

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 7, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Colin Grotheer; Jud Aley; Emily Burnaman; Christine Bisceglie

OTHERS: James Travers, Director, TMP; Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; Jahliah Green, Health Department; Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Azra Asaduddin; Phil Chiaia; Audrey Cozzarin; Shari Brennan; Wendy Bjerke; James Carter, NRV; Paul Chenard

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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Asaduddin said that she had a recent incident happen with her son and went on to say that they live on Blue Mountain Road, and he walks to West Rocks School via West Rocks Road and there is no sidewalk on the north side of West Rocks Road, so he has to cross over to the southbound side of the road in order to get to school. She said while walking to school and crossing the street one car stopped on one side of the street but the other didn't so he had gotten hit by a car and thankfully is ok and recovered well, but all will all the children that walk on West Rocks Road they are put into that situation and she understands that the city has received funding to remedy the walkability and bikeability on West Rocks Road, but there is not a plan yet and asked if crosswalks will be part of the plan and if not requested that they are included as part of the plan and if possible to install temporary crosswalks in the interim period or provide some guidance.

Mr. Travers said that West Rocks Road was identified in a prior plan as a street that is in need of sidewalks, and he had a conversation with Congressman Himes and expressed that sidewalks had been part of the plan for a very long time, and he was able to get an earmark from the federal government to look at designs and also received a state grant for crosswalks. He said staff is currently working with them on the process for the city to acquire the funds in advance and are beginning the design process that will include a community meeting. He said ideally, he would like sidewalks on both sides of the street if there is enough funding but regardless if there are sidewalks installed or not they need to connect the side streets with network and have a state grant that is specific for crosswalk sections and will be ADA compliant ramps and will install RRFB's where they are relevant. He also said the Federal Highway

Association was in Norwalk for a training session on pedestrian safety last week, so the city is working very diligently to build a city that is pedestrian friendly and get people to move safely.

TMP REPORT

Mr. Travers said there was a recent post that the Bike/walk commission had done regarding East Avenue that he found to be a little hurtful and went on to explain the number of projects and overall investment that the department has been working on. He said he recognized East Avenue as a challenge a while ago and had put in a capital request that did not get funded, but said that he thinks it is dangerous to put out a post that says that the commission is 100% in support of additional signals when there are requirements that the government put upon them to do signals and they are looking at a holistic approach and where things will make a difference.

Mr. Travers provided a high level report on where the department in his view over the past 18 months and said they have been successful in moving a number of things forward that included the Transportation Master Plan and the final meeting will be held on December 7, 2022, from 6:30PM to 8:30PM at City Hall. In addition to the Transportation Master Plan, they were able to successfully move forward the Complete Streets legislation and design manual and Norwalk will be the 16th city in the state to adopt a Complete Streets legislation and will be the community that will invest the most amount of money. He said in addition to that they are also taking the steps to move the city forward to a vision zero plan but will need to have the Complete Street adopted before that can happen but does not prevent them from moving vision zero forward. He went on to say that when he had attended his first Bike Walk Commission when he came to Norwalk he was told about the challenges of the intersection at Gregory Blvd. @ Fifth Street and were successful in getting the funding in this year's budget to design and will also look at the area of Marvin Steet @ Calf Pasture Beach Road holistically and have written a LOCIP grant to fund this and are now looking for a date to schedule a community meeting. He said they also had the first stakeholder meeting for Seaview Avenue and are getting ready to hold a community meeting and continue to work with every partner to make things happen as well as with the CTDOT on the Walk Bridge project and are working to make a number of intersections in the area safer. He said they just completed the survey for the Yankee Doodle Garage façade project, have installed a bioswale in Webster Lot to deal with some of the water retention issues, and are in the construction phase for the Riverside Avenue phase of the NRVt, and they are currently completing Phase III of the signalization project on East Avenue and will begin Phase IV and Phase IV of citywide traffic signal upgrades.

Mr. Thompson said he acknowledges that in the long run the most impact will be to focus on long term projects where there is a large-scale plan where the data is collected which will give the city the most long-term impact and solve the fundamental problem which is that the streets and sidewalks and other infrastructure has been underfunded for decades in Norwalk. He said he thinks that where people think they are falling short is in the effort to focus on long term problems that a lot of "low hanging fruit" is being left out that is low cost and short term that could be done in the interim. He said the commissioners are not professionals but do see examples from other cities and showed an example of temporary installation that had been done in Stamford and is an example of what a lot of people on the commission and in the community would like to see more of in Norwalk. Mr. Travers noted that while they look like short term solutions there is a long-term plan behind it and TMP can work on small projects but that the longer projects would then never get done.

Mr. Grotheer said the commission realizes there is work being the bigger projects but what they are seeing in other places that are done in phases over long periods of time and asked why they can't long

term plan and implement where they need to go in a less expensive manner and still look at the big picture but also look at what can be done now to increase peoples level of comfort and test the functionality and maybe there will be things that change. Mr. Travers said that TMP is looking at areas where they can do short term and diligently work with DPW staff and have doubled the number of bikes lanes in the past year and a half in the city. Mr. Pacelli added that staff has also put together and RFP for concrete services to hit the smaller concrete projects which will be released over the next month so some of the shorter-term projects will be addressed with this contract. Mr. Grotheer said that the commission realizes there has been a tremendous amount of change in the city since Mr. Travers came on board. Mr. Travers said that TMP is looking at where interim solutions can be made.

Ms. Bisceglie thanked Ms. Asaduddin for joining the meeting and sharing her story and said she hopes that she becomes an advocate and maybe even think about becoming a commissioner. She also said that she was on her bike this weekend and noticed that the striping was done on Fitch Street @ Strawberry Hill Avenue and thanked TMP staff for doing that. She also said that there is a huge improvement on Camp Street thanks to the help of Mr. Pacelli and thanked TMP staff for all that they are doing. She said she does have a concern with the crosswalk on William Street because it is on a blind curve and scares her because it is not a crosswalk where cars have to stop, and lastly the produce market on Main Avenue brings a lot of people and suggested that the intersection be looked at because there is nowhere to cross.

Mr. Travers left the meeting 7:10PM.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- o Letters of support

Mr. Thompson said he had written letters of support for the grants that were discussed at the last meeting.

- o Electric bikes in the city fleet

Mr. Thompson said he attended a subcommittee meeting of the Common Council where electric bikes in the city fleet were discussed and he made a comment about that and followed up with an email.

- o Crosswalk strategy

This was discussed earlier on the agenda.

- o Meetings & event calendar

Mr. Thompson said Hanpeter has created a Google calendar that has not only the commission meetings on it but other city meetings that are relevant to biking and walking.

- o Sustainable streets Happy Hour

Mr. Thompson said that he and Ms. Burnaman have been working on trying to find a venue for the next happy hour.

- o Strategic Plan working group

Mr. Thomson asked for a volunteer to lead the strategic plan working group but if there are none he will continue to work on it.

- o Bike friendly communities working group

Mr. Thompson said the group has not met since the last meeting to make progress on the application but is importing that they do and again asked for a volunteer to lead the group.

- o Book purchasing

Mr. Thompson said it was voted on last month to purchase a dozen copies of Confessions of Recovering Engineer from a local bookstore and asked for a volunteer to make the purchase.

WEBSITE UPDATES

Ms. Burnaman reported and said she has been working with Ms. Green on updates to commissioner page and have added a document into Googledocs and is hoping to have it completed by the next meeting. She said that if anyone wants to make changes to reach out to her.

TMP PROJECTS REPORT

- o CT Community connectivity grant

Mr. Pacelli reported and said that staff is working with the traffic vendor to finish installing the necessary lines on Fort Point Street, but the green and red pavement that is part of the final plan will not be complete until next year as recommended by the contractor, but that the new striping already delineates traffic much better and will cause much less confusion when going through the intersection. He said a majority of the striping for the connectivity grant will be done next year and have been coordinating with DPW on the paving but plan to have a majority of the striping completed by next year and will be adding over seven miles of bike lanes to the city. He said the contracts have been awarded for the signage and will be installing the signage over the winter. He said the sidewalk portion of Hunters Lane has been completed as well and was the third component of the connectivity grant.

o Highland Avenue sidewalk project

Mr. Pacelli said the Highland Avenue sidewalk project is near completion and should be completed by the end of the month at the latest. He said next year that DPW plans to repave that section on Highland Avenue.

o SONO Train Station bike parking

Mr. Pacelli said the bike racks have been installed along with the repair station and will be putting together a press release. He said that the Parking Authority has also provided and installed two new bike racks at the East Norwalk Railroad Station on the New Haven bound side. Mr. Hanpeter said they look great and were installed under a light which was great but asked if there are security cameras near the bike racks. Mr. Pacelli said he does not believe so, but he will confirm and report back to the commission.

Mr. Pacelli said he received an update today regarding the Walk Bridge Project and said that the bike racks that are on the New York bound side will be temporarily relocated as they do some utility work and will be located near the train station building, and they will be putting on a communication on social media

o Roadway striping update

Mr. Pacelli said that West Rocks Road has been striped as well as Scribner Avenue and will now install the bike symbols and signage. He said that Fillow Street was also striped as well as Glover Avenue and Fort Point Street so by the end of the year should have approximately 5 ½ miles of additional bike lanes that were installed just this year alone and next year with the connectivity grant will be adding seven plus more miles of bike lanes.

o Wall Street coordinator design Charrette meeting

Mr. Pacelli said the Wall Street design charrette meeting will be held next Monday from 5:00PM to 8:00PM and will be held at the Norwalk Public Library. He also said the first public meeting for the Seaview Avenue project will be held the first week in December and will provide the details once they are finalized.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER MEETING

**** MS. BISCEGLIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

****MS. BURNAMAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. BURNAMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd