

Bluewater Trails Committee Terms of Reference

Background

In October 1996, Sarnia City Council directed the City Clerk's office to advertise Councils' intent to develop a local volunteer committee to study the issue of developing a bike and pedestrian pathway with the potential to link to neighbouring municipalities of Mooretown and Point Edward. A local volunteer committee with membership representing a wide cross-section of the community began meeting in January 1997. In August 1997, a Public Opinion Survey was distributed throughout Sarnia over a seven-week period with 638 questionnaires being completed and returned. Survey results suggested that the overwhelming majority of survey respondents wanted to see an extended trail system in Sarnia. In 1999, the Sarnia Bike and Pedestrian Path Committee was renamed Bluewater Trails Committee. In 2000, the City of Sarnia Bluewater Trails Master Plan was completed by ESG International Inc. which outlined suggestions and recommendations for a trail system in the City of Sarnia and completed the City of Sarnia Bluewater Trails Master Plan. Over the years, the Bluewater Trails Committee has spent a great deal of time and energy marketing, managing, developing and fund-raising to create a healthy, friendly, safe and accessible trail system for the community and our visitors.

Mandate

The Bluewater Trails Committee is a Committee of Council of the City of Sarnia. The primary role of the committee is to:

- Assist in the planning, development, maintenance and marketing of a safe network of pathways and trails in the City of Sarnia

Purpose

Assist in the development of a first class trails system for residents and visitors.

- Work to connect communities through interlinking trail and pathway systems.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the Bluewater Trails Committee are:

1. To promote a healthy lifestyle to residents through the provision of year round, low cost, safe, environmental friendly, recreation trails for pedestrians, cyclists and persons with physical disabilities.
2. To increase public awareness about respecting the flora and fauna located along the Bluewater Trails and preservation of native habitats and species.
3. To make recommendations to the City of Sarnia Council and City Departments on Bluewater Trails issues.
4. To design and integrate existing trails to create a city-wide network of trails.
5. To provide trail linkages among points of interest, neighbourhoods, schools, businesses and communities.
6. To provide a trail system for use as an alternate means of transportation (active transportation) and to educate residents about the benefits of using the trail system for active transportation purposes.
7. Participate in fundraising and promotion activities for future trail development.
8. To promote trail activities for tourism purposes.

9. The Bluewater Trails Committee will work with community partners to develop trail programs and activities that promote physical, mental and ecological health benefits and to support Active Transportation initiatives

Committee Composition

1. Community Members
 - a. The committee shall represent a wide cross-section of the community.
 - b. Committee members are appointed for a term of two years or for such other term as Council may determine.
 - c. Committee members must commit to at least 3 Committee meetings a year and if possible assist with work on a sub-committee and attend one community event per year
2. City of Sarnia Staff Support
 - a. Two city staff representatives are assigned to liaise with the Committee.
 - b. These staff liaisons will be the conduit to provide administrative, procedural and /or technical assistance. The staff liaison will co-ordinate all requests, responses, departmental involvement and assist in preparation of any reports, resolutions or replies as necessary.
 - c. Representatives from other City departments will be asked for input on an as needed basis.
3. City of Sarnia Representation
 - a. The City of Sarnia Council may appoint a minimum of 1 council member to serve as a full member of the Committee. The length of the term of the Council member on the Committee shall be determined by the City Council.

Subcommittees

To fulfill the mandate and objectives of the BWT Committee, members are requested to serve on one of the following sub-committees:

- a. Maintenance and Development Committee
- b. Promotion and Fund-Raising Committee
- c. Activity and Event Committee
 - i. Phase Two Project – “Connecting Communities”
 - ii. Active Transportation Projects- ie. Bike Month and Bike Security Areas

Vacancies

The City Clerk’s Office advertises for potential applicants at the end of the Term Year. Committee members are asked to complete and submit an Application to the Clerks office on a yearly basis even though they have committed to a two year term. The Bluewater Trails Committee may ask for Council’s approval to invite potential applicants to the Committee if a vacancy occurs and/or if an applicant would benefit the Committee.

Administration

The Committee shall be known as the “Bluewater Trails Committee” (BWTC).

As a Committee of Council, BWTC shall report to Council via the Chair, Vice Chair or City Staff, as appropriate.

At the first meeting of the year, the Committee shall:

- Elect a Chair and Vice Chair
- Select a Secretary and Treasurer
- Select members and Chair for the following sub-committees:
 - Maintenance and Development Committee
 - Promotion and Fund-Raising Committee
 - Phase Two Project – “Connecting Communities” initiative to continue development of the River Road trail from Suncor to the St. Clair River Trail at LaSalle Road
- Establish dates and times for regular meetings throughout the year
- Review Terms of Reference
- Discussion of previous of year’s activities.
- Generate an annual plan of activities and report to Council as appropriate.

A meeting quorum shall be 50% of the Committee members.

When deemed necessary by the Committee, working sub-committees for issues, projects etc. may be established. Sub-committees may include individuals who are not members of the BWTC.

Minutes of the meeting will be recorded. Meeting minutes will be amended as necessary and adopted at the following meeting.

Meetings shall be conducted with an agenda that is approved by members. Members are encouraged to submit agenda topics at least 1 week prior to the meeting to the recorder.

Committee Budget

Bluewater Trails will submit an annual budget request (operational and capital) each fall to City Staff which will be reviewed and sent to Finance for processing and forwarded to Council for approval. Attached to budget will be a post-event review with proposed activities for the up-coming year. Once approved, the budget will be administered by the BWT Committee with support and input from city staff.

Committee Meetings

The Bluewater Trails Committee currently meets once per month, usually on the second Wednesday at noon at City Hall.

Delegations interested in presenting to the committee must notify the Staff Liaison or Chair at least 1 week in advance to ensure they are placed on the agenda. Following the presentation, the Committee may make recommendations or defer the issue(s) until after consultation with the respective City of Sarnia department(s).

Committee Procedures

The Committee will strive for consensus on all issues. If consensus is not reached, minority views are welcomed on any issue and will be reflected in the minutes.

All motions properly put before the Committee shall be voted upon. All members will have one vote and a simple majority carries the motion. A tie vote is lost. As a full member the chair is entitled to vote on any motion. City staff does not have voting privileges.

Communication to Council and City Staff

1. Committee Minutes should be forwarded to City Council.
2. Periodic updates shall also be forwarded to Council.
3. The BWT Committee will consult with the City of Sarnia BWT liaison(s) on issues affecting city staff.
4. The BWT city liaison(s) will forward BWT committee meeting minutes, reports and issues to their respective Directors for information purposes or for action item follow-up.

Amendments to Terms of Reference

A recommendation to amend the Terms of Reference can be made by a motion endorsed by at least two thirds of the membership of the Committee.

Proposed changes to the Committee Terms of Reference must be approved by Sarnia City Council.

Pecuniary Interest

Members having a pecuniary interest in any issue under consideration by the Committee shall declare the pecuniary interest to the Chair at the beginning of the meeting or at the earliest time known and shall not discuss or vote on the issue.

Roles of Committee Members

Chair

The Chair will lead the BWTC meetings and act as the Committee spokesperson for media inquiries and Sarnia City Council.

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair will assume the Chair's responsibilities in the event the Chair is absent.

Secretary

The Secretary will prepare and issue agenda's prior to the meeting, take attendance at the meeting, write minutes of the meeting and issue meeting minutes following the meeting.

Treasurer

The Treasurer will obtain BWTC budget information for review at each monthly meeting.

Approved by Sarnia City Council: Monday, March 7, 2011