

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
December 6, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Christine Bisceglie; Colin Grotheer; Barbara McCabe; Audrey Cozzarin; Jud Aley

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner, Theresa Argondezzi, Asst. Director of Health; Sergeant Gulino, Norwalk Police Department; Michael Yeosock, Principal Engineer, TMP.

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 6:00PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER & NOVEMBER

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** MS. BISCEGLIE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC INPUT

- Principal Brush from Tracey School

Principal Brush of Tracey Elementary School said at the beginning of the school year it came to her attention that there were a lot of unsafe areas around the school, and it was not marked as a school zone which she found surprising because there is a lot of difficulty with the traffic patterns

during drop off and pick up. She said that staff from TMP came to observe the traffic patterns and looked for possible options to improve the safety for the students and had made some recommendations that have already taken place. She said the city is working on the speed limit and crosswalk concerns that she brought to their attention and the speed limit is one of her big concerns. She said that there is also a large number of parents who drop off and pick up and one of the things we have been discussing is how to make the area safer for the students to walk to school, because there are a large number of students in the area that do not qualify for bus service but get dropped off and picked up but if there were some safer areas around the school more students would likely walk to and from school which would help to reduce the congestion and the traffic and in general improve the area, but currently the area does not have well connected sidewalks. She said in general she is looking at the walkability of this area and make it safe for the students and more attractive to walk to school and would love to have the commissions help to bring some of the concerns to light.

- Chris Mojica- Tracey Traffic Committee

Mr. Mojito said we are in a very walkable community and have a lot of parents who are in that walkshed that choose to walk to school but don't feel comfortable because how dangerous and unsafe it can be. He said the impacts are significant and there is a mixture of traffic in the morning and in the afternoon of parents and those using the road as a cut through to bypass the congestion on RT 1 and tend to go at a much higher rate of speed. He said it seems like there has been a lot of infrastructure investment and hearing about the sidewalks on West Rocks Road is great but it would be good if there was some additional attention made to complete the sidewalks on Adams Avenue as well as on Ward Street and Jarvis Street and requested the commission take another look at the area, and requested an additional study be done to see if there is anything that can be done in terms of speeding, traffic calming and striping to slow the traffic down in the area and more importantly get sidewalks on the roads which would incentivize more people to use these roads to walk to and from school, and would also alleviate the congestion at drop off and pick up times.

Mr. Thompson said in his opinion getting sidewalks installed would be the most effective and they also have a traffic calming effect. Mr. Grotheer said he agrees, and Adams Avenue is the best candidate but the first need is to reconstruct the sidewalk at the corner of the school because so many people drive over the curb and are parking on the sidewalk which makes for a hazardous condition.

Mr. Pacelli said that he has spoken to TMP staff regarding this issue and the sidewalk on Adams @ Camp Street is an existing sidewalk and a request can be submitted to DPW to look at it because TMP looks at installing new sidewalks but does not replace them. He said as far as extending the sidewalk that is a much more intricate task and is costly and there are a lot of areas around the city that are in need of sidewalks so that would be a longer-term item because funding for sidewalks is difficult to get and are now working on inventorying and assessing all of the sidewalks in the city through a consultant which will determine where they need to be placed. He said as far as implementing some of the changes on Camp Street especially on the short-term level will implement new striping and add narrow lanes especially on the north approach and provide a better defined outline of the street, and will also be putting in a request the OSTA

which is the state Traffic Authority to lower the speed limit to 20 MPH so that it can become a school zone and will look to install a traffic speed sign as well.

Ms. Bisceglie asked if there is anyone dedicated for safe routes to schools because there are also other schools that need attention. Mr. Pacelli said TMP does have safe routes to school funding each year and have been working on the Highland Avenue sidewalk project and each year will try to increase it as much as we can for the safe routes to school funding from the city.

Mr. Thompson said the commission is looking forward to the citywide sidewalk audit so that all the areas in the city that are missing sidewalks are identified, but the commission is already identifying some locations such as the area at Tracey School and asked if there is an area where we can prioritize these locations. Mr. Pacelli said we are aggressively putting together concept designs for sidewalks.

Mr. Mojica asked if a similar plan that was done on Camp Street can be done on Adams and Ward Street and anything that can be done in terms of additional signage, striping or speed measurement devices would be well received by a lot of the parents in the area. Mr. Pacelli said that he will speak with the TMP staff to see if they have any available staff to assign. Ms. Bisceglie said a lot of the issue is visibility and there needs to be something done to reduce the amount of traffic during drop off and pick up times.

Mr. Grotheer asked if the school community, neighborhood, and commission was to establish a master plan of a targeted area around the school if a federal safe routes to school grant can be applied for so there is more funding in addition to what is in the city budget. Mr. Pacelli said “yes” but he does not know at this point what funding is available. Ms. Bisceglie said she would like to help with that work. Ms. Argondezzi suggested that when compiling the list of potential areas of improvement that some sort of quantitative data is included to compare different areas in the city and why it should be on the priority list. Mr. Pacelli suggested there be an offline discussion to try and streamline the process.

Ms. Cozzarin said the Pedestrian Committee did create a PowerPoint presentation identifying problem spots around all the schools and on state roads and there were two studies done and a lot of the information in the presentation came from those studies and is a tremendous resource.

REPORT OF FAIRFIELD BIKE/WALK COMMISSION- AUDREY COZZARIN

Ms. Cozzarin said she was introduced to the chair of the Fairfield, Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and they serve at the pleasure of the First Selectman because they are not yet a commission because the ordinance needs to be created to establish the commission and they are very interested in being in touch with the Norwalk Bike/Walk Commission. She said she will start off by introducing Mr. Thompson to her and they are interested in more collaborations, and they are also interested in having a Fairfield County biking a pedestrian group that would have regular conversation and relationships with other cities and towns that are moving forward in biking and pedestrian issues. She also said at the end of November they had an event during the World Day of Remembrance honoring victims of pedestrian accidents in Fairfield.

Ms. Cozzarin said last year we did the Winter Walking safety tips and encouraged the commission to do some public outreach to remind both motorists and pedestrians to make their presence known during the winter.

Ms. Bernamin asked if the commission had any input on the Zoning Commission's workshops that they had hosted and asked what else the public can do besides attend the meeting to voice to support the improvements of walking and biking. Mr. Thompson said he had attended one of the meetings regarding green and sustainable infrastructure as well as streets and connectivity and he provided some input on how we would like walkability and bikeability to be enabled to be front and center in the zoning code. He said it is his understanding that this will be a long process and he will continue to attend the meetings to not only give input but also report back to the commission. Ms. Bernamin asked as a volunteer to the Bike/Walk Commission how she can help assist in getting a voice heard and get it to be more prominent on the radar to get more bike lanes etc. Mr. Grotheer said he is always opened to dialoguing with the community and he typically trends towards the urban areas but anywhere in the city is fine and he is more than happy to open a dialogue and will forward any concerns and help to identify potential improvements in areas. He also said reaching out to any of the commissioners is a good way to keep things moving. Mr. Thompson mentioned that there is currently not a full complement on the commission and there is still an opening and if anyone is interested to contact him.

CONNECTIVITY GRANT UPDATE- GREG PACELLI

Mr. Pacelli reported and said that staff is continuing to coordinate with the DOT on the connectivity grant for the east/west and north/south bike lanes and the desire is get it finalized over the winter and begin the installation in the spring/summer of 2022. Mr. Aley asked if any new bike boxes will be installed on that route. Mr. Pacelli said "yes" and are looking at the intersection of Fort Point Street and Seaview Avenue and are working with the state to get the design finalized and will look at other areas once this one has been finalized.

LUDLOW ROUNDABOUT UPDATE- GREG PACELLI

Mr. Pacelli said that staff has met with Mr. Kydes and some local residents regarding Ludlow Manor and began discussing the project and at this time are in the early stages of the concept design. He said once all the comments are received back a public information meeting will be scheduled to solicit additional comments and encouraged the Bike/Walk Commission to attend the public information meetings. He said some traffic counts were done during the boat show so they have an idea what the traffic is like on a heavily traveled traffic day and are looking at a dual round-a-bout especially between Calf Pasture Beach Road and Marvin Street but is at a primary design concept design stage and there will be changes.

LOCATIONS TO INSTALL PEDESTRIAN STANCHIONS WE PURCHASED- GREG PACELLI

Mr. Pacelli said when staff receives the stanchions they get delivered to the transportation department for the schools, but they have not yet been put out and they will update him once the locations have been determined. He also said if the commission would like to put a list of locations near any of the schools together, he would be happy to share them with the transportation department. Mr. Thompson asked if

any of the commissioners would like to volunteer. Ms. Bisceglie and Mr. Grotheer said they would like to volunteer. Mr. Thompson requested that Mr. Pacelli connect Ms. Zandevor with him through email.

WEST ROCKS ROAD UPDATE- GREG PACELLI

Mr. Pacelli said that 10 ½' bike lanes have been implemented on West Rocks Road and based on Mr. Grotheer's recommendations have installed extension lines on the intersecting roadways to keep the vehicle edge line continuing all the way through as well as for cyclists going through the intersection of an intersecting roadway. He said most of the road is striped but there are still a few punch list items remaining before it is completed. Mr. Aley said in the past we would meet to go over the paving schedule and no one from DPW or TMP called the commission to say that West Rocks Road was on the paving list, and he thinks there is a lot of value in the commission meeting once a month to review the paving schedule.

BIKE RACK DESIGN- GREG PACELLI

Mr. Pacelli said the design for the bike racks for the Police Department and Main Street parking lot are still being finalized based on the commission's recommendations and he will provide an update once it has been finalized.

HIGHLAND AVE./ FLAX HILL INTERSECTION- MIKE YEOSOCK

Mr. Yeosock said a public meeting was held last week for the intersection of Highland Avenue@ Flax Hill and he provided an overview of presentation of the proposed plan and said it will add another crosswalk to the intersection on the western side and will make the intersection less confusing. He said public comment is open until December 15, 2021. Mr. Grotheer asked what the volume of traffic is at that intersection. Mr. Yeosock said approximately 8,000 per day on Flax Hill Road and 6,00 per day on Highland Avenue. Mr. Grotheer asked if the crosswalks on Flax Hill Road can be brought closer together to make the plan better for pedestrians. Mr. Yeosock agreed and said he thinks that can be done. Mr. Thompson also agreed which will help make bicyclists more visible.

Mr. Thompson said the Bike/Walk Commission meeting that was scheduled for January 3, 2022, has been rescheduled to January 10, 2022.

RENEWAL OF LAB MEMBERSHIP- TANNER THOMPSON

Mr. Thompson said this item will be discussed at next month's meeting.

LAB MIKE SUMMIT 2022- TANNER THOMPSON

Mr. Thompson said this item will be discussed at next month's meeting.

BIKE RACKS AROUND THE GREEN- TANNER THOMPSON

Mr. Thompson said this item will be discussed at next month's meeting.

**CHANGING SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY TO FOCUS ON PARTICIPATION IN OUR
MEETINGS AND RECRUITMENT- TANNER THOMPSON**

Mr. Thompson said this item will be discussed at next month's meeting.

****MR. ALEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd