

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 2, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: Nancy Rosett, Chair; Deborah Lewis; Jud Aley; Brian Brown; Colin Grotheer (6:25PM)

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Kathryn Hebert, Director, Transportation, Mobility and Parking

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment this evening.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. November 4th

**** MS. LEWIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4TH AS SUBMITTED.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Initiative

Ms. Hebert said that Mr. Aley had sent an email to herself and Ms. Casey regarding the Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Initiative. She said that the grant funding up to \$25,000 grant with a \$25,000 match and staff had researched it and because it is an asphalt art grant one of the requirements is that it has to be related to transportation, mobility the investment and it needs to be impactful and an investment. She said the city is putting an effort and priority into the Martin Luther King Drive corridor and that the working team will be applying for the grant at the intersection of Lowe Street and Martin Luther King Drive where there is a four-way crosswalk intersection that they are looking at doing an artistic crosswalk that will include a mural in the middle for an artistic place making installation. She said it will enhance the neighborhood and also tie into the South Norwalk Railroad Station. There is a residential development at Bates Court that will increase activity in the area. The Arts Commission will be requesting \$50,000 in the capital budget for these types of artistic place making-installations so part of the match will come from them. Mr. Aley asked who will determine what the design will be. Ms. Hebert said that Economic Development will be partnering with the Arts Commission so it will be someone who is working with the Arts Commission to curate the installation, but will still need to go through the Traffic Authority for approval since this a crosswalk and on the city's right of way and will ultimately go to the Common Council for a contract to perform the installation.

Mr. Brown said he thinks this is a bad idea to spend \$25,000 of the city's money making an aesthetic change when we have a huge backlog of infrastructure needs for sidewalks and bike lanes. Ms. Hebert said there is a capital request in for \$100,000 for sidewalks and \$50,000 for bike lanes and each department requests for both a capital and operating budget which goes through a vetting process and depending on where the priorities are that is how things get funded. Mr. Brown said by putting paint on the intersection in this area of the city where infrastructure is needed is a "slap in the face". Ms. Hebert said it is a balance with the resources that are available. Mr. Brown said he thinks this is a waste of money when there are so many things in the city that need to be addressed. Ms. Rosett suggested to Mr. Brown that if he wants to see more sidewalks and crosswalks that is a function of the Pedestrian Committee is which he chairs and the information should be forwarded to Ms. Hebert so that it can be included in the capital budget request.

Ms. Lewis said that she thinks it is a wonderful opportunity to jumpstart a process in a bottomless pit of need and would be impactful.

Ms. Hebert left the meeting at 6:20PM.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Rosett presented the new business cards that included simplified URL's as requested at the last meeting.

Mr. Grotheer joined the meeting at 6:25PM.

Ms. Rosett reported and said she and Ms. Lewis presented to about 30 Physical Education Teachers on Election Day and it seemed well received. Ms. Lewis said it was very basic but very useful and Ms. Rosett spoke about the laws that applicable in Connecticut to bicycling and safe bicycling guidelines. She said she spoke about the laws that that are applicable in Connecticut with regard to walking and safe walking guidelines. She said people need to be responsible for their own safe behavior when they are walking as well as those when they are driving and it is not an “either/or” proposition and that this should again be distributed. Ms. Rosett said Ms. Mandy Fisher of Naramake School would like to incorporate bike safety into her curriculum and she had put her in touch with Ms. Bisceglie as well as Susan Smith, the CEO of Bike/Walk CT.

Ms. Rosett said that they have applied for the American Walks grant and thanked Josh Morgan and Deanna D’Amore for their help. She said the grant is a maximum of \$1500 and have applied to put the signs in the crosswalks near schools. The application is included in the agenda and we should hear if we will get an award this month.

Ms. Rosett said she attended the East Norwalk TOD Community Forum and did not hear opposition to bike facilities as she has heard at some of the forums in the past and were definitely interested in making East Norwalk more walkable. She said most of the opposition was to tall buildings changing the character of the neighborhood. There appeared to be a desire for amenities in East Norwalk like a supermarket but little understanding that would require a greater population density than now exists.

Ms. Rosett said that she spoke to Mr. Yeosock today and he had requested that Ms. Taber to get a quote for the signs for the bike trough but she was out sick today and he wasn’t able to follow up with her. She said she is hoping that the signs will be installed by the January meeting. Mr. Aley said he had taken photos of people using bike troughs and laminated them and tied them to the railings for a temporary signage.

Ms. Rosett said that she had met with Lamond Daniels, the new Chief of Community Services for Norwalk and they will be discussing a grant he had told her about under the new business portion of the meeting.

Ms. Rosett said that Public Works and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs Committees are having a joint meeting tomorrow night primarily to discuss the Gardella lease at Calf Pasture Beach. She said there will be public hearing on January 7th at 7:00PM in room 231 and encouraged the commissioners to attend the meeting. She also requested that Mr. Grotheer look at their presentation that is included with the agenda.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Bike Plan

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Ms. Rosett said that the goals were put into short, medium and long term buckets. Mr. Grotheer said they had coordinated the bike plan with the paving schedule at the last meeting and included a few more major projects for the budget in this coming year. Ms. Rosett said both the Pedestrian Committee and the Bike Plan Committee will determine what they would like to see in the coming fiscal year and it will go through the budget process.

b. Events

Ms. Rosett read the report provided by Ms. Mc Cabe as follows:

Since our last meeting I had the opportunity to take a look at two possible sites for the showing of the Motherload documentary and both City Hall and the Library will let us use space free of charge. I'm personally leaning towards the Library because the availability of weekends and they provide technical support but I'd like to know your thoughts about location and what days and times of day you think we would get the biggest audience. I'd also like to know if we should schedule it in the spring or do it sooner.

Someone asked how long the documentary is at the last meeting and it is 86 minutes.

Regarding mall walking I had the opportunity to speak with their Strategic Partnership person about two weeks ago and she tells me they have partnered with the Hospital for what they are calling a wellness initiative. The plan they have for walking fairly anemic and seems to be just art worked placed around the mall with what they call fun facts and encouragement. They are happy with the approach but have not closed the door to a real waling program. I am hoping to hear back in the next week or two about the possibility of working together regarding a stronger program and fee parking before the stores open. The building opens at 7:00AM and the stores open at 10:00AM. Theresa, at the Health Department found another mall contract and sent an email introducing the Health Department, he Nor Walker and the Bike walk commission as potential partners in a mall walking program. I haven't had the opportunity to ask her if she has received a reply.

A decision on where and when to show the Motherload documentary was postponed to January when Ms. McCabe should be present.

c. Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)

There was no discussion.

d. Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Brown reported and said that they have finalized the goals for the Pedestrian Committee. Ms. Rosett said at the next committee meeting they will need to pick one or two specific things in each of the areas that they would like to accomplish during the year. Mr. Aley requested that Mr. Brown send him the meeting schedule for the Pedestrian Committee.

Mr. Brown said it was also discussed at the meeting to create a document depository to include agendas and meeting minutes and he will send the link to the members of the Bike Walk Commission once it has been created.

e. Safety and Education

Ms. Rosett said that Ms. Bisceglie is working on a Bicycle friendly business program that the League of American Bicyclists has and she is planning on speaking with the Norwalk Hospital to see if they would like to apply, and she has offered to work with them in completing the application which is due in February.

f. Strategic Plan

There was no discussion.

g. Website

Mr. Brown said the two parts of the website that need to be updated which is the flyer and the commission goals.

h. Walking Update

There was no discussion.

i. Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Pacelli reported and gave an update of the Bike/Scooter Share program and said they are still researching the feasibility of the program and looking at other cities and he will continue to update the commission.

Mr. Pacelli provided an update on the connectivity grant and said it is in the process of being finalized and will then be sent to the state for approval and are hoping to put it out to bid by the spring with a summer installation.

Mr. Pacelli presented the two locations for the raised crosswalks as part of the safe routes to school project on Highland Avenue and said there will be one at the northern end and

one at the southern end, of the Brien McMahon parking lot and the sidewalks will also be widened so the road will need to be reduced. Mr. Grotheer asked if this will need to go to the state for approval. Mr. Pacelli said “no”. Mr. Grotheer asked where there is state involvement on the project on Flax Hill. Mr. Pacelli said his guess would be because the roadway is going to be changed. Mr. Aley suggested bringing the sidewalk into the driveway of Brien Mc Mahon High School. Mr. Grotheer asked if the project is grant funded. Mr. Pacelli said “yes”. Mr. Grotheer said for consistency he would ask that they look at reducing the turn radii into and out of the two driveways because it would increase the safety and lower the speeds of the vehicles as they go through the crosswalks. Mr. Pacelli said they will look into it. He also said that he will be meeting with Mr. Yeosock to discuss the sharrows and the signage.

He said he has met with Mr. Yeosock to discuss the overall layout and he had mentioned that he is working with the state regarding the intersection on Flax Hill and Highland Avenue so it may change which will affect some of the signage and the placement of the pavement. There may also be a possible realignment of the road so he had advised him to stay away from doing anything in that area.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

6. NEW BUSINESS

b. Sustainable CT Community Match Fund

Ms. Rosett said this is a matching grant and it is for making communities more sustainable, healthy and vibrant and one of the categories that they will consider is public transportation. She said one of the things in the Strategic Plan includes covered bike parking and suggested working that into the grant application and asked if anyone is interested in working on this with her. Mr. Aley and Mr. Grotheer volunteered to work with her. She said it will be brought to the full commission in February for its consideration.

Mr. Grotheer said have been discussing about website things to put on the website and presented for safe roles for walking and biking and suggested adding a version of it to the website. Ms. Rosett suggested that he forward the link to the members of the commission.

Mr. Brown suggested the possibility of closing one of the streets for a couple of hours on a Sunday or Sunday's in the summer to have dedicated bicycling. Ms. Rosett said she would include it on the January agenda for discussion.

7. ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. BROWN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd