

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
October 7th, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Emily Burnaman, Chair; Tanner Thompson, Christine Bisceglie; Nicholas Pappas; Manual Salgado

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; TMP; Jahliah Green, Heath Department

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 6:04 PM.

At roll call, there were four (4) committee members in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Pacelli said earlier today Mayor Rilling formally appointed Emily Burnaman as the Chair of the Bike/Walk Commission and the staff at TMP will be supporting her as she steps into her new role as chair. He said she will have “big shoes” to fill in taking over for Mr. Thompson, but the staff is excited to have her as the new chair and lead the commission and continue to advance the commission goals. As the commission embarks on this new chapter, he encourages each commissioner to engage and support Ms. Burnaman actively in her new role, and speaking from all the staff members at TMP congratulated her on her new role as Chair. Ms. Burnaman said she is looking forward to working with TMP in her new role and has extreme gratitude to Mr. Thompson who had originally introduced her to the commission and got her involved and she is excited to try and fill these shoes to the best of her ability and keep the momentum going.

Mr. Mushak congratulated Ms. Burnaman and said that he is happy there are passionate people involved in this great organization.

Mr. Mushak said he is speaking on the agenda item in support of the state project for the proposed improvements on Route 7 from Grist Mill Road to Kent Road. He said unfortunately the comment period for the project is over and that he thinks there is a missed opportunity to do shoulder bike lanes on this stretch of Route 7. He said he always felt there was a missed opportunity to put them north through Wilton when the state spent tens of millions of taxpayer dollars expanding the road without any bike lanes. He said there would be 10,000 people living within one mile of that area. The only offering for bike

facilities is in the future where it says off-road multi-use paths to be explored which will never happen because parking will not be reduced. He does not think the commission should write a letter in support of this project based on a future off-road multi-use path which again is not going to happen, and he thinks this is unethical and a violation of the 2009 compete streets law.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR STATE PROJECT 102-020

o Proposed Improvements on Route 7 from Grist Mill Road to Kent Road

Ms. Burnaman said that she along with Mr. Thompson and the staff of TMP attended the meeting. Mr. Thompson provided an overview of the meeting and said it was held at Cranbury Elementary School and shared some concepts that they came up with and there were lots of members from the public that had attended and asked about walking and biking. They mentioned a shared use path could be done at some point and there was a lot of support from the public about this which was encouraging. Ms. Burnaman agreed and said that a lot of business owners also spoke on the same things and were in line with a lot of those suggestions as well. Ms. Burnaman said following the presentation there was a discussion regarding an opportunity for the commission to write a letter of support for a project like this and although the deadline of October 1st was missed going forward if there are other projects that the commission can help support could be a good opportunity for the commission to pursue going forward. Mr. Thompson said he does not think the letter of support from a project should be unilateral and should outline the parts of the project the commission supports and which ones we would like to see more.

ORDINANCE REVIEW-BIKE WALK ADVISORY COMMISSION

Ms. Bisceglie reviewed the ordinance and said she would like to increase the awareness around it and prioritize it. The commission discussed the purpose, powers, and duties section of the ordinance. Ms. Burnaman said this is a great opportunity to look at the commission's agenda prioritize it and make sure that the committee is in line with the ordinance. She said the commission is currently working on updating the webpage and when the strategic plan and is building on the mission, vision, and goals as they redid the commission's website and strategic plan for this year, and as we are looking for new commissioners and building our team and trying to get more people involved part of that onboarding process should be a review of the ordinance to be sure the commission is abiding by this and the goal as a commission should be to complete these objectives. She asked if the commission thought this should be part of a sub-committee meeting or meeting as a commission and hold a brainstorming session. Ms. Bisceglie said she does not think a sub-committee is necessary because the commission is doing most of what is in the ordinance but suggested it be reviewed regularly and use this as a "homework assignment" and come back to discuss any comments or suggestions at the next meeting.

Mr. Pacelli said the Ordinance Committee is in the process of rewriting ordinances based on the complete streets ordinance that is being implemented so there is a lot of crossing of what is proposed in the new ordinance so over the next few months there will be a public meeting and encouraged the commission to attend those meetings.

Mr. Thompson said over the last several months he has been trying to promote some of the purpose, powers, and duties of the commission specifically the pedestrian and bicycle plan and asked everyone to

read the existing plan and got conflicting responses and still maintains that the commissioners should read them. He suggested going through the plan specifically as it relates to the POCD that are assigned to the commission. He also suggested that he meet with Ms. Burnaman and Ms. Bisceglie offline before the next commission meeting to discuss all the things that should be on the report to the Common Council.

2012 PEDESTRIAN AND BIKEWAY TRANSPORTATION PLAN

o Tier II Corridors

Ms. Bisceglie presented a list of the streets in the Tier II plan. Mr. Pacelli provided an overview of Tier II corridors and said they were classified in the previous bicycle and pedestrian plan as community generators and a lot of the roads listed have been completed or are in the process of being completed. He said the document is used very heavily. Ms. Bisceglie suggested that he let the commission know how they can be of support. Ms. Burnaman asked if there is a way the commission can coordinate efforts to help with this document. Mr. Pacelli urged the commission to read the document and get familiar with it; the goal is to update as many corridors as possible.

OPEN STREETS

- o Open Street Festival BOE Concept and Expectations**
- o Emails from Open Street Event**
- o Open Streets**

Ms. Bisceglie said she just attended a meeting with staff from the transportation department within the Board of Education, and they mentioned the open streets festival and wanted to be sure the commission is aware of it and keeping it in future planning. Ms. Burnaman said it might be a good opportunity to start a committee and suggested inviting key departments to have a conversation. Mr. Thompson said he was pleased with how the last event went but will need some support from a new source as it was a big lift to get this off the ground with the volunteers they had. Ms. Bisceglie said it is her vision that this becomes a more frequent event where the public is aware that it won't take a lot of bandwidth and will already have been approved and on the calendar and the goal is to have Calf Pasture Beach Road closed to motorized traffic regularly during the nice weather for people to access. Ms. Burnaman asked Ms. Bisceglie if she would be interested in starting a planning committee for the 2025 event. Ms. Bisceglie said "yes", and she will reach out to Mr. Stowers and will begin planning the next event in January.

EDUCATIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Salgado said the educational subcommittee met with Mr. Zanvettor and Ms. Kress to discuss moving the Bike Roll Event to later in October and Ms. Green has volunteered to create a flyer. Ms. Green said the event will be held from October 21st- October 25th to coincide with National School Bus Safety Week and three schools have signed up to participate in walking, biking, or rolling to school Ms. Kress will be meeting with schools to get additional schools to sign up and she found a fillable flyer online that Mr. Kress will be sharing with the schools so the schools will choose whichever date works best for them to host an event during that week and will

communicate that with the commission. Mr. Salgado said the next meeting will be held on October 9, 2024.

NPS WALK BIKE ROLL EVENT ON OCTOBER 21ST-25TH

This was discussed under the previous agenda item.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

o Newsletter, Media Resources, Local Partnerships

Ms. Burnaman said the Educational Committee is working on media resources for some content around safe walking and biking as well as a newsletter building that out.

Ms. Burnaman said the commission was aiming to have the bike valet program at the SONO half marathon but got tied up in the approval process and suggested that the commission brainstorm on the upcoming events and points of contact confirmed to improve the flow of communications. Mr. Pacelli said knowing which events the commission would like to have the bike valet and having the pre-requirements for each event ahead of time would be a major help on the city side so that staff can coordinate with the necessary departments and get the documentation ahead of time. Mr. Thompson said he would like to continue to be involved in the bike/valet program and that he will work offline with Mr. Pappas.

Ms. Burnaman said CT State College recently opened a walking path and Ms. Green was there and did a walk with the mayor. She said they also met with the wellness committee and there are opportunities to run other walks, and she will work with Ms. Green on scheduling those.

Mr. Pappas joined the meeting at 7:25 PM.

APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2024, MEETING

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

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

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd