

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 6, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Emily Burnaman; Nicholas Pappas; Christine Bisceglie; Jud Aley; Manuel Salgado

STAFF: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner

OTHERS: Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Paul Chenard; Peter Franz; Gary Washinsky; Jahliah Green; Paul Fox

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

There were no public comments this evening.

GREEN PAVEMENT MARKINGS EDUCATION DISCUSSION

Ms. Burnaman presented a draft outline that she had put together to answer any questions that the public may have about the green lane infrastructure. The point of the green bike lanes are painted sections of the road that are reserved for cyclists and the purpose is to make them more noticeable and to address areas where conflict can happen and remind drivers not to park in those spaces. The project is entirely state funded and the key benefits of having the bike lanes is that it encourages different types of transportation in a single area, makes cyclists more visible to drivers, provide cyclists with a clear and defined space for riding, alerts both cyclists and drivers to potential conflict zones, encourages drivers to yield to cyclists more often, and will minimize the likelihood of bicycle accidents with turning vehicles. The green pavement is a slip resistant material designed to enhance visibility for both cyclists and motorists and has been federally adopted and proven safety measure that has been utilized by cities across the country. She said that she will update the draft outline based on discussions from tonight's meeting and that the watchformect has written out laws and has additional links for best practices for cycling and road safety. Mr. Thomspon asked if the goal is to post this in response to questions that come up on social media. Ms.

Burnaman said “yes” and there are a lot of questions about education and how people are expected to know how to use these without some sort of introduction outside of what the city has posted in response to questions as there still are people having trouble understanding this both as a motorist or a cyclist so by having a written document or a quick start guide could be helpful for public education. Mr. Thompson said he thinks this will be much more impactful if it reaches people and suggested it be done in conjunction with a social media campaign and pointed to a page where people can access this. Ms. Bisceglie said she likes how Ms. Burnaman is going about this however, she does not think the questions should be on the page and suggested a link rather than the outline. Mr. Pacelli said the document is a great starting point and is a perfect opportunity to build upon not only for the green pavement but for other bike infrastructure as well as they look to implement more in the coming years and is a perfect opportunity to create pamphlets to hand out to people. Mr. Salgado said he would be interested in helping out with social media and helping to create a short video that highlights what the document is saying as a secondary piece that would accompany the document. Mr. Thompson suggested that Ms. Burnaman, Ms. Bisceglie, and Mr. Salgado work together as an education subcommittee.

YANKEE DOODLE GARAGE BIKE RACK

Mr. Aley said prior to the last Parking Authority meeting he went to the garage and found that there is no clear space to put a rack at this time without taking a couple of parking spaces so he thinks a bike rack outside of the garage would draw more people which he had conveyed to the other Parking Authority commissioners. He said currently at the Maritime Garage there is a bike rack that is inside the garage, and he has never seen a bicycle in that rack over the last several years. He said that Mr. Bolella was attending the Parking Authority meeting and said that bike racks will be installed as part of the upgrades to the Wall Street area. Mr. Thompson said the original request came from an email that he received from an advocate in Hartford who had a friend that was moving to the Wall Street area who was looking for long term bike storage in the area so the visibility is not so much of an issue and being less visible is probably better for long term storage and having it outside will not protect against the elements. Mr. Aley suggested that the person making the request attend a Parking Authority meeting and make the request during the public comment period. Mr. Thompson said until then there is recently placed bike rack outside of the Yankee Doodle Garage. Mr. Aley said “yes” at the end of the driveway behind the Yankee Doodle Garage.

BIKE RACK PURCHASING UPDATE

Mr. Pacelli provided an update and said they will be ordering and installing the hoop style bike racks with the Bike Norwalk logo over the winter.

NRVT CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Pacelli provided an update and said Mr. Yeung of TMP has been overseeing the daily work and the NRVT boardwalk on Riverside Avenue is near completion and it is set to be completed by early to mid-December. He said once it has been completed it will be continuous from Broad Street to SONO with some on street sections to Calf Pasture Beach and are looking at some of the on-street sections in that area

to create a better off street bike network through that area. He said there are already plans for the trail section from Broad Street to Perry Avenue, but the funding source is yet to be determined at this point, and north of Perry Avenue is dictated by the Route 7/15 interchange project. Mr. Thompson asked if TMP will get a design consultant for the section on Broad Street to Perry Avenue. Mr. Pacelli said he would need to speak with Mr. Yeung regarding that project but again said there are no funds to move the construction portions forward at this time and he does not know where it stands as far a design level. Mr. Thompson asked if TMP is interested in hosting a grand opening of the NRVt trail in the spring. Mr. Pacelli said that will come through the mayor's office once it has been completed. Mr. Thompson said the grand opening would be more targeted to the public to try and get turnout and introduce the trail and he will contact Mr. Travers to have a further discussion.

EAST AVENUE CORRIDOR DISCUSSION

Mr. Pacelli said they definitely see the need but as a reminder they had requested full funding for a comprehensive study and design and received partial funding of approximately \$300,000. He said the corridor study would cover Route 1 to Hendricks Avenue and for fiscal year 2024-25 they will be requesting the remainder of the funds to perform a comprehensive corridor study for East Avenue. Due to the overall complexity of the corridor want to study the corridor holistically and see it done as one connected corridor and not done in pieces.

Mr. Pacelli reminded the commission that upgrades to East Avenue have been implemented along this section over the last couple of years that include the phase III signal prioritization project at the intersection of Park Avenue, East Wall Street and Morgan Avenue where all new signals were installed over the last few years as well as new sidewalks and ramps and coming up later this year or early next year will be signal upgrades at the intersection of East Avenue and Eversley Avenue as part of the phase IV signal projects so there are some pedestrian signal upgrades and amenities that are happening on this section of East Avenue in the short term. Mr. Thompson asked if it includes a crosswalk across East Avenue. Mr. Pacelli said "yes", that is the intent. Mr. Aley pointed out the large number of crosswalks throughout the city that were not previously stripped that now are and thanked the TMP team. Mr. Aley asked Mr. Pacelli if there was anything he would like to share about the electronic signs on West Avenue. Mr. Pacelli said that was part of the traffic signal upgrades along West Avenue and all over the city. He said that TMP has been coordinating with DPW and has been installing ramps and striping crosswalks once roads have been paved. Mr. Thompson asked if there is a timeline for the Eversley Avenue signal upgrade and crosswalk implementation. Mr. Pacelli said that is part of the senior traffic engineers' project and should be starting soon depending on the weather and at the latest should be completed by early spring. He said they will also be doing upgrades to the intersection at St. Johns Street.

OPEN STREETS PLANNING DISCUSSION

Ms. Bisceglie said the event was popular and wished it could be held again in the summer and asked if it could be an annual event. Mr. Thompson provided an overview of the event and said that following the event he and Ms. Burnaman met with Mr. Stowers and Mr. Travers and they suggested that for the next event that there is more programming especially if it will be held on Calf Pasture Beach Road. Mr. Thompson said he agrees with having the event on a regular basis multiple times a year but does not know if they are at that point yet so the next step would be to have it on a one-off basis again. Mr. Pacelli said that anytime a street is closed it must go before the Traffic Authority for approval as well as having a

detour plan and notifying the residents and businesses, so they have a chance to have input. Mr Thompson suggested the commission have a working group to discuss the event. Mr. Aley suggested that it be kept on the agenda and the goal could be to have the event once in the early summer and once in September. Mr. Hanpeter said there was a successful event held in Los Angeles and suggested applying what they did to this next event.

BIKE WALK AUDIT AND NORWALK HOSPITAL FOLLOW-UP

Mr. Thompson asked for a volunteer to take the lead on the bike walk audit and reach out to Dr. Bjerke. Ms. Bisceglie said that she would take the lead.

Ms. Burnaman said that she will follow up with the Norwalk Hospital and provide an update to Ms. Bisceglie and Ms. Greene.

COMMISSION BUDGET ITEMS

- Reflective Vests
- NRV T Portable Toilet

Ms. Bisceglie suggested giving away reflective vests to pedestrians at the senior and public housing facilities as she finds that a lot of people are walking in the dark with no reflection and it is dangerous. Mr. Thompson said he does disagree that it would make people more visible and increase safety but does not agree to put the onus of safety on the people who are exercising their right to be in public and that he thinks there are other things that can be done with the budget that would be more impactful. Mr. Aley said the vests may actually get people out walking if they realize they can be safe and agree to try giving away the vests. Mr. Thompson said with the budget that is left for this year he would like to prioritize ordering taillights to match the headlights that were ordered. Mr. Aley suggested getting pricing on both. Peter said he would get quotes on the vests, and Mr. Aley said he would get the quotes for the taillights.

Mr. Thompson asked for status on the bike racks for valet parking at events. Mr. Pappas said he has sent over the W-9 to the vendor. Mr. Pacelli said he has received it and sent it to the purchasing department so that a purchase order can be created, and he will follow up with them. There was a discussion on the bike valet events and it was decided that Ms. Bisceglie would contact representatives for the Pride festival, Mr. Pappas would contact representatives from the Nice Festival and the Oyster Festival, and Mr. Thompson would contact representatives from Earth Day and the SONO half marathon.

Mr. Thompson said at the next meeting he will present a breakdown of the budget and what has been spent so far.

Ms. Bisceglie reminded people to vote tomorrow.

APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 4TH, 2023 MEETING

****MS. BISCEGLIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Thompson opened the public comment portion of the meeting.

Mr. Fox said he has noticed there are crosswalks that have not been restriped after the road has been paved and asked where that should be reported. Mr. Pacelli said that can be reported to customer service.

Mr. Aley said all of the streetlights are out on West Avenue between I-95 and the Route overpasses as well as further down West Avenue. Mr. Pacelli said he will look into it and report back.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd