

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 1, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: Nancy Rosett, Chair; Jud Aley; Vincent Scicchitano; Deborah Lewis;
Colin Grotheer; Jim Carter, NRVT; Barbara McCabe, Gary Washinsky

OTHERS: Deanna D'Amore, Director, Health Department; Jessica Casey, Chief of
Community and Economic Development; Paul Sotnik, DPW Senior Engineer

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Rosett called the meeting to order at 6:04PM.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public input this evening.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. March 4th

On page 1, add Jim Carter to the attendance.

**** MS. LEWIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS
AMENDED.**

**** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Rosett reported and said that she had received a letter from Kaitlin Latham and read it to the committee.

Ms. Rosett read her report as follows:

Letter from Paul Sedlack

It appears, in effect, that the Norwalk Police Department does not enforce CT bike safety law, based in Deputy Chief Walsh's response to my questions. Consistent therewith, he confirms the Department apparently has no specific or dedicated training of officers as the enforcement of pedestrian and bike safety laws. Is this a proper subject for your commission, in the interest of public safety for Norwalk rider and walkers? Ms. Rosett said that she had emailed Mr. Sedlack back and said that she thought he was being unfair to the Police Department and Deputy Chief Walsh had explained why the driver was not cited. She said that she has welcomed him to attend the next meeting but she does not think there is anything else the committee can do. It was the consensus of the committee that while Mr. Sedlack is welcome to attend the next meeting but that the committee has done all that it can.

Bicycle Parking Signs

Traffic, Mobility and Parking will put up a sign for the bike rack at the East Norwalk Railroad Station. Mr. Sotnik and Ms. Rosett haven't had a chance to talk about what would be required to put a rack in Mill Pond Park. Nor have Mr. Grotheer and Ms. Rosett gotten together about figuring out where else to put bike racks. Ms. Casey asked if there is an inventory of where all of the bike racks are located. Ms. Rosett said "yes" and that she will send her the list.

MLK Corridor

Jud attended the last meeting as Ms. Rosett was in Florida. They will be establishing three committees and we will be participating as part of the economic development committee.

Ms. Casey said that the MLK corridor effort is led by a group called Freedom which is a group of Pastors and Reverends in area, and have come together to ask the state for \$150,000 to conduct three studies along the MLK corridor's, and the funds were received from three state agencies and the objective of the effort is to be able to look at the neighborhood as a whole and to understand different efforts under education, housing and economic development that can be put forth by the working team. There is a steering committee which is comprised of seven folks from the community which are primarily appointed from the Freedom group, as well as six City Hall employees and the Mayor is the co-chair. The steering committee will meet on a bi-weekly basis and the last meeting was held last week and there will also be a sub-committee formed. She said they have asked to meet with the state agencies regarding the level of grants, funding and resources that are available to make change in the area. Ms. Rosett asked if the funds are just for study and not for the implementation. Ms. Casey said "yes".

East Norwalk TOD Visioning Session

This session was very well attended. People seemed generally interested in main the area more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. The consultants will be taking with other groups and hope to present a draft plan at a public session in July and Ms. Rosett will let the committee when the date has been scheduled and said that it is worth attending if possible.

Holly Parker

Ms. Rosett spoke to Holly Parker who is heading up WestCOG's regional plan. She will keep the commission updated on the progress of the plan.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Bike Plan

Mr. Grotheer presented the bike plan map of the completed facilities and said the anticipated connections are building on the east side of town, and are hoping that what was recommended last year will be what the map will look like. With the amount of development that the urban gaps will be filled in the 2019 proposal and will take a year and focus on the externalities. He said for 2020 they will take what has been discussed this year and implementing that to fill in the west side gaps and at that point will be well connected. In 2021, they will concentrate on West Rocks and Silvermine and at that point suggested they evaluate it and discuss any improvements that can be made and determine if there are any connections that are needed or ones that are not needed. Ms. Rosett said that Mr. Grotheer will add the street names to the plan Ms. Rosett will match it up with the paving list.

b. Events

Ms. Rosett said that the Bike Walk Commission is cosponsoring the Norwalk Bike Rodeo on Saturday, May 4, 2019, and the participants will receive a free helmet and their bikes will have a safety check and there will be loaner bikes available if a bike is found to be unsafe and can't be made safe. Ms. Bisceglie will be at the bike safety area.

c. Bike Share

Ms. Rosett said that they had met with the vendor last month, and she took Matt Finelli, P3GM Operations Manager on a tour of the potential bike share station sites. The group meets again later this month. She said that a public meeting will be scheduled to get public input on where to locate the stations.

d. Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)

Mr. Carter provided an update on marking the on-road portion of the trail from the Maritime Aquarium to Calf Pasture Beach and said that he had met with Mr. Sotnik on Friday to re-designate way finding sign installation locations and they will be installing them on Tuesday. He said that the markings in the street still need to be done but that is contingent on the weather.

Mr. Carter said they are in the public document portion and are on schedule for the missing link which is section on trail from Union Park to New Canaan Avenue, and that if they continue to stay on schedule and they have every reason to expect that they will that they will be moving to construction late fall.

Mr. Carter said WilWalk which is the section that runs from Broad Street to Wolfpit Road in Wilton in on track, and the goal is also to start construction on portions of that this fall but legal language is still be debating between the prospective cities and the state.

Mr. Carter said that there is a cleanup scheduled for April 11th at 10:00AM on the section of New Canaan Avenue to Broad Street and it is a partnership with Keep America Beautiful, The Norwalk Watershed Association and Grace Farms.

Mr. Carter said that the Mutt Strut will be held of May 18th at Lockwood Mathews Park.

Mr. Carter said that they have proposed where the trail that comes down Calf Pasture Beach Road have a bike lane and presented a map with the proposal. Ms. Rosett suggested researching if there is sufficient room to install the bike lane on the left-hand side rather than the right-hand side where it passes the head-in parking. Mr. Sotnik said that he has made Mr. Yeosock aware of the proposal and that a parking bumper would be required for safety. Mr. Grotheer suggested pushing the parking back as far as practical and have a shared esplanade for pedestrians and bikes along the water. Ms. Rosett requested that a meeting be scheduled with Mr. Hughes because she would like to see this get done as soon as possible and the capital budget process in now underway and he will need to budget for it. Mr. Sotnik said that a plan will also need to be presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee for approval. Ms. Casey suggested finding out when the area is scheduled to be paved and said that there are three city departments that will need to work together to make the plan happen and the first piece is the design.

e. Outreach

Mr. Scicchitano suggested coordinating a poker run as a way to promote Norwalk and the existing bike lanes and provided an overview and said it would be a rally and not a race and suggested August 18th which is “The Taste of Norwalk” day event. He also said that there can be walking path for people who would rather walk. Ms. Rosett said that she spoke with Ms. Donna King regarding what would be needed in terms of the legalities

and will need to determine what exactly the event will entail and contact her regarding the necessary legalities.

f. Pedestrian Plan

Ms. Lewis said they are still looking for volunteers to lead walks and that she has not been successful in finding people. The goal is to have someone in each part of town leading walks each month. Sabrina Church has volunteered to lead a walk in the area of Norwalk High School and the Mayor and his wife lead their weekly walks.

Ms. Lewis said the goals are set up by Common Council district because they felt that was the way to integrate with the existing infrastructure, and have identified one key goal for each district and for three of the districts there are outstanding grant applications. She said that she and Ms. Rosett will be attending June meeting of the Health, Welfare and Public Safety Committee because they are very interested in sidewalks.

Ms. Lewis said they are doing an assessment of all of the crosswalks for all of the public schools and are identifying what the standards are nationwide and fit the assessments of all of the schools into that. She said they would like to integrate with the Board of Education and the PTO's and focus on the safety and walkability of the schools.

Ms. Lewis said that Norwalk is in need of a complete streets policy and requested that the Bike Walk Commission along with the Pedestrian Committee look into a policy for the City of Norwalk.

g. Safety and Education

There was no discussion.

h. Strategic Plan

Ms. D'Amore presented the Strategic Plan and said it is for quarter three and 75% of the activities that were set have been completed or on target, 13% are in progress and 12% that are below or not started which is partly due to social media and since Ms. Latham left there has been no update to social media. There was also no outreach event held in the third quarter. She said at the next meeting she will facilitate a SWOT analysis to inform the update of the strategic plan for next fiscal year.

i. Website

There was no discussion.

j. Planning and Zoning Liaison

There was no discussion.

k. Public Works Liaison

There was no discussion.

i. Redevelopment Liaison

There was no discussion.

m. Walking Update

Ms. D'Amore said that the American Heart Association is hosting a walk called Move More Day on Wednesday, April 3rd at the Merritt 7 between the hours of 11:30AM and 1:30PM and will be meeting in the lobby of building 301.

n. DPW Update

Mr. Sotnik said that the wayfinding signs for the NRVV will be installed tomorrow and Ms. Taber will be re-marking Fifth and Cove Streets and as soon as the weather permits it will be sent to Safety Markings to be painted, and she is also actively working on the six streets that were left from last year. He said that the Calf Pasture Beach proposal will have to be prioritized with the group.

Mr. Sotnik said that a Public Works and Chief of Operations position has been filled by Anthony Carr and he started on March 18, 2019.

Ms. Rosett said that Mr. Yeosock and Mr. Sotnik invited a small group to meet with them regarding the East Wall Street plan and they will be looking at a new plan incorporating a lot of the things they had discussed, and once it is formalized it will be sent to the group and will present it to the committee at next month's meeting.

o. Transportation, Mobility and Parking Update

Mr. Aley presented a bike map of Savannah, Georgia and suggested it be used as an example for Norwalk. The committee agreed and Ms. Casey will work on contacting a graphic designer.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Department of Economic and Community Development

Ms. Casey said that she had joined the City of Norwalk on January 7th as part of the reorganization that was approved by the Common Council in September. This position is a new position that was created in the reorganization and is the Chief of Community and Economic Development and she works with Planning & Zoning, Code Enforcement, Business Development and Tourism and Transportation Mobility and Parking. She said her role is to help to streamline what everyone is working and help create cohesion to move projects along. She said there are a lot of efforts going on and there are a lot of amazing things going on in Norwalk that don't always get promoted. She said she has met with each person on each of the teams as well as external stakeholders to hear what the goals and priorities are. She gave a background on her experience and said she will be taking those experiences and helping in Norwalk the best she can.

b. Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)

Ms. Rosett said that there is a proposal to possibly consider the Diverging Diamond interchange on East Avenue at exit 16. Mr. Grotheer presented an example of a Diverging Diamond Interchange and said that it improves traffic flow, but the biggest objection he has to it is that it is a very hostile for the pedestrian and bicycle environment. He said in the research that he has done they are usually done in low density and low dollar value per square acre areas. He suggested that the committee come out strong against this type of design based on the underlining and that another solution needs to be looked at. Ms. Rosett said that she has spoken to Ms. Burns and she is aware that if this comes up again that the committee would be very interested in being involved in the discussions.

7. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd
Telesco Secretarial Services

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