

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Nancy Rosett, Chair; Barbara McCabe; Jud Aley; Christine Bisceglie

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Theresa Argondezzi, Health Educator, Heath Department; Mike Yeosock, Asst. Director of Transportation, Mobility and Parking; Diane Lauricella, Tanner Thompson; Brad Craighead; Nick Roberts, Director of Recreation and Parks (arrived at 7:00PM)

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Rosett called the meeting to order at 6:02PM.

6. NEW BUSINESS

b. 25 mph speed limit on East Avenue-

Mr. Craighead said he is representing the Norwalk Green Association and their real focus is on pedestrian safety, promoting walkability and raising awareness but also being hospitable to traffic flow in a managed way, and they have been working closely with the City of Norwalk. He gave an overview of the demographics of the area and said that there are 1000 people who live within a five-minute walking distance from the green, and in addition to the 50 buildings in the geographic area there are approximately 160- 175 single family homes, 50 other properties and 210-225 apartments. He said the area is active not just during the week but on the weekends as well and has spent much time trying to find ways to make the area more pedestrian friendly and safe, and in speaking with the staff from Transportation, Mobility and Parking he has proposed making East Avenue between Morgan Avenue and Route One 25 MPH, because in his opinion it would make the area much more pedestrian friendly. Mr. Yeosock said they will look at the entire East Avenue corridor. Mr. Aley suggested the change to 25MPH should be citywide. Mr. Craighead said he appreciates the support and if anyone had any additional questions or recommendations about ways to help manage the traffic to contact him. Mr. Thompson suggested a road diet taking the road from four lanes to two lanes adding a bike lanes and buffer which would not only slow down the traffic but also beautify the area.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Lauricella-

Ms. Lauricella stated that she has lived in Norwalk for 34 years and she has recently moved to South Norwalk and one of the reasons being because there are sidewalks in the area. She complimented the Bike/Walk Commission and appreciates how thorough the committee structures are. She asked when the commission is discussing the future of having bike trails in the woods or alongside the river bringing the trail away from the wetlands because there are inland wetland laws and our wetlands are very precious. She asked that the commission be mindful of environmental laws so that both can exist.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. December 2, 2019

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 2, 2019 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** MS. MCCABE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH (3) THREE IN FAVOR AND (1) ONE ABSTENTION- MS. BISCEGLIE**

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Rosett reported and said Northeast Community Cycles which is an organization that collects used bikes and refurbishes them and donates them to children and adults who are in need of bicycles has donated 20 bicycles to the South Norwalk Community Center at their Christmas Party and they were raffled off. She thanked Mr. Daniels for making the contact to Northeast Community Cycles.

Ms. Rosett said that this is the third year that they have done the places for bikes survey and presented the results of the survey. She thanked Mr. Pacelli for the statistics for the miles of bike facilities, Ms. Stokes for the information regarding bikes and Ms. Green for the data of injuries.

Ms. Rosett said with the help of Mr. Morgan and Ms. D'Amore they have applied for the Sustainable Connecticut Community Match Fund for \$1500 to install the crosswalk signs in front of a few of the schools, but received an email from them stating at this time they are unable to fund the project.

Ms. Rosett gave an update on the Sustainable Connecticut Community Grant and said that she has spoken with Mr. Morgan and Norwalk is already registered and it is a matching grant. She said she will be meeting with the NRVT and Mr. Morgan later this week and she will report back to the commission next month.

Ms. Rosett said thanks to Ms. McCabe she had noticed at the Pine Street entrance to the parking lot there were what appear to be bike racks. She said that she will contact someone to see if they would consider installing a bike parking sign so people know there is bike parking, and if so, she will ask Mr. Morgan to do a press release. Ms. Bisceglie said that she will provide Ms. Rosett with a point of contact.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Bike Plan

There was no discussion.

b. Events

Ms. McCabe said that the city has offered space at the City Hall and the Library to show the motherload documentary and asked the commission if there is any interest in showing it. Ms. Bisceglie suggested co-sponsoring with another organization such as Sound Cyclists or League of Women Voters to generate interest. Ms. McCabe also suggested showing it at the beach if possible, depending of the increase of the cost. Mr. Aley agreed and said that it would open a whole new world to a lot of people.

c. Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)

There was no discussion.

d. Pedestrian Plan

Ms. Rosett said that the Pedestrian Plan Committee had met earlier today and she provided highlights of the meeting. She said that one the strategic goals of the commission is to improve walking near the areas of schools, so the Pedestrian Committee has been working on that and the two things they think need to be done is to get a handle

on whatever is already in progress. Mr. Pacelli has agreed to research that and report back to the committee, and Ms. Meyer- Mitchell suggested that they work with the school governance councils in each of the schools and they have decided to focus on the three schools that are on Highland Avenue and she will be speaking with the school governance council at those schools to see if the Pedestrian Plan Committee can get on their agendas and figure out how to work with them to improve things.

Ms. Rosett said at the meeting they also discussed crosswalks and decided to invite Mr. Carr and Ms. Hebert to the meeting in January to discuss ways to collaborate on crosswalks.

e. Safety and Education

Ms. Bisceglie said the League of American Bicyclist is rating cities and are giving awards called bike friendly America and the categories include Bike Friendly Community; Bike Friendly Business and Bike Friendly University. She said there is an application to submit to potentially win one of the three awards and the spring application is due in February 5th and the fall application in due on August 12th. She said there have been two communities in Connecticut that have received awards and the New Milford received and honorable mention and Canton received the bronze award. Ms. Rosett said that she has also reached out to Ms. Casey because she though Economic Development may also be interested in participating. Ms. Rosett said she thinks this is something to pursue and suggested that they apply for the fall application if Ms. Bisceglie is willing to spearhead the process. She said that she will email the application to the commissioners and they can reach out to Ms. Bisceglie with any of the answers they may have to the questions.

f. Strategic Plan

Ms. Rosett said the quarterly update will be given at the February meeting.

g. Website

Ms. Rosett said that she has spoken with Mr. Brown and suggested to him that the website be updated on a quarterly basis.

h. Walking Update

Ms. Argondezzi said this month the Healthy for Life project which is a community health coalition project. They will determine what initiatives there will be for the NorWalker program. In the meantime, at the suggestion of Ms. McCabe Ms. Argondezzi has reached out to the Norwalk Hospital and the SONO Collection and asked if they would be interested in partnering with the commission and the Health Department to sponsor a walking program at the mall. The library is also interested in the mall walking program so she will be meeting with them next week and she will report back to the commission.

i. Transportation, Mobility and Parking Update

Mr. Pacelli gave an update and said the Connectivity Grant is in final design to be sent to the State for approval. He said he is also working on the concept plan for Highland Avenue and he will be meeting with Ms. Hebert and Mr. Yeosock to finalize some of the preliminary designs.

Mr. Pacelli said that he is still researching what other communities are doing with the Bike/Scooter share program and their regulations.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Bike and Ped Laws and Safety Tips on Website

The item was tabled until the February meeting.

Mr. Roberts joined the meeting at 7:00PM.

b. Closing Road for Bicycling Periodically

Mr. Aley said there was a discussion at a past meeting of possibly closing a street on a Sunday for bicycle and pedestrian use and he was thinking of closing one lane on Beach Road in each direction as a starting point. Mr. Roberts said that he is familiar with the concept and he likes concept but he is not in charge of road closures and that would have to be approved by the Traffic Authority. Mr. Yeosock said one of the things to consider about closing lanes on Beach Road is that they already have a lot of races and the residents are beginning to get frustrated. Mr. Aley asked what the next step would be. Mr. Yeosock suggested that a proposal be put together to present to the Police Department.

Mr. Thompson also suggested closing one lane on Washington Street or North Main Street. There was further discussion ensued and it was decided that Mr. Thompson, Mr. Aley and Mr. Brown would be on a sub-committee for the concept.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Gardella Easement in Calf Pasture Beach

Ms. Roberts said this is an easement that the Gardella's have been seeking for at least two years and there was a joint meeting held with Parks and Recreation and DPW Committees in August, 2019, and at that point they had wanted three easements or curb cuts into their properties but due to the increase in traffic. They were asked to go back and work with their engineer and DPW engineering. He presented the draft proposal that both the City and the Gardella's had agreed to and the committee had requested that the Gardella's review the value of what they would be contributing to the City for the easements which was initially \$175,000 but the members of the Common Council have requested \$350,000 due to the cost to redo the roadway is upwards of \$750,000 and that is where it now stands. He said there was supposed to be a public meeting held tomorrow and a vote on Wednesday but that has now been taken off the table until February because the Attorneys for the Gardellas are still working through the agreement with the City Attorneys. Ms. Rosett asked if the design includes bike lanes. Mr. Roberts said "yes". Mr. Thompson asked the Parks Department encourage people to bike to the area rather than taking their cars because it creates additional space for recreational use.

Mr. Thompson said that Oslo Norway had announced that that have had zero pedestrian and cycle deaths in 2019.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd