

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
DECEMBER 11, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Nicholas Pappas; Christine Bisceglie; Manuel Salgado

STAFF: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Jahliah Green, Health Department

OTHERS: Ben Hanpeter

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at <http://www.norwalkct.org/meetings>.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:05PM.

Ms. Lauricella said she would like to celebrate that a strategic plan is being discussed and she will email some thoughts for projects she would like to bring forth in the coming year.

APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 6 2023 MEETING

**** MR. SALGADO MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. PAPPAS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

STRATEGIC PLAN

Mr. Thompson said there is currently not a strategic plan, but the commission had begun the process to make one last year but never finished and has picked it back up this year. He said that Mr. Salgado has some experience in the non-profit realm and has done some strategic planning in the past for a similar type of group and he has asked him to facilitate the discussion tonight.

Ms. Bisceglie said a lot of the strategic plan has been done, which the commission worked hard on and had a lot of good points and suggested using that as a starting point. Mr. Thompson said the only thing that has been formalized in the plan is the city's ordinance and has purpose, powers, and duties and what was worked on last year was never finalized.

Mr. Salgado said one of the goals of the strategic plan is how the commission fits into the city and asked what the issues are that the commission is trying to address. There was a discussion and review of what the commission accomplished last year as well as TMP achievements. Mr. Salgado asked if they fall in line with the goals of the organization and where does the commission feel good where they are as an organization. Mr. Thompson said if he had to choose one thing it would be the Bike Friendly Communities application and the second would be bike month. Ms. Bisceglie said the things that she is proud of is that there is only one vacancy on the commission, and the open streets event. She said one of the biggest strengths of the commission is the ability to have partnerships. Mr. Pappas said he would choose the bike month events and the letters that the commission wrote in support of grant funding for departments such as TMP which is a way to contribute towards infrastructure in the city. Mr. Pacelli agreed it is important to have support when applying for grants and for projects and that it is an integral piece in getting the grants. He also said participating in as many special events as possible and getting involved in as many city events as possible. Mr. Salgado said that the items that were shared that the commission feels good about and that the commission has accomplished fit into the responsibilities piece and are positive and strong things that are being done as a Bike/Walk commission.

Mr. Salgado asked the committee where they see some of the blind spots and what goals have not yet been accomplished. Mr. Thompson said he feels that the commission is constrained on the limitations on how they do business and that is why some of committee members have formed sustainable streets as they felt there is work could get more easily done if people meet on their own and be more flexible and organic. Ms. Green said she feels that a weakness is lack of public knowledge of the commission and if there was more public input on certain things it would make the events better and if they could get the community more involved with the commission and having more attendees at the meetings the commission would probably get more out of the community on what the community needs. Ms. Bisceglie suggested figuring out a way through education to address the complaints on social media. She said the other thing is diversity and although they have tried to get more diversity on the commission, she would like to see more minorities get involved as part of their work. Mr. Thompson said he would add that as a strength as two Hispanic commissioners have been added to the commission which has let do better engagement at events because they speak Spanish and can interact with people who speak Spanish. Mr. Pappas said they now have a newly formed education committee and an opportunity for growth is the education aspect and by now having a committee for this shows that the commission is paying more attention to it and addressing some situations and is an area to grow. Mr. Pacelli said the lack of public knowledge is a big thing and getting the word out, so people understand what the commission's mission is and also suggested identifying what other cities do.

Mr. Salgado asked the committee if they perceive any threats in accomplishing what they are trying to do. Ms. Bisceglie she would like to see the strategic plan to be prioritized as a commission because they need to be held accountable by the city and a piece of their work is an internal quarterly review of the strategic plan to see if milestones are being reached and getting that out to the public as part of the promotion of our group and what was accomplished.

Mr. Thompson asked what the timeline looks like for the draft transportation master plan to be finalized and does TMP intend to bring in a consultant again to update it or is that the kind of thing that the commission will do. Mr. Pacelli said the master plan should be completed over the winter, but they have not yet discussed rewriting the bike plan and that may be something that may be looked at in the upcoming year, but the two main drivers at this time is the master plan and complete streets. Mr. Thompson asked if the commission should work on an update to the bike plan. Mr. Pacelli said "yes" it would be worthwhile for the commission to look at the existing bike/ped plan and get a better understanding of it. Mr. Thompson said that should be a goal for 2024.

Mr. Thompson said the bike share plan should be worked on as it was a suggestion from the mayor and because it would be impactful to Norwalk.

Mr. Salgado asked if the bike valet program should be a priority. Mr. Thompson said “yes”. Mr. Pappas agreed and said the whole idea of the bike valet program is to make people who attend these events who may otherwise drive there feel more comfortable brining their bike knowing there would be someone watching it.

Mr. Salgado asked if the goals that were in the 2023 strategic plan should be looked at to see if they are still a goal. Mr. Thompson suggested brainstorming a lot of goals and then prioritizing them. Ms. Green said when the goals are established, she thinks by making them smart goals would be more helpful in achieving so a specific time can be set, and the goals would be very specific. She also suggested discussing the goals of the strategic plan throughout the year to ensure the committee is achieving them or working towards them.

Ms. Green left the meeting at 7:15PM.

The committee set potential goals for 2024 to be prioritized at the next meeting.

The committee decided to schedule a follow up meeting on January 3, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. BISCEGLIE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. PAPPAS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd