

**City of Norwalk
Bike/Walk Commission Meeting
October 2, 2017, 6:00pm
Norwalk Health Department, 2nd Floor Library**

Attendance: Jud Aley, Peter Franz, Colin Grotheer, Mike Heslin, Kevin Kane, Peter Libre, Nancy Rosett (Chair)

Ex Officio Members: Theresa Argondezzi (Acting Director of Health), Lt. Terry Blake (Police), Bruce Chimento (Director of Public Works), Sgt. Sofia Gulino (Police), Steve Kleppin (Director of Planning and Zoning), Tim Sheehan (Director of Redevelopment)

Other City Staff: Kaitlin Latham (Health Education Associate, Health Department)

Members of the Public: Mike Mushak, Mary Ann Pellegrino

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Rosett called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and a quorum was present.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Rosett asked for introductions from all meeting attendees.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Mushak shared his support for installing bike lanes on West Avenue, citing several studies suggesting that bicycle infrastructure should be incorporated in commercial areas frequented by cyclists. Mr. Mushak provided a self-made design depicting how bike lanes could fit on West Avenue.

Mr. Mushak asked for public support of The Pinnacle at Waypoint on the condition that space for bike infrastructure is incorporated into its design, and suggested that Commissioners email Steve Kleppin, Director of Planning and Zoning, the following statement: "The sidewalk width and building line must allow a minimum 70 feet of road clearance on West Avenue to allow for future 5-foot-wide bike lanes in both directions if parking is included on the East side of the street, or a minimum of 60 feet without parking."

4. ACCEPT SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Aley motioned to accept the September 5, 2017 Bike/Walk Taskforce minutes as presented. Commissioner Heslin seconded. The motion passed with all Commissioners in favor.

5. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. **Department of Public Works (DPW) Liaison Subcommittee:**

Ms. Rosett shared that meeting minutes from September's meeting between DPW and the Bike/Walk Taskforce were circulated via email.

Commissioners agreed to keep the monthly meeting between the Bike/Walk Commission and DPW private, and therefore will allow up to 3 Commissioners to attend the meeting. Ms. Rosett and Mr. Grotheer will attend monthly, and Mr. Libre and Mr. Aley decide amongst themselves who will attend each month.

b. **Norwalk Community College (NCC) Subcommittee:**

Mr. Grotheer discussed NCC's previous plans for an overpass on Richards Avenue, connecting the East and West campuses. This plan was placed on hold due to lack of budget and public resistance.

Mr. Grotheer, Ms. Rosett, and other City staff met with NCC staff to discuss inexpensive potential changes to Richards Avenue to enhance student safety, including a crosswalk at the north end of campus, creating approximately 30 on-street parking spaces through the middle of campus, and including al fresco dining areas to reinvigorate life into the outdoor space. Mr. Grotheer will share the presentation made to NCC staff with the Commission.

Mr. Chimento agreed to investigate the feasibility of including the on-street parking and additional crosswalk.

Mr. Libre suggested revising the plan to include parking on one side of Richards Avenue and bike lanes on the other side to connect to bike lanes on Richards Avenue.

c. **Bike Share Subcommittee:**

Ms. Rosett shared that the Mayor supports bringing a bike share to Norwalk and agreed to move to a RFP process. The RFP should become available within the next 3-4 weeks.

d. **Website Subcommittee:**

Ms. Latham asked commissioners to review the current website, <http://www.norwalkct.org/1503/Norwalk-BikeWalk-Task-Force>, and compile a list of suggested changes to discuss at the November Commission meeting.

e. **Strategic Plan Subcommittee:**

Ms. Rosett would like to create a strategic plan for the Commission, similar to that of the Bike/Walk Taskforce. Having this plan in place will help keep the Commission organized and focused, and will assist in the development of an annual report due to the Common Council each year.

The Commission agreed that education should be a primary focus of the Commission's strategic plan, in response to youth cyclists not obeying rules of the road.

6. **RULES OF OPERATION DISCUSSION**

Commissioners agreed to allow public comments at the beginning of each meeting, limited to 3 minutes per person. The speaker must be commenting on topics related to biking and walking in Norwalk, but will not be limited to speaking on agenda topics only. Special guest presentations will be allowed, but will not be considered public comment.

Commissioners agreed to establish a general email address that the public may send messages to. Ms. Rosett will have primary access to the account and will forward all messages to Commissioners. Ms. Argondezzi will ask the City's IT department whether the Commission is allowed to have a norwalkct.org email address, or if they should plan to create their own email address on their own.

7. **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Commissioners agreed to the following people as members of subcommittees:

- a. **DPW Liaison Subcommittee:** Ms. Rosett and Mr. Grotheer as primary members, and Mr. Aley and Mr. Libre.
- b. **NCC Subcommittee:** Mr. Grotheer and Ms. Rosett
- c. **Bike Share Subcommittee:** Mr. Heslin, Mr. Kane, and Ms. Rosett
- d. **Website Subcommittee:** Mr. Franz and Ms. Latham
- e. **Strategic Plan Subcommittee:** Mr. Aley, Mr. Grotheer, Ms. Latham, and Ms. Rosett
- f. **Safety/Outreach Committee:** Mr. Aley and Mr. Heslin

8. **WALKING UPDATE**

Ms. Latham shared that she presented on the success of the NorWALKer Walking Routes program at the National Walking Summit in St. Paul, MN last month. Other towns and cities were impressed with the level of support that the City of Norwalk has shown for creating safe physical activity opportunities throughout town.

Ms. Latham noted that community walks are ongoing, with the next walk taking place in Silvermine on Saturday, October 7. All participants should meet at Silvermine School at 8am to join the walk. All walks are posted to the City's calendar and the Health Department's website.

An attendee suggested that NorWALKer maps be displayed at Endurance House in the Waypointe district, and that the walks should also be promoted to runners to gain a more diverse audience. Ms. Latham will contact Endurance House to discuss.

9. **YANKEE DOODLE BRIDGE DISCUSSION**

Mr. Chimento shared that the walkway on Yankee Doodle Bridge will close while the bridge is under construction. The walkway will be reopened when work is completed. A shuttle service will be provided during the day, coordinated by the Norwalk Transit District.

Mr. Heslin requested contact information for the companies involved with the bridge reconstruction, as the Commission can provide input to designers as to how to best accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.

10. **TRAFFIC CALMING AT NORWALK HOSPITAL**

The Commission discussed the issue of speeding down Maple Street, past Norwalk Hospital. The intersections at Maple Street / Prospect Street and Maple Street / Fairview Avenue are especially dangerous.

Mr. Libre suggested 2-10' driving lanes and two 5' bike lanes on Maple Street as a traffic calming measure.

The Commission discussed the feasibility of installing crosswalks at these intersections. An ADA compliant crosswalk cannot be installed at Prospect/Maple due to the 13% grade of the road; however, crosswalks may be installed across Prospect Street and Fairview Avenue, with the ADA compliant crosswalk at Fairview rather than Prospect.

The Commission officially recommends installing traditional crosswalks at Prospect Street and ADA compliant crosswalks at Fairview Avenue. Mr. Libre motioned for approval, Mr. Grotheer seconded, and all approved with no abstentions.

11. **SIGNAGE/PAINTING PRIORITIES**

The Commission reviewed suggested priorities for signage and painting this Fall, and agreed on the following projects to prioritize for the remainder of 2017;

- a. Sunset Hill Avenue – Bike lanes on east side to Beacon Street; sharrows on west side to East Avenue (est. \$300)
- b. Beacon Street – Sharrows southbound and on north side from Sunset Hill Ave to Willow Street; bike lanes north from Willow Street to Strawberry Hill Avenue (est. \$1,000)
- c. West Rocks Road – Bike lanes except sharrows southbound from Rudolf Lane to France Street; patch around manhole covers (est. \$16,000)
- d. Richards Avenue – Paint bike lane symbols in existing shoulders from Route 1 to Cedar Street; paint bike lanes from Cedar Street to Flax Hill Road (est. \$2,500)
- e. East Avenue – Southbound bike lane on west side from Cottage Street to Seaview Avenue. (est. \$500)

The Commission discussed installing bike lanes and/or sharrows on Flax Hill Road, Woodward Avenue, and on North Water Street (until Oyster Shell Park). In an effort to take a long-term view, rather than make impulsive decisions on projects to prioritize, the Commission agreed to form a Bike Plan Committee, consisting of Mr. Heslin, Mr. Grotheer, Mr. Libre, and Mr. Mushak.

12. **ADJOURN**

Mr. Heslin moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Aley seconded. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:25pm.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 6, 2017 at 6:00pm in the Norwalk Health Department's 2nd floor library.