

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 3, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Nancy Rosett, Chair; Barbara McCabe; Brian Brown; Jud Aley; Christine Bisceglie; Deborah Lewis; Colin Grotheer (arrived at 6:15PM)

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Kathryn Hebert, Director
Transportation, Mobility and Parking; Tanner Thompson; Gary Washinsky

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment this evening.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. January 6, 2020

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2020 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** MS. LEWIS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Rosett reported and said she had met with Mr. Aley, Mr. Carter, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Taney of the NRVT to discuss applying for a grant from the Sustainable Connecticut Community Match Fund. She said the grant is up to a \$25,000 match and the reason for inviting the NRVT is that the commission does not have the ability to raise that amount of funding but the NRVT does and their mission and our mission are compatible. She said there is no deadline for the application and Mr. Taney had suggested a “Bee Highway” which is a picnic area and a pollinator path beginning on New Canaan Avenue to Broad Street, and also suggested involving some of the schools that are near the path. She said she will be meeting with the NRVT to see what the next steps are to pursue the grant.

Ms. Rosett said that Ms. Mc Cabe had gone to the SONO Collection and discovered what appeared to be bike racks. She said she had emailed them requesting if they are back racks if they would install a sign outside of the garage that says bike parking so people know they are there but has not received a response back. Ms. Bisceglie said that she will be contact the representative at the SONO Collection and report back.

Ms. Rosett said in addition to being on this commission and the NRVT board she is the community relations chair for Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club and they would like to start donating bikes racks to municipalities. She said as part of the Strategic Plan one of the goals is to add bike racks in covered places and asked the commission if that is something they would like to pursue. Ms. Bisceglie asked if there would be any cost associated with the bike racks. Ms. Hebert said just for the installation. The commissioners all agreed that they were in support of pursuing the bike racks. Ms. Lewis added that she would like to thank Sound Cyclists very much and that it is a wonderful idea and suggested asking them what they envision the rollout to look like. Ms. Rosett said that she will report back to the commission following the next meeting with Sound Cyclists.

Ms. Bisceglie asked if there is anyone who advocates for pedestrians for covered bus stops because it is painful to see hard working people in the rain and snow with no covered bus stops. Ms. Hebert said that she will contact the Transit District for a list of the bus stops that are covered and which ones are not.

Mr. Brown requested adding the bus stop at DMV to the next agenda as a discussion item.

Ms. Rosett said that she and Ms. Mc Cabe had attended the transit roundtable that had a panel of nine people and was very interesting. Ms. Bisceglie asked what the priorities are for the state. Ms. Hebert said bus and rail.

Ms. Rosett presented the signs for the bottom of bike trough that Mr. Yeosock had purchased and he asked if he should get similar signs for the top of the trough. The commission agreed that there should be an additional sign at the top.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Bike Plan

There was no update. Mr. Aley said there will be no updates on the bike plan during the winter months but in the spring will be is discussions with DPW.

b. Events

Ms. McCabe said that she will be meeting with Ms. Argondezzi to discuss the mall walker program with the NorWALKer program and the commission and will be scheduling a date for a test walk. Ms. Lewis asked Ms. Mc Cabe if she had inquired with representatives from the mall regarding waiving the parking fee during the walks. Ms. Mc Cabe said that Ms. Argondezzi had mentioned it to them again and they said they would think about it but they have added the ability to pay \$1.00/for an hour rather than the minimum of \$3.00 for three hours or less.

Ms. Mc Cabe said there is a meeting scheduled on February 12th with Mr. Roberts to discuss the feasibility of using Calf Pasture Beach to show the documentary. She said she would like to schedule it for May is possible being that is bike month.

c. Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)

There was no discussion.

d. Pedestrian Plan

Ms. Rosett said that the Pedestrian committee had met twice in January and they are discussing walkability near schools. At the last meeting TMP had volunteered to look at the data that was received from the parent survey with the crash data that is available from the state to see if there is overlap. She said they would like to concentrate on the three schools that are Highland Avenue and Ms. Meyer-Mitchell has sent emails to the school governance committees at the three schools to schedule a meeting with them to determine how to move forward based on the data that was collected.

Ms. Hebert said that Brien Mc Mahon High School is one of the schools that are included in the bell time change and might have traffic impacts so TMP had done traffic counts and turning movements and Mr. Pacelli put together a report that will be presented to the bell time task force as a benchmark. She said they will not know the true impact of the bell change until the fall once it is implemented and at that time will again do traffic counts. She also said when the Walk Bridge project begins working on East Avenue there will be traffic impacts to Strawberry Hill Avenue but they do not yet know what those impacts will be.

Ms. Rosett said that TMP is responsible for new sidewalks and DPW is responsible for maintaining existing sidewalks and she has invited Mr. Carr to a Pedestrian Committee meeting to clarify how they mesh together.

e. Safety and Education

Ms. Bisceglie said that she has reached out to the hotel in Norwalk who had received the bronze award for Bicycle Friendly Businesses from the League of American Bicyclists Community but she has not received a response back. She said the representative from the League of American Bicyclists suggested a conference call after the summit in March to discuss the application process for Norwalk to become a Bicycle Friendly Community. Mr. Pacelli said a lot of the questions in the application were tailored to what the goals are for Vision Zero and the Complete Streets policy but we won't have either until the end of the year. Ms. Hebert suggested waiting until 2021 to apply when all of the initiatives are implemented. Ms. Bisceglie said she will focus on the NCC applying for a Bicycle Friendly University award and the business application first.

Ms. Bisceglie said that she will be meeting with Mr. Roberts regarding the bicycle safety program for the summer camps. Ms. Bisceglie suggested now that the YMCA is opening that it may be another avenue for bicycle education.

f. Strategic Plan

Ms. Rosett provided an update on the Strategic Plan and said that she meets with the Mayor and his direct reports a few times a year and generally uses the Strategic Plan and evaluation to date as the basis in the discussions with him. She said she will be scheduling the meeting late in February and once the date is confirmed she will email the Commission members to see if any would like to attend. She said that she has also invited Mr. Kleppin to speak to us after our May meeting to provide a brief overview of the POCD and specifically discuss what things the Commission is responsible for and to figure out how to work with the other groups to make forward progress that were assigned to the commission. She said that 20 bicycles were raffled off and the booklets in both English and Spanish from the League on bicycle safety were donated at an event that was held at the South Norwalk Community Center. She said in updating social media and said she does post to the Facebook account and she does send out emails to the mailing list which now has just under 200 people on it. Ms. Hebert suggested posting to

the Norwalk Tomorrow site and said if anyone on the commission has any information to share to send their ideas to Ms. Rosett. Ms. Rosett said for the fundraising section of the Strategic Plan states that the commission will apply for a minimum of two grants and that they have applied for one and were rejected and are in the process of applying for a second one with the NRVT.

g. Website

There was no update.

h. Walking Update

There was no update.

i. Transportation, Mobility and Parking Update

Mr. Pacelli reported and said that they are in the draft process for Highland Avenue. He said he has been researching the crash data locations in the depository and getting down to a granular layer of data and will combine that with the walkability results from the survey.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Bike and Ped Laws and Safety Tips on Website

Ms. Lewis said people really don't know the basics of walking and bicycling safety and suggested the information be posted on the Facebook page as well as Norwalk Now. Ms. Rosett said that she will also send it to the mailing list. Ms. Hebert will send the information to Norwalk Now to be reformulated as a blog for their site.

b. Closing Road for Bicycling Periodically

Mr. Thompson presented and said at the last meeting there was brief discussion on holding some sort of event in the street and closing the street to cars and opening them up to pedestrians and cyclists. He said that he had met with Mr. Brown and they were inspired by two events which are Summer Streets in New York City and Bicycle

Sundays on the Cross County Parkway and they gave a brief overview of the events. He said they were inspired by the events because it shows what street space can do for the community when it's not just moving cars and presented three ideas that they think would fulfil that vision and the first one is Beach Road as a possible location during the off peak season and it would provide a space for families to ride their bikes. He said the second idea is a pedestrian event to turn one block of Washington Street into pedestrian area and suggested cross promoting it with the Wheels 2 U program. Ms. Aley suggested Wall Street which is in need of pedestrian activity. Mr. Grotheer suggested two events be held simultaneously and use the Wheels 2 U to bring people back and forth. Mr. Aley said he will contact the Wall Street Association and meet with Mr. Brown and Mr. Thompson. Mr. Thompson said the last idea for a location is MLK corridor south of the mall as another possible cycling location. Ms. Rosett suggested contacting the police department to discuss the proposals. Ms. Hebert said there is a process and suggested that a proposal be put together to present to the Traffic Authority for approval.

6. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business discussed this evening.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd