



A meeting of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) was held on the above date at 7:00 p.m., Kiwanis Centre, 111 Lakeside Drive, Stratford.

Committee Present: Councillor McManus – Chair presiding, Councillor Vassilakos – Vice-Chair, Councillor Ingram, Henry Centen, Don Farwell, Sarah Merkel, Gary Jacques and Geoff Love.

Staff Present: Nancy Roulston – Manager of Engineering and Margaret Johnston – Recording Secretary

Also Present: Katherine Horst – Perth District Health Unit, Doug Cota – G2G and Quin Malott – Parks & Forestry Manager

Regrets: Councillor Brown and Brad Hernden – Manager of Recreation and Marketing

MINUTES

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Members of the committee and staff introduced themselves.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF BY MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL.

None declared.

3. ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES – November 25, 2015

Motion by Henry Centen, seconded by Councillor Ingram

**That the ATAC minutes dated November 25, 2015 be adopted.
Carried.**

4. OVERVIEW OF BIKE & PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN FOR NEW MEMBERS

Councillor McManus gave a brief synopsis of the Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan. She explained that ATAC's role is to explore infrastructure & funding opportunities as well as promote and encourage active transportation through educational initiatives.

Councillor McManus encouraged the new members to access the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan on the City's website and stated she would bring in a hard copy at the next meeting and they are welcome to borrow it.

5. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Recording Secretary declared nominations for Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee open.

Henry Centen nominated Councillor McManus.

The Recording Secretary asked for further nominations.

Don Farwell nominated Councillor McManus.

The Recording Secretary asked for further nominations. No further nominations were made.

Committee decision: Motion by Geoff Love/Don Farwell
That nominations be closed for the position of Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Carried.

Councillor McManus indicated that she would allow her nomination to stand.

Committee decision: Motion by Councillor Ingram/Henry Centen
That Councillor McManus be elected 2016 Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Carried.

The Recording Secretary declared nominations for Vice-Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee Open.

Geoff Love nominated Councillor Vassilakos.

The Recording Secretary asked for further nominations. No further nominations were made.

Committee decision: Motion by Councillor Ingram/Henry Centen
That nominations be closed for the position of Vice-Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Carried.

Councillor Vassilakos indicated that she would allow her nomination to stand.

Committee decision: Motion by Councillor Ingram/Geoff Love
That Councillor Vassilakos be elected as the 2016 Vice Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Carried.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Doug Cota – Discussion regarding G2G Initiative

Doug Cota explained he was there to give everyone an update on the Guelph to Goderich initiative. He explained that they were incorporated in 2014 and they are a charitable organization. He explained that their main plan is to link Goderich to Guelph via rail trail. The trail is 127km long and they consider it to be the back bone of Ontario. It links thousands of people, 13 communities and dozens of other trails come off of this trail.

Mr. Cota stated that on July 1, 2015 the province of Ontario approved them for a 5-year lease on the unleased portion of the rail line. They had some signage done up last summer to determine which sections of the trail were going to be accessible to the public; this was based on whether it was safe or not. They closed some sections off that were not ready. They are now in the process of getting the ones that are open, up to speed, and there are significant costs associated with doing this.

Mr. Cota explained that the Regional Tourism Organization for this area, the RT04, has taken the G2G initiative under their wing as it is a very important asset for tourism within the region. They have assisted them to the point they are at currently and they have just recently received a Trillium grant for \$150,000 which will help them move forward.

Mr. Cota explained that they are in the process with Perth and Huron of setting up their steward groups. These groups will be around trail heads to monitor the trail.

Mr. Cota stated that currently they have several large bridges that need to be replaced as well as a large amount of brush that needs to be removed in order to make them passable. The biggest work-around they have in Perth County is a section that is currently leased by a land-owner. As far as stone-dusting, they are currently looking at a couple of innovative options; there is a gentleman in Huron County that can take off the first 6-8 inches of trail and re-process it back into stone dust again. This option would cut their cost in stone dust by having it re-purposed that way.

Mr. Cota explained they are currently setting up a crowd-sourcing program and Sarah Merkel knows more about the process. They have a large Facebook presence and a new website coming within the next month.

The University of Waterloo is currently working on mapping for them.

They have a big fundraising event coming up on May 14, 2016 which is "Spring on the Trail" and is \$25.00 per person. It runs at 10:00am and starts anywhere along the trail. There will be lots of prizes.

Mr. Cota stated that they have been in meetings with landowners and both counties for about a year now. They have brought approximately fifteen concerns to the table. They have answered all fifteen concerns though there are still some that feel they have some problems with the project. They are working with them on a one-to-one basis to address their individual concerns.

Mr. Cota concluded that the trail is currently 80% – 90% open, it's just maintenance that they have to do in order to make it passable. The projection for the trail to be 100% open is 2017 which will be the 150th Birthday of Canada. They are looking at probably doing a couple of big races on the trail end to end at that time.

Sarah Merkel explained that on the Kissing Bridge trail portion, which has been up and running for fifteen years now, they dealt with all the same issues. It comes down to being able to work with the farmers and acknowledging that their concerns are legitimate and that they can resolve them together. Sometimes it's just about communicating clearly with the farmers what it actually means to have a trail in their backyards and how it can benefit their businesses and their communities economically.

Ms. Merkel stated that currently the trail hits and possibly crosses the Avon Trail, though the Avon Trail is not set up for biking yet.

Councillor Vassilakos stated that we need to get all interested parties together to discuss the different linkages and how we can link up Stratford to the trail as well.

Mr. Cota stated that anyone can volunteer to help along the trail. They have applied for a Grant to train 30 steward people to assist in trail management and trail maintenance, etc. It is done through Algonquin College and it's a certification course. Mr. Cota stated he would send that information to Councillor McManus.

b) Update from Councillor McManus regarding obtaining information from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority about possible concerns with building stiles or extending trails to assist people walking on the south-east side of the river in the TJ Dolan.

Councillor McManus stated that she had a meeting the next day with individuals from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority to discuss this issue and would update members at the next meeting.

Councillor Vassilakos stated she has asked staff to come back and let them know what the possible funding options are for linking the trail. We need to know what the funding gap is and what options we have in terms of making up the difference through different funding opportunities.

Quin Malott said that in terms of a bridge to connect the old grove to the other side, it can be done, as both sides are flood plains so the abutments are pretty deep concrete. The bridge would have to be pretty high since there is quite a bit of ice flow through there. There was about a \$90,000 – \$100,000 cost to this when they looked at it.

Mr. Malott stated that he spoke to Stratford Tourism and they are looking at a number of things and they are applying for a grant. He told them about this project and thought maybe ATAC members might be interested in getting in touch with them. At this point, Stratford Tourism does not know how they want to use the grant money, if and when they get it.

Councillor Vassilakos stated she could bring it up to the Stratford Tourism Alliance Board at their next meeting.

The members discussed where the bridge would have to be located and the issue of speaking with landowners.

Councillor Vassilakos stated she has spoken to the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Community Services and they would look into what money the City has in different reserves that would apply to the bridge development, and get back to her. Hopefully what will happen is the information that comes from them and the information from the original plan along with how much it would take to purchase the land from the UTRCA will all come together and we'll have a clearer picture as to how we can make this project happen. We will have a package of information to work with.

Sarah Merkel stated we could take this package of information to the Stratford-Perth Community Foundation for possible funding opportunities. Ms. Merkel stated she could also take this to Rotaract and Rotary once we have the package of information assembled.

Ms. Merkel stated that another option for funding would be a crowd-sourcing campaign; both Revel Coffee House and Monforte Restaurant got started up that way.

Councillor Vassilakos stated a crowd-sourcing opportunity will have to involve approaching an organization to take this initiative on, and figuring out who could do this.

c) Update from Community Services as to the progress of bike rack inventory.

Mr. Malott stated he had a summary of where the bike racks are currently located which Councillor Ingram forwarded to the ATAC members. We will probably need more bike racks at the Splash Pad, ball diamonds and schools, etc. Public Works and the City Centre Committee maintains the racks and keeps them in good repair.

d) Updates and comments on Bicycle Parking Questionnaire

Councillor McManus stated she received the Questionnaire from Henry Centen which she will send out as soon as first semester is over.

e) Update from Engineering on Report Card Draft

The members indicated they all had a copy of the Report Card Draft.

The Manager of Engineering stated there are a few multi-use trails and bike lane markings going on this year.

Councillor Vassilakos stated that the Report Card would be effective if we had an update from staff around June as to what is planned, as well as what was completed at the end of every year. The members agreed with this scenario.

ATAC members discussed the idea of identifying where the funds are coming from in terms of the projects on the Report Card that is slated for completion.

The Manager of Engineering explained that the projects they have planned for 2016 will utilize 75% of the money that is available right now.

Councillor Vassilakos stated they don't have actual dollar amounts on the Report Card Draft, just the basic source of those funds. They could eventually add those dollar amounts and indicate where the funding is coming from.

The Manager of Engineering stated she could indicate dollar amounts by end of April 2016.

The Manager of Engineering explained that the information they have in the GIS system is correct in terms of all the projects that have been completed, though for proposed projects, there are errors and it is something they are working on getting up-to-date.

f) Update on Share the Road Bike Friendly Communities Workshop and obtaining a list of past attendees as well as Council participation

Geoff Love gave background information on this workshop which is on April 27, 2016, to update new members.

Mr. Love indicated that he and Don Farwell have been meeting with the University of Waterloo because they are interested in making the discussion surrounding active transportation more interesting.

Don Farwell explained that they are looking at collecting some data using University of Waterloo students or others by using a tool called 'PhotoVoice'. This tool asks people to take photographs of what your target is, so in this context, we're asking people how do we make our city more sustainable and more livable in terms of active transportation. They are hoping to get this data before the workshop on the 27th of April so they can integrate it.

Mr. Love stated that once the workshop is complete, the results will be posted.

g) Update on coordination of Snow Angels Project

Councillor Vassilakos stated that she met with Councillor Ritsma and as the Principal of Stratford Northwestern, he was excited about getting kids involved in the project. They have a lot of kids needing ways in which they can get their volunteer hours. He is going to reach out to these kids to see if they are interested in the snow angels project.

Councillor Vassilakos stated she has done some research on different snow angels projects and she received information from the man who developed the snow angels project website in London, ON. He explained that Calgary and Hamilton have their own program, though they have a budget of \$300,000 to \$500,000 annually for this. St. Thomas on the other hand, has a similar program that they run through Community Services and it doesn't cost them anything.

Councillor Vassilakos explained that what the website developer in London did was create a snow angels website called snowangelslondon.ca with the help of a couple of other website developers. It is a very user-friendly site. They have indicated they will give us this website and adapt it for our use and our needs and are happy to do so. They may also launch this website nationally and change it to snowangelscanada.ca because the website is driven by postal codes. She would like to speak with them further on this topic.

The members discussed the pros and cons of making the website regional vs national in order to give each community their own voice and identity. The regional site could link to the national site.

Councillor McManus stated that it should be an opportunity for students to gain their volunteer hours, though not a child-labour opportunity.

Councillor Vassilakos stated that in order to get a snow angel's assistance, you should have to fill out a form indicating you have a disability or are a senior.

Motion by Councillor Ingram, seconded by Geoff Love

**That ATAC members support Councillor Vassilakos meeting with the snow-angels website designers to discuss website options for Stratford.
Carried.**

7. New Business

- 1) Mobile Month receipts submitted and attached to Agenda for review and approval by the committee.**

The members reviewed the Mobile Month receipts and the expenses were approved.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos, seconded by Henry Centen

That the receipts submitted by the Perth District Health Unit for Mobile Month be approved for reimbursement. Carried.

- 2) Update on Cycling Cooperation Group projects.**

Councillor Vassilakos explained what the Cycling Cooperation Group was for new members and who the group consisted of.

Councillor Vassilakos stated the group met again that evening and the first half of the meeting they spoke of creating a cycling map that is useable for the public; the second half of the meeting they discussed safety issues.

Councillor Vassilakos stated the Stratford Tourism Alliance has a map that they are using and they are going to build on it. They have a much more complicated on-line digital map and are adding layers to indicate hiking trails, cycling trails, art destinations, etc. Currently, we have added cycling pieces to the map that they produce every year. Over the next year or two, we are working towards something more interactive which possibly includes an app based map. We also discussed putting information on google calendar to show all the cycling events going on which can be shared with the public in general.

Councillor Vassilakos explained that the second half of their meeting they discussed safety issues. Dave Stewart spoke of their 'I Share the Road Campaign' which is going to launch in April. They are going to roll out this educational campaign in collaboration with the Perth District Health Unit. The Health Unit is going to come up with a Notice similar to the one Grimsby has, where there is information on one side relating to car safety and the other cycling safety. The mock-up will be brought to the next ATAC meeting for feedback. This Notice can be handed out at events, Cycle Stratford and put into swag bags, etc. It is a nice, cohesive and collaborative way to share information.

Ms. Merkel discussed the idea of using 'trail counters' to measure the use of trails or any use of an active transportation initiative. Other municipalities have used them to help with forming and planning active transportation initiatives. For instance, The City of Hamilton uses trail counters to build and provide information regarding what trails are being used and which one are not. The City of Hamilton also uses swipe cards for people using trails in order to develop heat maps to develop data. This data is collected from their Bike Share Program. At some point, possibly Stratford could benefit from these initiatives.

Ms. Merkel stated that another initiative for the G2G is to share bikes along the trails. This would be a long-term goal, though might work well for the thirteen communities involved.

NEXT MEETING DATE – Wednesday, February 24, 2016 – 7:00pm – KIWANIS COMMUNITY CENTRE, 111 Lakeside Drive.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

ATAC decision: Motion by Councillor Vassilakos, seconded by Don Farwell
That the January 27, 2016 ATAC meeting adjourn. Carried.

Start Time: 7:00 pm
End Time: 8:28 pm