

Community Services, Quality of Life & Tourism Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: April 14, 2026

Time: 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Location: Community Centre Boardroom, Niagara-on-the-Lake

Attendance

[Insert names]

Regrets

Teri Andruz, Brenda Tipper

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

4. Approval of Previous Minutes

The previous meeting minutes were not reviewed in detail during this discussion. The meeting focused primarily on current committee business and next steps.

5. Committee Discussion / Chair's Update

5.1 Accessibility and StopGap initiative

The meeting opened with a discussion on accessibility in Niagara-on-the-Lake, including the StopGap initiative and recent progress in encouraging businesses to adopt temporary accessibility ramps. It was noted that several businesses have now adopted StopGap ramps and that accessibility awareness continues to grow. The discussion also emphasized that accessibility goes beyond ramps and includes washrooms, door access, interior navigation, and overall universal design.

5.2 Health / committee capacity

Andrea advised the group that she was not feeling well due to shingles and was not at full capacity. She noted that she would continue to support the committee by recording the meeting and circulating notes, but would be relying more heavily on others in the discussion until she had recovered.

5.3 Tourism reference paper

A reference paper prepared from Kathy Weiss's recent tourism presentation was reviewed. The purpose of the document was to extract key phrases and themes relevant to the committee's work, especially around:

- collaboration
- shared prosperity
- respect
- heritage
- harmony among partners, community, and government
- benefits to residents, businesses, and guests

The document also pulled out references to residents and community relations from the presentation, including:

- community sensitivity to tourism growth and development
- transparent communication
- community engagement
- partnerships and collaboration
- festivals, events, and support for local business
- sustainable growth benefiting visitors, businesses, and the community

The committee agreed that this would serve as a useful reference document for future drafting and discussions.

5.4 Meeting with Kathy Weiss and Nicole Cripps

The committee discussed the proposed meeting with Kathy Weiss and Nicole Cripps. It was reported that Andrea had raised the matter informally with Kathy during a personal lunch, and Kathy indicated that she would be open to attending a committee meeting alongside Nicole. It was also noted that a tourism summit is expected in June and that the public is expected to be invited, although members agreed not to discuss that publicly until formally announced.

The committee agreed that the purpose of the proposed meeting should be:

- introductory
- relationship-building
- non-confrontational
- focussed on communication, community relations, and resident engagement

It was emphasized that this should not be framed as a meeting to raise complaints or specific issues, but rather as a way to open dialogue and establish a constructive working relationship.

5.5 Draft invitation letter

A revised draft invitation letter was reviewed. The draft introduced the committee, acknowledged the direction of the recent tourism work, and invited Kathy Weiss and Nicole Cripps to attend an upcoming committee meeting to discuss:

- their roles and priorities
- how community relations is currently being approached
- where the committee may be able to support communication and engagement efforts

The committee agreed with the overall tone and direction of the letter. It was decided that the invitation should remain concise and relationship-oriented.

5.6 Supporting documents

The committee discussed whether to include a more detailed brief along with the invitation. After discussion, it was agreed that the detailed brief should **not** be sent at this stage. Instead, the invitation letter would be accompanied only by a simple background piece about the Residents Association and committee. Members felt that sending the brief at this point could be overly heavy and might shape the meeting too narrowly before a relationship had been established.

5.7 Proposed dates and format

Possible meeting dates in May were discussed. The committee agreed that a few date options should be offered and that the meeting should ideally take place in the Community Centre Boardroom. A more intimate, in-person setting was considered preferable for this initial discussion.

Tuesday, May 5

Thursday, May 7

Wednesday, May 20

The committee discussed holding the meeting at the same general time as its regular meetings, and the time proposed was:

4:00 p.m.

5.8 Committee focus

The committee reaffirmed that its main focus areas at this stage are:

1. balancing tourism growth with quality of life in Niagara-on-the-Lake
2. exploring issues related to community health, with further refinement needed around that theme

6. Broader Discussion

6.1 Resident engagement and trust

A broader discussion took place about the relationship between residents, the Town, and local institutions. Members reflected on the way resident concerns are often perceived as oppositional, and how that dynamic can make collaboration more difficult. It was noted that many residents feel that consultation processes are sometimes predetermined, which contributes to mistrust.

The committee agreed that one of its roles is to help create a more constructive path between residents and institutions, so that issues can be raised and discussed without immediately becoming adversarial.

6.2 Royal George and hospital site as examples

The discussion referenced the Royal George Theatre and old hospital site as examples where process and community trust have been strained. These examples reinforced the view that consultation must be more meaningful, transparent, and respectful if public confidence is to improve.

6.3 Cell tower meeting

Andrea shared a brief update regarding a recent cell tower meeting. The discussion highlighted the tension between infrastructure needs and neighbourhood concerns, particularly in Queenston and along the parkway. Attendance at the meeting was low, and it was noted that broader communication to residents remains an ongoing challenge.

6.4 Housing and aging in community

The group also discussed the increasing need for housing options that support aging in place and allow older residents to remain in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Concerns were raised about limited accommodation options, pressures on older homeowners, and the need for more thoughtful long-term planning around senior housing and mixed community development.

7. Motions / Decisions

- The committee agreed to proceed with a concise invitation letter to Kathy Weiss and Nicole Cripps.
- The committee agreed **not** to send the more detailed brief at this stage.
- The committee agreed to offer a small number of date options in May and propose an in-person meeting in the Community Centre Boardroom.
- The committee confirmed that its current focus remains tourism / quality of life and broader community health concerns.

8. Action Items

- Finalize and send the invitation letter to Kathy Weiss and Nicole Cripps.
 - Prepare a short background attachment about the Residents Association / committee.
 - Confirm possible meeting dates and room availability.
 - Continue refining the committee's key issues and desired outcomes for the meeting.
 - Retain the tourism reference paper as a working document for future communication and drafting.
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9. Next Meeting

[Insert next meeting date and time]

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.