25, 2025, 4:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 1**

**1. Call to Order**

The March 25, 2025, Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

The staff resource gave the roll call.

Present: Lori Brant, Chair; Dennis Hernandez-Galeano, Vice Chair; Adam McLeod; Gary Kooistra; Marilyn Abbs; Jennica Giesbrecht; David Pantano.

Absent: Lindsay Davis; Councillor Noyes

Staff Resources: Keegan Gennings, Chief Building Official; Sean Hutton, Manager of Facilities and Parks; Bev Bradnam, Manager of Corporate and Community Initiatives.

Guest: Elizabeth Latif, Project Manager, Parks Planner (t 4:24 p.m.).

**3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

**4. Adoption of the Agenda**

**Recommendation 1:**

Moved by: Marilyn Abbs  
seconded by: Adam McLeod

That: The March 25, 2025, Agenda of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed. (Carried)

**5. Adoption of Minutes**

**Recommendation 2:**

Moved by: Marilyn Abbs

Seconded by: Adam McLeod

That: The February 25, 2025 Minutes of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved as printed. (Carried)

**6. Playground Replacements for Goderich Street Park**

Project Manager, Parks Planner, Elizabeth Latif, provided a power point presentation outlining the replacement (1 to 1 ratio) for the Goderich Street Playground. It was noted that there were two swings (a belt style and an infant style) and Elizabeth was asked about including an accessible swing. She explained that because it is a replacement they are only able to use the space designated, which would not allow for an additional swing. If it was to be increased it would limit the number of playground equipment pieces as it would impact the “safety zone”. Elizabeth explained that there is currently a ramp to the playground area but not into the surface area and it was noted that it is currently quite a drop. Elizabeth advised that part of the budget will be allocated to include a ramp into the play area to allow for a safer entry.

The AAC members noted their preference for rubberized surfaces in playgrounds as the engineered wood fibre is not accessible; however, they do understand that it is costly and the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) does recommend rubberized surfaces for the larger, more frequented playgrounds and those that have a splash pad adjacent.

Elizabeth advised that the Ferndale Park upgrade is being worked on by her colleague, Kathryn, and a tender should be going out late spring-early summer. Following the tender there will be concepts for the AAC to review. Elizabeth also noted that staff have requested additional funding to the approved capital budget so that rubberized surfaces can be included, especially with the splash pad in close proximity.

**7. Site Plan Review**

There were no site plans to review.

**8. Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2019-2023**

**8.1 Survey Responses**

The Committee worked through numbers 16-28.

With respect to parking spaces, Keegan advised that the Zoning By-law has differing designated spaces than what is outlined in the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standard, noting that the DOPS requirements are for municipal lots and does not impact new commercial development as they would fall under the Zoning By-law. It was noted that the AAC does review

site plans and provides comments on parking, occasionally requesting consideration for additional spaces.

Sean will be asked to comment on the Council Chambers doors and when automatic door openers will be considered.

Discussion took place about accessible washrooms not being available after hours for events held in the Erie Road parking lot ("the Grove"). Lori noted that there are no accessible washrooms for use in the downtown Crystal Beach area after hours as the only accessible washroom in a restaurant is now take out only. It was suggested that portable washrooms that are accessible should be considered. Lori recommended a permanent washroom in the Grove that is accessible, but it was noted that the Town leases the parking lot on Erie Road. Lori suggested that the BIA could be given a key to the beach washrooms to be used during after hour events. Bev advised that two agreements are coming forward on Monday night for use of the Grove and perhaps Councillor Noyes could ask about washroom facilities. *(Following the meeting, Sean advised that there was one accessible portable toilet in the Grove last year and in past years and one standard toilet. For 2025, staff have ordered two of each for placement in the Grove).*

#### 8.2 Awareness Campaign re Parking and Blocking of Sidewalks

See Item 9.9 – AAC members will be participating in Ridgifest to kick-start the campaign and social media will also be used for messaging.

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#### 8.3 Recognition of Accessibility Improvements

Bev advised that she has notified the Clerk's Department that we would like to recognize the StopGap ramp businesses that participated in the program and certificates will be presented at the Council meeting of May 26, 2025, during National AccessAbility Week – NAAW.

### 9. Outstanding Business

#### 9.1 Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

Bev advised that 2025 is the year to submit compliance reports to the Province. Many of her colleagues that belong to the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals have reported that those municipalities that have Specialized Transit services have received notification from the Province that a desk audit will be undertaken. The Region of Niagara is one of the many municipalities that are having to undergo the audit.

#### 9.2 Parking Concerns

Dave noted that the Avondale on Ridgeway Road has two ramps but they are right in front of the parking spots and difficult to access. Dave also

noted that there is a salt box in between the Chinese Restaurant and Avondale store that blocks the sidewalk and makes it difficult if you are trying to get between businesses, especially with a mobility device. It was noted that the salt box may have been moved now that the winter is over but the Committee felt it important to advise the owner that the salt box should not be placed there in the future.

#### 9.3 Barrel Restaurant Access

A letter was forwarded to the Barrel with the previous March 17, 2023, letter attached. Committee members suggested having a meeting in their separate room and show them how difficult it is for persons with disabilities and the elderly to open the heavy doors. Remove from outstanding.

#### 9.4 Beatties - accessible door

The door closest to the accessible parking space has been opened and it was agreed that the sidewalk is not wide enough to allow for an automatic door unless it opens inward. Bev did follow-up but no response has been received. Remove from outstanding.

#### 9.5 Transit Issues

Bev read excerpts from the Niagara Transit Commission's letter dated March 3, 2025, addressed to the Town Clerk in relation to the AAC's resolution from September 2024 and the request to attend a future Council meeting to answer specific questions. The NTC's General Manager, Carla Stout, advised that she was not provided direction by the Board to attend a Council meeting. Bev advised that the General Manager had recently attended a Council meeting in Grimsby and was asked by a Council member how much the Town of Grimsby pays and how many riders there were and the Councillor calculated that each ride was costing taxpayers \$80.00. While transit has always been subsidized, it was noted that this is not efficient or cost effective under the current framework.

Lori advised that riders are completely frustrated and another individual was stranded in Welland on Saturday. Lori advised that she has followed up with the Niagara Falls Councillor that suggested all accessibility committee members meet but she has advised that there is currently too much going on. Dennis advised that some AAC members were considering going to Regional Council to request details about why funding was cut. Committee members advised that they would also like details on what was actually cut from the Transit budget, especially since the Town is being required to pay so much more. Committee members requested that the Mayor and Regional Councillor be invited to the April meeting to discuss the Committee's concerns and request details about the budget cuts made. Lori asked that we provide facts to both the Mayor and Regional Councillor that shows what we had in terms of vehicles, ridership numbers and operating costs vs. what we are receiving now.

Bev will provide Jennifer Pennell-Ajje (staff member who was the Town's Transit Supervisor when the Town ran the service) with the response from Carla Stout, which questions the numbers provided by Jennifer to the Committee and ask her to clarify other details contained in the letter. Bev reviewed the questions that were outlined in last month's minutes that are going to Council on March 31, 2025. Committee members will provide any additional questions they would like to ask prior to the next meeting. It was noted that the new policy related to not pulling into people's driveways that require specialized transit should also be included in the discussions. Lori described a recent incident about someone being left outside and 911 had to be called to assist the individual. The family of the individual has written a letter to the Niagara Transit Commission, and they are looking into it.

9.6 Accessible Archery

Dave advised that he has followed up with an email. Remain on outstanding.

9.7 Seniors Stepping Out Event - June 14, 2025

Committee members advised that they would prefer participating in Ridgifest as the SSO event takes place during Father's Day weekend and no one was available to participate.

9.8 Access Now

Bev advised that we can start populating the Access Now app and she will be keeping an eye out for any type of funding that may be available to conduct more in-depth validation and/or Map Missions.

9.9 SeaTrac

Lori advised that, following out last meeting, she contacted the company and they are looking for a Canadian distributor and she has reached out to an individual in the York Region to see if there is any interest.

**10. New Business**

10.1 Proclamation for National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) - May 25-31, 2025

National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) is a time when accessibility and inclusion are promoted across communities and workplaces, and a time to celebrate the contributions of Canadians with disabilities.

**Recommendation 3:**

Moved by: Adam McLeod  
Seconded by: Marilyn Abbs

That: Council proclaims May 25-31, 2025, as "National AccessAbility Week". (Carried)

**11. Next Meeting Date**

The next AAC meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in Conference Room #1 at Town Hall.

**12. Adjournment**

**Recommendation 4:**

Moved by: Marilyn Abbs

Seconded by: Gary Kooistra

That: The March 25, 2025, meeting of the Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee does now hereby adjourn at 5:59 p.m. (Carried)