

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

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

STAFF: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; LaToya Fernandez, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer; Jahliah Green, Norwalk Health Department

OTHERS: Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Paul Chenard; Peter Franz; Shari Brennan; Sarah Roy

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CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:03PM.

Mr. Chenard asked if it was determined why the center line was ground out on the NRV. Mr. Thompson said it is his understanding that the trail was never intended to have a centerline, and the nationwide best practices are to have a centerline if the trail is 12' wide or wider and the trail is only 10' wide so the contractor installed it my mistake.

Ms. Roy said she is an outreach and engagement specialist for CT Rides and are looking to improve people's quality of life and improve air quality by getting people to not drive alone in a personal vehicle and to get people onto public transit, or biking and walking where it is feasible. She said it is a free program from the state and will be partnering with the Bike/Walk Commission in the next few weeks on the "World Car Free Day".

Ms. Burnaman said that a comment was sent in by email from Alison Smith from Trolley Place. She said that her children are required to walk on Old Trolley Way but there is no sidewalk on Old Trolley Way, and it is a major cut through from Rowayton to South Norwalk, and the kids are forced to walk in the street. She went on to say that they would love any assistance to get a sidewalk and a bike lane as her son bikes into Rowayton frequently. Mr. Thompson said there is a connection at the end of Tory Hill Lane that connects to Covewood Road which makes for a much safer connection then riding on Route 136. Mr. Pacelli said that a Councilmember had forwarded TMP that request, and Witch Lane is scheduled to be paved next year so they are coordinating with DPW to install sidewalks on Witch Lane and they are continually working on sidewalk projects across the city. Mr. Thompson asked if any traffic calming can be done on Witch Lane. Mr. Pacelli said that Witch Lane is very narrow and the typography changes so

they are looking at installing a sidewalk on one side of the street and will have it striped after it is paved next year and will incorporate a curb. Ms. Bisceglie said that since there is a pre-school in the area if the grant funding from safe routes to schools can be used. Mr. Pacelli said those funds are being used to perform the work in front of Fox Run Elementary School and are trying to use the concrete services contract from the smaller projects.

Ms. Burnaman said she also received an email from the injury prevention coordinator at the Norwalk Hospital and one of her priorities in preventing bike injuries coming into the hospital and asked if the commission would be interested in collaborating on educational opportunities with them. Mr. Bisceglie volunteered to get involved. Ms. Greene said that she will reach out to her and copy Ms. Burnaman to see how they can coordinate. Ms. Bisceglie asked that she also be copied.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

➤ LaToya Fernandez, City of Norwalk

Mr. Thompson introduced Ms. Fernandez and said she is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer for the city and most recently came from San Jose, California where she was a very dedicated and involved activist and teacher. Ms. Fernandez said the mayor and the city have a commitment to advance equity and creating a space of belonging for the folks that work for the city and for the residents and she is excited to be helping to lead that work. She provided an overview the transportation equity coalition that was created in San Jose and said she is excited to think about doing things like that in Norwalk. Mr. Thompson said that he hopes they can work together on a transportation equity plan. Ms. Bisceglie said that she thinks that having Ms. Fernandez onboard with the city is great and accessibility has been an issue in Norwalk, and she hopes they can make a change even if it is something as small as having covered bus stops. Ms. Fernandez asked that the commissioners reach out to her with any comments and that she wants to use her office as a platform for this work and she is a partner and an ally and can think about how the city can be supporting the efforts towards transportation equity.

Mr. Thompson said that he has connected Ms. Fernandez with Mr. Pence of the Transit District because a lot of the minority or low-income residents depend on the bus, and that he has had recent conversations with Mr. Pence about the bus stops and it is on his radar.

BIKE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES' APPLICATION SUBMISSION REVIEW

Mr. Thompson said the application has been successfully submitted for the bicycle friendly communities award and the deadline was on August 30, 2023, and was a big undertaking and thanked Mr. Hanpeter, Mr. Pacelli, and Mr. Benjamin for all of their help. Mr. Thompson shared the notes that he had collected, and his long-term goal is to synthesize them into a more digestible set of action items and goals. He said there were five main sections to the application that included engineering, education, encouragement, evaluation planning, and equity and accessibility. He said there were many things on the application that they do not have in Norwalk that are interesting and could be helpful and a lot of the items can be implemented if there is someone to work on them.

Ms. Bisceglie asked when they would know the status of the application. Mr. Thompson said they will announce the awards in December but between now and then there are some additional steps to go

through and the big one is the public survey that will need to be distributed to as many people as possible and will be available in both English and Spanish and should be shared with the commission's mailing list as well as on social media and with the community partners. Ms. Bisceglie suggested sharing it with the Norwalk Hour. Mr. Thompson suggested reaching out to the bike shops and sharing it with them. Ms. Bisceglie asked what the deadline is for the public survey. Mr. Thompson said October 20, 2023.

Mr. Thompson provided an overview of the process and said that the public survey will be available until October 20, 2023, and the public announcement for the award will be announced in early December.

TMP PROJECT UPDATES

➤ Fox Run School Sidewalk Project Completion

Mr. Pacelli said the Fox Run School sidewalk project has been completed and includes 5' sidewalks with a 4' amenity zone and crash strip throughout the stretch of sidewalk and will be installing street trees. He said that ADA compliant ramps have also been installed at the entrances of both ends of the driveway at the school and Fillow Street will be paved and striped with directional bike lanes.

➤ Union Park Raised Crosswalk

Mr. Pacelli said the Union Park crosswalk that is set to commence within the next week or so will be a 6" raised crosswalk which will connect the two sides of the NRV and will include two RFFB's as well. He said once the raised crosswalk is completed either later this year or early next year thermoplastic pavement markings will be incorporated. He said this project was in partnership with the Health Department and was funded by a grant that they had received. Mr. Thompson asked how long the construction will last and if the trail will be useable during construction. Mr. Pacelli said there will be some disruption during construction and there will need to be a detour, but the construction will not take long.

➤ Pavement Markings Installation

Mr. Pacelli said that pavement marking installations have been put into place, most recently the bike lanes on Richards Avenue have been installed from Route 1 to West Cedar Street. He said they also worked with DPW to bring the curb out and create a sidewalk at the driveway near Walmart and will work with DPW to install the remaining short portion of sidewalk further north which will make continuous sidewalks on both sides of the street on Richards Avenue. Mr. Thompson asked if anyone from TMP has been in contact with anyone from CT State College regarding this project. Mr. Pacelli said "yes" and early next year Richards Avenue will be paved from West Cedar Street to Fillow Street so will look to continue the bike lanes. Mr. Thompson said he recalls asking about the on-street parking because it seems like a shame with the massive parking lots to lose the bike connectivity for the sake of a handful of on street parking spaces. Mr. Pacelli said they will work with the school and look to address that on a future project. Mr. Thompson said he thinks it would be good for the Bike/Walk Commission to have a contact with someone at the school to assist them in helping their students to bike to school more easily. Ms. Bisceglie suggested reaching out to Professor Kipp and suggested inviting her to a commission

meeting. Mr. Pacelli said that a bike box was also installed on Richards Avenue approaching West Cedar Street.

Mr. Pacelli said that West Rocks Road and Aiken Street were also stripped on the portion that was paved and incorporated bike lanes and Bayne Street was paved as well and will be laid out and striped this week and will in directional bike lanes. Mr. Thompson asked what the status is on the sidewalk installation along West Rocks Road. Mr. Pacelli said it was an earmark project because it came from the federal government, and someone needs to manage the funds so the DOT is managing the program and in the coming months they will begin the design to perform the sidewalk work on France Street and West Rocks Road from route 1 to route 7, but just have \$1.4 million dollars to do the work. Mr. Thompson asked if that is for design and construction costs. Mr. Pacelli said “yes” but they will be doing the design inhouse.

Mr. Pacelli said the community connectivity pavement markings is nearly complete and was over 17 lane miles of signage and striping. Mr. Thompson asked if there will be a press conference. Mr. Pacelli said “yes” they will look to do something at a later date.

UPCOMING EVENTS

➤ Complete Streets Public Workshop

Mr. Pacelli said they are planning a complete streets public workshop on September 28, 2023, from 5:30PM-8:00PM, and will be held in the community room at City Hall to hear from the public on how they want the streets to be shaped in the future and encouraged the commission to attend.

➤ Complete Streets Upcoming Demonstration Project

He said they will also be doing a demonstration project but that has been moved to early spring so that it can be left for an extended period of time for people to see and would like the commission to participate.

➤ World Car Free Day September 22nd

Mr. Thompson said that Ms. Roy had brought it to his attention that September 22nd is world car free day and thought it would be great if they could observe that as a city, and will include it the Transportation Tuesday's social media post both tomorrow and the following Tuesday, and will include an invitation for people to make a plan on how to go car free and to post about it and sent the city pictures of them going car free and will share them on the city's social media page. Ms. Bisceglie said the Chamber of Commerce has a calendar and these types of events should be included.

Mr. Thompson said an idea that he has brought up has been circulating to get some sort of funding for the Transit District to go fare free for the day and may be feasible for next year.

BWC BUDGET AND BIKE VALET PROGRAM

Mr. Pappas said he has been working on ideas on how to better utilize the budget, so they are not scrambling to use the funds at the end of the fiscal year that include doing some more planned social events as well as more commissioner development and also purchasing valet bike racks. He said they were not able to get the valet bike racks in time for the Oyster Festival, but he is working on quotes for the valet bike racks. Mr. Pacelli requested that when the commission receives the quotes to send them to him and the city will handle the ordering of the product per the city purchasing guidelines. Ms. Bisceglie asked where the bike valet will be housed. Mr. Pappas said his initial plan was to have it stored in the commissions closet that is in the Yankee Doodle Garage.

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO APPROVE ALLOCATING \$1,175 FOR THE PURCHASE OF BIKE VALET PARKING TO BE USED AT EVENTS IN NORWALK.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Bisceglie said the port-a-potties for the NRVt trail was discussed last month but is not on the agenda this month and requested going forward if there is an item that was discussed it should be include on the following meeting agenda. Mr. Pacelli requested that if the commissioners would like an item included on the agenda to email him.

Mr. Pacelli said that he will need to speak with Recreation and Parks staff regarding the port-a-potties because they manage the trails as far as maintenance is concerned.

APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 7TH, 2023 MEETING.

The minutes were tabled.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd