

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 12, 2022**

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

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; TMP; Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Shari Brennan; Peter Franz; Paul Chenard; Phil Chiaia; Michael Maida; Jim Carter, NRV; Audrey Cozzarin; Alex Keyes; Jahliah Green, Norwalk Health Department; Gary Washinsky

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

Mr. Michael Maida- 6 Betts Place

Mr. Maida said that he has some concerns regarding crosswalks in his neighborhood particularly at Seaview Avenue @ Betts Place, Osborne Street @ Seaview Avenue, East Avenue @ Seaview Avenue and First Street @ New Street because it is very difficult to walk or run in that neighborhood without crosswalks and requested painted crosswalks in the area. He also said that a stop sign is needed at the corner of Betts Place @ Seaview Avenue.

Mr. Pacelli said some of these concerns were brought to the city's attention a few years ago and the city had brought a project forward and started looking not just at individual intersections but the entire corridor from First Street to Fort Point Street because there is a lack of pedestrian access especially to SONO. He said they plan to have their on-call consultants look at conceptual designs to redo the entire corridor and implement a complete streets design from Fort Point Street to New Street and the funds have been allocated in the capital budget. He said that VHB and city staff will first be meeting with the business owners in the corridor along the area to get their input and following that will hold two input meetings but reiterated that this is just a conceptual design and is nowhere near a final design and VHB is now in the data collection phase and will be scheduling the stakeholder meetings and public information meetings over the next few months.

Mr. Thompson clarified the term “complete streets” and said it is the idea that a street should be designed for all users and not just for automobiles, and the commission is interested in having Norwalk adopt it both formally and informally and there is a ball rolling for complete streets to be required by law in the near future but TMP is in the process of having a consultant compile all of the street designs into one design guide that enables and requires that a road be designed to cater to all users.

Alex Keys

Mr. Keys said there is a need for more crosswalks and speedbumps around the town green because it is a very busy area and there are a lot of people walking onto East Wall Street and it doesn't feel very safe and would be great to see some consideration for pedestrians.

Ben Hanpeter

Mr. Hanpeter said he seconds what Mr. Keys stated and that he crosses the at the crosswalk at Park Hill Avenue every day on his bike and does appreciate the RRFB's and even with that in place is frequently ignored by cars.

Audrey Cozzarin

Ms. Cozzarin said that she heard today that there is a City Hall Neighborhood Association that has been or is being formed to address the traffic on East Avenue. She also recommended reading a book the “Confessions of a Recovering Engineer” by Charles Marohn and said that East Avenue has some issues and has been a topic of conversation for a long time.

Mr. Pacelli said that the issues on East Avenue are on the city's radar and hope to address them but is not in the city's immediate future plans to allocate funds, but the signals were just upgraded at the intersection through DOT funding, but he does not disagree that crossing is difficult.

Mr. Aley said a crosswalk at Parkhill Avenue was discussed 4-5 years ago and St. Paul's Church was very interested in having that put in and would attend meetings occasionally and suggested if there is an idea or any project in the city that is important to anyone it should be adopted as your project and attend the meetings on a consistent basis as it is more likely to get done.

Paul Chenard

Mr. Chenard suggested having the liaison for the police department join the commission meetings so that they can hear the issues that people are experiencing while biking and walking and to also meet with the city engineer to do a walk/bike audit. Mr. Thompson said that Sergeant Gulino is a non-voting member of the commission but due to the police department being understaffed over the last few months she has been unable to attend the meetings. He also said that TMP is constrained by the budget that is given to them and suggested the commissioners contact their Common Council member to advocate for funding.

Phil Chiaia

Mr. Chiaia said when using the crosswalk at Connecticut Avenue @ West Avenue the oncoming traffic gets a green arrow which is very dangerous for pedestrians. Mr. Pacelli said he will investigate that issue and report back to the commission at or before the next meeting. Mr. Aley said he has seen the same thing when coming off the I-95 ramp onto West Avenue.

Mr. Grotheer asked if it would be possible to get edge line striping and on street parking on Park Street in the near term. Mr. Pacelli said “yes” in the short term but would need to check the width of the road but

there are definitely some low-cost options that can potentially be looked at but on a master plan scale are looking at the entire corridor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- o Norwalk Night Out (Sept. 27)

Mr. Thompson said the Norwalk Night Out is an event that is put on by the police department to interact with the public and the commission will have a booth there and said that all the commissioners are invited and encouraged to come and help staff the booth and it is a great opportunity to educate people about the benefits of walking and biking and also to hear feedback from the community. He said the event will be held on September 27th from 5:00PM to 8:00PM.

- o Sustainable Street Happy Hour (Sept. 21)

Mr. Thompson said that he put together and partnered with the Coastal Connecticut Times for a happy hour for people interested in biking, walking or public transportation and they will sponsor the first 20 drink tickets to those that attend. He said it will be held on September 21st from 5:00PM- 7:00PM at 314 Beer Garden and the venue is for those 21 and older.

NRVT

Mr. Carter said work has resumed on the boardwalk section of the Missing Link and is the last section of infrastructure work that will need to be completed and it should be completed before the fall and once the paving is completed the grand opening will be held in the spring so it can be planned with confidence. He also said that three kiosks will be installed along the Missing Link trail which will have a map, and the trail has been resigned from Calf Pasture to Union Park and once the Missing Link has been paved the signage will continue to Broad Street.

Mr. Carter provided an update on the Grist Mill Spur which will connect the Wilwalk section of the trail which is complete and open and runs parallel to route 7 and this spur will connect from under Grist Mill up to Glover Street and down to Main Street. He said they have been speaking with some donors regarding that section and the goal is to have a public/private partnership to construct that section of the trail.

Mr. Carter said the 7/15 project original design of that intersection did not address the NRVT so the Merritt Parkway was going to be a permanent block and they have met with the state and design team of Stantac and have identified a route through the new interchange and have permission to design a feasibility study and that it looks encouraging that they will be accommodated.

Mr. Carter said the bids have gone out for the Harbor Loop and is likely to be completed this fall.

Ms. Brennan asked where the parking is for the Missing Link Trail. Mr Carter said there is currently no parking available and that the trail is not yet opened but the parking lot will be on Riverside Avenue and

will be paved. He also said that the Norwalk Tree Alliance has been working with them and will be planting some trees in the area that will include flowering trees.

Ms. Brennan requested that the signage be installed as soon as possible because people are already using the trail.

**** MR. GROTHEER MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND TAKE THE AGENDA OUT OF ORDER.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

BIKE SAFETY CLASSES

Ms. Bisceglie presented the Bike Education Pilot Program and said it is a proposal that she created, and the purpose is to begin a free two-day bike education safety course for the citizens of Norwalk. The League of American Bicyclists has a smart cycling curriculum, and they certify instructors through a one-hour course and for those that want to continue there is a three-day training to become an instructor. She said the proposal is for a free two-day, three-hour course on Saturday mornings from 10:00AM- 1:00PM and will be held for two weekends and participants would receive a certificate after completing an online evaluation. She said the program would be supported by city agencies to offset the cost of the instructor and venue and the League certified instructor that teaches the curriculum would be compensated at the recommended current rate of \$30/hour and will provide liability coverage. Ms. Burnaman asked if there is an age limit for the participants. Ms. Bisceglie said 18 and older would be the preferred age group. Mr. Aley suggested that Ms. Bisceglie speak to Sound Cyclists to see if anyone would be interested in taking the course. Mr. Thompson asked Ms. Bisceglie if she has reached out to any leaders in the community to see if they are interested in taking the course. Ms. Bisceglie said she has not at this point. Mr. Ebert said he supports the idea of surveying interest and have a list of tentative candidates that would like to take the course. Ms. Burnaman agreed.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Mr. Thompson said he would like to begin to put together a strategic plan for the current fiscal year and asked for volunteers to work with him to draft the plan. Ms. Burnaman, Mr. Hanpeter, Mr. Aley, Mr. Ebert, and Mr. Chiaia all volunteered to help draft the plan. Mr. Thompson said he will reach out to the volunteers for the bicycle friendly communities application working group and the volunteers for the strategic plan and report at the October meeting.

TMP

o CT Community Connectivity Grant Project Update

Mr. Pacelli reported and said they have received a notice to begin proceeding by CTDOT for the Connecticut Community Connectivity grant to begin advertising the project for construction and have already advertised the signage part of the project which includes approximately 226 signs on 100 signposts, and will have a contractor install them along the two bike routes.

o Fillow Street Sidewalks, Paving and Striping

Mr. Pacelli said the sidewalk segments on Hunters Lane between Lancaster and Ponus Ave has already been installed which leads to the school. He said moving forward they will be coordinating with striping contractor to begin the roadways that are ready to be striped.

Mr. Pacelli said on Fillow Street from Fox Run Road to North Taylor Avenue is currently being paved and have coordinated with DPW and have requested to have a 400' section of the road widened to maintain a minimum 30' curb to curb roadway width to accommodate bike lanes in both directions, and included widening of the asphalt sidewalks on the northerly edge to approximately 5' as well as 3' grass strip to the right of the roadway and sidewalk.

- o Seaview Avenue Public Information meeting

This was discussed during public participation portion of the meeting.

- o Bike Shelter and Bike Rack at SNRR Overflow Lot

Mr. Pacelli said that TMP is looking to install a covered bike shelter and will have a ramp for cyclists only and should be able to fit 4-5 bike racks under the shelter and are hoping to have it installed prior to the end of the year.

- o Bike Rack Parking area at SNRR Garage

Mr. Pacelli said bike racks will be installed in the bike parking area and will be installing 10-12 hoop style racks and there will be large bike parking symbols. He said that the Parking Authority has been a huge help with both bike rack projects.

- o Bike Rack at ENRR Brim and Crown Parking area

Mr. Pacelli said the Parking Authority will be purchasing and installing an artistic bike rack of a train in the parking area of the eastbound side and are making the investments into bike parking especially at heavily parked areas such as train stations and are appreciative of that investment.

- o Sidewalk Audit Update

Mr. Pacelli said VHB has provided staff with the first version of the database from the findings of the sidewalk audit and are in the process of reviewing it and plan on addressing the finding from the audit to address the missing gaps in the sidewalks as well the installation of ADA compliant sidewalk ramps and will be advertising a bid for concrete services which TMP would use to quickly start addressing small gaps and missing ramps.

Mr. Hanpeter said a big section of West Rocks Road was just paved and asked if that is part of the new bike lanes that will be installed. Mr. Pacelli said “no” and that is short term and has been on the paving list for some time and the TMP project is more of a long-term project that is a little further out

Mr. Grotheer asked what the current timeline is to complete the West Rocks Road project. Mr. Pacelli said that they are ready to advance it and are working with CTDOT to give guidance.

PAPER DISCUSSION

- o Paper title: “Community Design and Policies for Free-Range Children: Creating Environments that Support Routine Physical Activity” (Mark Fenton, 2012)

The paper discussion was moved to next month’s meeting.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM AUGUST MEETING

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

**** MR. EBERT SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. BURNAMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. EBERT SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd