

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 2, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Nancy Rosett, Chair; Barbara McCabe; Jud Aley; Deborah Lewis; Brian Brown

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Kathryn Hebert, Director Transportation, Mobility and Parking; Michael Yeosock, Asst. Director Transportation, Mobility and Parking; 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. February 3, 2020

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 3, 2020 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** MR. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Rosett reported and said that she and Mr. Aley met with Brian Bidolli, the new Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency to introduce themselves and give an overview of what the Bike Walk Commission does. She said they also shared the strategic plan and he was very interested in it and is working to develop a strategic plan for the Redevelopment Agency and is eager to have this commission have some input.

Ms. Rosett said that Mr. Grotheer, Mr. Brown, Mr. Washinsky, Ms. Lewis and herself had met with Mayor Rilling and Ms. King to review the Strategic Plan and the progress to get his input on not only what we are doing but suggestions he may have had on where we should be headed. He was positive about what the commission is doing and the progress that has been made but is very disappointed about the bike share program. She said she had explained to him that the industry is currently not interested in doing business with medium sized cities but explained to him that the committee has not lost sight of the bike share program but it made sense to incorporate it with the up and coming Vision Zero Project.

Ms. Rosett said that Ms. King mentioned that there is a problem with committee members, commissioners and Common Council members contacting city staff directly. Ms. Rosett said it has been her experience that city employees are generally very eager to help, but the problem is that it takes time away from what they are supposed to be doing. Ms. King had pointed out if their managers are not aware of what they are doing there is no way during budget time to request additional staffing. She said that Ms. King has requested that each of the committees and so forth choose a single point of contact and she requested that the commissioner either contact herself or Ms. Hebert to get the information and conserve the city employees time going forward.

Ms. Rosett said that Ms. Hebert is in the process of developing an inventory of the bus stops to be included on the City's GIS system. Ms. Hebert said she has received information from the Transit District and it is being entered into the GIS and she has also spoken to Ms. Morton, Executive Director of the Transit District and they have a comprehensive operation plan that they are putting together. She said that most of their funding comes from the state and federal government so they have requirements that they have to fulfill, and one is the comprehensive operation report and she will include the bus stops as part of the scope. She said she will also be evaluating the current bus stop locations and also where people are walking from and where the crosswalk are located in relation to those bus stops and also looking at the crash data. Ms. Rosett requested that Ms. Morton attend the April or May commission meeting. Mr. Brown asked if this would specially apply to the bus stop that is across from the DMV on Main Avenue because it is a frequently used bus stop and there is no canopy or crosswalk to get to the DMV nor is there a sidewalk. Ms. Hebert said "yes" they will be looking at this comprehensively and will narrow the priorities. Ms. Rosett said in addition to the data it would be helpful to understand the process. Mr. Brown said while he understand looking it this comprehensively but at the same time should identify some very serious concerns that action can be taken quicker on and requested that the bus stop near the DMV be elevated. Ms. Lewis said the bus stop on Connecticut Avenue in front of the Stop & Shop is also a safety concern.

Ms. Roseett that she has received emails for commissioners after she has posted the agenda requesting adding items to the agenda and she like transparency in government and asked the

commissioners if the draft agenda needs to be sent out earlier. The commission agreed that the agenda is sent out in time.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Bike Plan

There was no update.

b. Events

Ms. Mc Cabe reported and said that she has been working with Mr. Roberts and he is interested in combining the documentary with another event specifically to bicycling and he is favoring Oyster Shell Park but there are some logistical issues with that location. Ms. Rosett said that part of the reason Mr. Roberts had suggested Oyster Shell Park is because he thought that CCAP event was going to have an a race series at Oyster Shell Park in the spring but they are only doing a fall race. Ms. Rosett said that Ms. Mc Cabe will be meeting with Ms. Stokes regarding scheduling a recruiting event in conjunction with the documentary and if that doesn't work out perhaps go back to the original plan which was to show it at the library.

Ms. Lewis asked for a status update on the mall walking. Ms. Mc Cabe said Ms. Argondezzi has taken the lead on that.

c. Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)

Ms. Rosett said the NRVT just hired a new Executive Director and her name is Beth Merrill and she and Mr. Carter will be meeting her on Wednesday. She provided an update on the NRVT Trail and said the Common Council has passed the lease approvals. Mr. Yeosock said when the DOT sent the lease back they did not include the parking lot which also needs a lease agreement. He said it is now on the Public Works Committee agenda tomorrow night for approval and will go to the Common Council the following week.

d. Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Brown presented and said he and Mr. Thompson met with Mr. Allen regarding Wall Street and found out about the events that the Wall Street Association has and they have closed streets off for some of their events. He said they are on board with the idea of having a commission helping with anything regarding the plans and on June 21, 2020,

they will be holding a music festival which would dovetail very well. The next step is to attend the next neighborhood association meeting to speak with the body as a whole.

Mr. Brown reported on the Highland Avenue project and said that Ms. Meyer-Mitchell had scheduled a meetings with the Principal at Brien Mc Mahon and the Principal at Roton School, as well as members of the governance councils of both of the schools and the PTA for Brien Mc Mahon. He said they had some very specific concerns regarding Highland Avenue and he let them know that the city has a plan in process and are very interested in being a part of that plan and having input.

e. Safety and Education

Ms. Rosett said that she and Ms. Bisceglie met with Ms. Korkatzis and had exchanged a lot of good ideas. In addition to the traditional summer programs Recreation and Parks has been offering they will also be offering some one week interest oriented programs during the summer. She said that Bisceglie and Ms. Korkatzis will be working together to develop a one week course around bicycling and bicycle safety.

f. Strategic Plan

There was no update.

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 the Highland Avenue project is early in the design phase and will include two raised crosswalks. Mr. Brown asked if the island is targeted for a redesign. Mr. Yeosock said they have been trying to work on it but there has been opposition but there will be another public informational meeting on it next month. Ms. Hebert suggested that if there are people in favor of the intersection being changed they should attend the meeting so that the project can be advanced. Mr. Brown said the people at both schools said that intersection in dangerous and there is no crossing guard in the morning. Mr. Yeosock said that traffic will not be handled as well with the new design but

it will make it safer. Mr. Washinsky said just simplifying the intersection would facilitate faster movements. Mr. Yeosock said that he will send the committee members the plan and the date of the public informational hearing once it has been scheduled and suggested having it at one of the schools. Mr. Brown asked if staff would be prepared to discuss other changes that are being proposed for Highland Avenue. Mr. Yeosock said “yes” but not as part of the public informational meeting.

Mr. Pacelli said that he had also met with Principal Hurwitz and he had voiced his concerns that are taken them into consideration and they are still working on tying in the walkability study.

Mr. Aley said there are people crossing the intersection on Wall Street and River Street and no one uses the crosswalk up the street and asked what can be done to install a crosswalk. Mr. Yeosock said people are crossing at their own risk and if a crosswalk is installed the city will be at risk liability and suggested looking at a long term plan. . Ms. Hebert said this is part of a bigger plan and needs to be looked at either through another grant or by the Vision Zero plan or a combination of both. Mr. Aley suggested in the short term removing the right turn land and making two parking spaces on Wall Street between River Street and Mechanic Street. Ms. Hebert suggested bringing it to the Traffic Authority for approval after Mr. Yeosock evaluates the location.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. East Avenue Traffic Calming

Ms. Rosett said that she had circulated a request from Brad Craighead and they would like the commission to support them by formally supporting the reduction of the speed limit on East Avenue from 30MPH to 25MPH along with a commitment to explore the viability of using traffic calming mechanisms around the green.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE TO SUPPORT THE REDUCTION OF THE SPEED LIMIT ON EAST AVENUE FROM 30MPH TO 25 MPH AND TO EXPLORE THE VIABILITY OF USING TRAFFIC CALMING MECHANISMS AROUND THE GREEN.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business discussed this evening.

7. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. MCCABE MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MS. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd