

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 6, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: Nancy Rosett, Chair; Vincent Scicchitano; Deborah Lewis; Colin Grotheer; Barbara McCabe; Christine Bisceglie; Gary Washinsky

OTHERS: Deanna D'Amore, Director, Health Department; Paul Sedlak

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Rosett called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Sedlak said that he had a bicycle accident in November on Fillow Street and provided overview on the details of the accident. He said that he was surprised that there was no ticket issued even though the driver was found to be at fault, and that he had met with Deputy Chief Walsh as to why there was no ticket issued and he was told that 56,000 tickets are issued per year, but he did not know how many were bicyclist related but typically they don't write any tickets for bicycle accidents. He said that he asked about training and was told there was no training and it seems like lack of enforcement is typical.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. March 4th

On page 1, add Jim Carter to the attendance.

**** MR. GROTHEER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** MR. SCICCHATANO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Rosett welcomed Ms. McCabe to the committee and said that she will be filling in for Mr. Heslin until his term expires, and she has agreed to be re-nominated in July. Ms. Rosett welcomed her to the committee and thanked her for all of her work on the Pedestrian Committee.

Ms. Rosett said that she and Mr. Aley had met with Mr. Carr and informed him about the commission, the ordinance that created the commission and the strategic plan. She said he was very positive and one of things he had said is that he looks for ways to make things happen and not for road blocks, and she thinks the commission will work together very well with him.

Ms. Rosett said that she had attended a WestCog session and that it was mostly for the CTDOT active listening program and they are focusing on what they can accomplish since the State is lacking funding. She said that she has sent the CT Bike Plan not only the commission but the entire mailing list which is up to approximately 120 members, and the plan includes a brief survey and she hopes that the committee takes the time to complete it.

Ms. Rosett said in June she would like to schedule another training session like the one that was held for the FOI training and suggested several topics such as having Mr. Aley walk through some of the existing studies that relate to pedestrian and bicycle planning in the city; inviting the Director of Transportation from New Haven because they have been very progressive in bicycle facilities and bringing a bike share program to New Haven; inviting Sandy Fry who is the Acting Senior Project Manager for Bicycle and Pedestrian coordinating for the City of Hartford; inviting Holly Parker who is working with West Cogg on regional bike planning. She welcomed any suggestions that anyone else may have. Ms. Lewis asked what the duration of the training will be. Ms. Rosett said approximately one hour. Ms. Bisceglie suggested a training session for bike share and said that New Haven has a great bike share program. Mr. Washinsky suggested training for grant applications for grant possibilities that are available from the state. Ms. Rosett said that Mr. Yeosock is diverse regionally and state wide grants, and there is also a grants person in the city and she will contact them. Mr. Grotheer said he is also interested in inviting the Director of Transportation from New Haven on hearing a recap of the plans. Mr. Washinsky said he is also interested in the inviting the Director of Transportation from New Haven and that would be useful for the committee.

Ms. Rosett said that there is a group from the State working to rework the intersection of the Merritt Parkway, Super 7 and the Old RT7 and originally it was a regular clover leaf but half of that never got built for various reasons. She said that she is part of the advisory for the group and they met and are currently considering four alternatives, and they all include widening the overpass over Main Avenue and widening Main Avenue. She said it will also include a bike lane on either side of Main Avenue, as well as two lanes of traffic going in each direction but the most optimistic time frame on when this may happen is 2024. Ms. Bisceglie asked if there are currently any crosswalks in the areas of Merritt Parkway. Ms. Rosett said “no” there is one at Stop & Shop and another at 601 Merritt 7 but there are not any crosswalks near Merritt Parkway. Ms. Lewis said that is part of the grant application.

Ms. Rosett said that she was contacted by a Professor from NCC asking if there are any plans to install bike lanes on Richards Avenue and other places around the college because they are looking into a bike share and/or electric scooter program. She said that she had told him that they

had concentrated on the East Norwalk area last year, and will be concentrating on West Norwalk this year but will need to consult with DPW once the plans are completed, and that he should reach back out her in a few months and she should could give him more of a definite answer. She said she also spoke to him about the bike share program and said that the current bike share program does not go that far west and suggested contacting the city's vendor.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Bike Plan

Mr. Grotheer said that he has updated the spreadsheet to include the “from” and “to” on the streets where we'd like to have either sharrows or bike lanes. He said that north and south Richards Avenue was in the State's evaluation of deficient intersections on Route and someone would have to design a way to get bicycles and people through there to get the connection to work well. He said that he has no issues with the shared space at NCC and suggested that the city and the college consider looking at it as Campus Street where it becomes a shared mixing zone, and he had recommended if they wanted bike facilities they can do a shared sidewalk or a walking path.

b. Events

Mr. Scicchitano said that he has further investigated the idea of having a bicycle/walk Poker Run and distributed a draft copy of the plan. He said after speaking with Lt. Blake the cost of police presence and would be too costly for everyone to start the race and end the race in one location so he suggested a rally rather than race. There was discussion ensued regarding the bike route and walk stops and Ms. Rosett suggested starting with just a walk this year to start and maybe incorporate bikes next year. Mr. Grotheer suggested not to over complicate the event and having a loose rally would be beneficial and not to have a registration or a set route. It was decided that Mr. Scicchitano will work with Mr. Washinsky and Mr. Grotheer on the details of the event and on how the event will be promoted, and that the committee members will email Mr. Scicchitano on suggestions of where the stops should be.

c. Bike Share

Ms. Rosett said that there was an official kick-off on April 11th with the vendor and that she had met with Ms. Valadares and a representative of the vendor to finalize the ten stations for the October roll out. She said the locations include the South Norwalk Railroad Station, the plaza by the police department, 50 Washington Street, The Maritime Garages and the Bow Tie Cinemas, Matthews Park, Norwalk Library, and in the Main

Street Parking Lot. Mr. Grotheer asked if any of the locations will use parking spaces. Ms. Rosett said “no”. She said for the April rollout they will begin installations on the east side of the river. Ms. Bisceglie suggested that the instructions for the bike share be in both English and Spanish.

d. Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)

There was no discussion.

e. Outreach

There was no discussion.

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.

Ms. Lewis said that the Pedestrian Committee is focusing on the schools and there are three initiatives that are ongoing with the schools. She said that Ms. Mc Cabe and the rest of the members of the committee have photographed the crosswalks and sidewalks at each of the public schools, and Ms. Church of the Redevelopment Agency has uploaded the photos to a google drive site and she will share them with the commission. She said the committee would like to develop a simple scorecard and identify criteria of sidewalks and crosswalks at each of the schools and rate the schools against each other. She welcomed the input of the commission for the criteria for the scorecard. She said the reasoning behind it is so there is some criteria for the funds that are allocated to the schools because there are certain schools that have been the beneficiaries of grant funding. She said the third school initiative is discovering that this is an issue in Norwalk and that there are other people who are interested in it and she has emailed Ms. Myer-Mitchell of the Board of Education because she is very concerned and interested in the issue, and that the Common Council has designated some funds in their capital budget for school sidewalks that Mr. Hempstead was discussing at a recent meeting. She said if there is funding that has been allocated to the schools she would like the commission to meet with them to discuss where the money will be allocated given there are limitations. Mr. Grotheer suggested consolidating some bus stops.

g. Safety and Education

Ms. Bisceglie said Bike Rodeo was held on May 4th and it went well and was well attended.

h. Strategic Plan

Ms. D'Amore presented the Strategic Plan and asked the commission if the goals are the same for next year. Ms. Rosett suggested that the Strategic Plan Committee meet regarding the plan and present it and make a recommendation to the full commission at the June meeting. Ms. Rosett suggested that one of the goals is to work with TMP and DPW on a complete streets policy to the city.

i. Website

There was no discussion.

j. Walking Update

Ms. D'Amore said that Mrs. Rilling is hoping to begin her walks once the weather improves. She said that the American Heart Association, Merritt 7, and the Health Department hosted a walk called Move More Day on Wednesday, April 3rd at the Merritt 7 and that 40-50 people had participated. She said that the American Heart Association will have their walk on May 19, 2019, at Sherwood Island and that commissioners are invited to attend and she will forward the information

Ms. Rosett said that the walks prior to the concerts at the beach will be held again this year beginning in June.

n. DPW Update

There was no discussion.

o. Transportation, Mobility and Parking Update

Mr. Grotheer presented the current proposal for East Wall Street and said there is current parking on the uphill portion of the hill and the current proposal includes moving the parking to the other side of the street and Mr. Aley has recommended reducing the lanes to 11'. Ms. Rosett said the extra space could be used as a door zone for the parking so that there is room for the parked car to open its door and not knock into the cyclist. Mr. Grotheer said he feels that moving the parking to the opposite side of the street makes it more dangerous and it would not change much in terms of behavior and he sees it being a worst condition and he would feel less comfortable parking downhill than he would parking uphill. Ms. Bisceglie asked why they are suggesting moving the parking and that it losses the adjacency to the restaurants and the waterfront that is currently being established. Mr. Grotheer said that they had some issues with sight line concerns when exiting Brook Street and the bus drop off. Mr. Washinsky suggested requesting that

DPW paint the bus lanes on the pavement. Mr. Grotheer said he is not in support of the plan and he thinks it could be better and he would like to have DPW and other departments respond quicker to their requests with engineering in mind but try them with the knowledge that they have achieved some level of safety. Mr. Scicchitano said he would like to see a standalone bike lane on either side of the road and have no parking. Ms. Rosett suggested asking DPW to do another evening workshop to discuss the proposal further.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

6. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business discussed this evening.

7. ADJOURNMENT

- ** MS. LEWIS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MS. SCICCHATANO SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd
Telesco Secretarial Services