

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
September 9, 2024**

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

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; TMP; Kyle Benjamin, Traffic Analyst, 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 five (5) committee members in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments this evening.

Mr. Thompson said he will be stepping down as chair of the commission and that he has been a commissioner for the past four years, and chair for the past three years and is very proud of the work that the commission has done, and he plans on staying on as a commissioner through the remainder of his term. He said the chair is appointed by the mayor and he will be submitting Emily Burnaman's name as his recommended candidate for the next chair and he has full confidence that she is ready to take on the leadership of chair. He thanked everyone for the energy they have put into the commission, and he hopes that continues. He said that he had asked Ms. Burnaman to lead the meeting this evening.

TMP/NBW SURVEYING RESIDENTS TRANSIT PREFERENCES

Mr. Benjamin said as the Traffic Analyst his goal is to gather as much data as possible regarding crashes as well as vehicle, cyclist, and pedestrian volumes, and as part of that wants to know where trips are originating from and where they are destined to go and to have some data that backs it up. He said he has been thinking of ways to collect pedestrian and cyclist data but unfortunately, the background data is not

that robust so as a proposal to fix that he would like to conduct a citywide survey and get as much feedback as possible to collect what type of travel people are using, where they are going, and what method of transit they are taking. However, he does not have the time but does have the ability to make the survey, post the survey, and create the questions but he would like the commission to help with pushing the survey out as much as possible and suggested offering a financial incentive such as offering gift cards to those that fill out the survey.

Mr. Thompson asked what the state of the data access from existing data sources. Mr. Benjamin said they only have vehicular data, and it does not give specifics as to where the trips are originating and where they are going, and he is looking into data sources for that.

Ms. Burnaman asked if demographics are also being collected on who is answering the survey. Mr. Benjamin said he thought about that, and it will depend on how much space is on the survey but can be considered or perhaps a separate survey in the future. Mr. Thompson said if we are trying to get data that is useful it is important to speak to how representative the data and suggested at least some high-level demographics. Mr. Benjamin said he is thinking about doing the neighborhoods based on the zip codes or census tracts so there would be some demographic data.

Ms. Burnaman asked how much Mr. Benjamin is anticipating in budgeting for the financial incentive. Mr. Benjamin suggested \$500.

Ms. Bisceglie said having the survey in both English and Spanish is important.

Mr. Benjamin asked if the commission is willing to put in the time to do the “legwork” to get the survey out. Ms. Burnaman said she is interested in helping with the survey and suggested including this as a discussion item on next month’s agenda. Mr. Thompson said he is interested in participating and thinks his experience in data analysis/science is relevant and asked if Mr. Benjamin has the bandwidth to be a project manager or would the commission be taking it on. Mr. Benjamin said this is going to be the city’s survey however, he would the commission to help him with the promotion of the survey so he will build the survey and review it, but the city will have the final say on what questions are included in the survey. Ms. Bisceglie also volunteered to help with the survey. Mr. Salgado said he would be happy to help with the outreach efforts.

Mr. Benjamin thanked the commission and said he would have a draft survey for review by the November meeting.

Mr. Benjamin left the meeting at 6:30 PM.

CT DOT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MICROGRANT PROGRAM

Mr. Pacelli expressed his gratitude to Mr. Thompson for his time as chair and had some good discussions and is glad he is staying on as a commissioner.

Mr. Pacelli thanked Mr. Pappas for filling out the grant application and making the changes and the city’s grants coordinator submitted it to West Cog and if the funding is awarded, it will need to be approved by the Common Council and if approved the mayor will sign it to accept the funds and will then be readily available for the commission to utilize. Ms. Burnaman asked when it was submitted. Mr. Pacelli said it was submitted on September 5, 2024.

DEEPS'S RECREATION TRAILS GRANT

Mr. Thompson said there was a deadline in March, but he does not believe the DEEP has announced the next round and he would like to stay on top of that, especially for the opportunity to submit a grant application for money to study and design a section of the East Coast Greenway to ultimately connect South Norwalk to Rowayton and Darien. He said the commission will need TMP's help to submit the application and particularly getting a statement of work and suggested doing it in tandem with Darien.

Mr. Pacelli said TMP thought this was more of a feasibility study and did not realize there was a route already chosen. Mr. Thompson said the commission has a route in mind but ultimately would hire a consultant to do a study and find a route and that he is not interested in taking the lead on this but would like to see it picked up again and Ms. Burnaman has expressed some interest in picking it up for the commission and he is happy to advise but the project will ultimately be executed by TMP. Mr. Pacelli said TMP does not have the ability to do that at this time, but the commission can create a scope of work and engage a consultant and provide a draft for review, but should be a feasibility study to give the consultant the flexibility to look at different routes and the funding for the match for the grant will need to be requested in next year's budget cycle. Ms. Bisceglie asked how the commission would pay for the consultant. Mr. Pacelli said there are funds remaining in this year's commission budget that can be used for a consultant to provide an estimate and TMP will gladly assist if the commission needs any advice and once the application is completed to submit it to TMP for review and provide comments and ultimately sign off on it and submit it. Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Pacelli if TMP could review the draft of the work statement. Mr. Pacelli said "yes".

LEAGUE LCI GLASS & SUMMIT 2025

Ms. Burnaman said the commission applied to the League of American Bicyclists last year and got an honorable mention for the City of Norwalk and with that holds a membership and Ms. Bisceglie is a league-certified instructor. She said they currently have a few things happening and the first is the National Bike Summit which will be held in March 2025. She also said as part of the strategic plan the commission is looking to get another person certified to be a league-certified instructor and there is a class that is open that will be held in New Haven from April 4th through April 6th. Ms. Bisceglie said there are funds in the budget to attend the summit and it is also offered virtually.

Ms. Burnaman asked if the application would need to be submitted to retain the honorable mention. Ms. Bisceglie said she does not believe so.

Ms. Bisceglie thanked Mr. Thompson for all his work as chair and for working on the is application last year. Mr. Thompson said that Mr. Hanpeter was instrumental for completing the application.

Ms. Burnaman said she will do some outreach to see if there are any Interested members of the community that would be willing to engage with the League of American Bicyclists or possibly become a league certified instructor.

UPCOMING EVENTS & BIKE VALET

o Bike Valet

Mr. Pappa's said the last targeted event was the Oyster Festival but were not able to do the bike valet due to the certificate of insurance not applying to the event as tried to get clarification as to why it was not applicable but never got it. He said it was his impression that the insurance through the city could only apply to city events and any other event would require insurance through the private events and all the targeted events for the rest of the year are considered private events. He asked Mr. Pacelli if he could provide clarification. Mr. Thompson said there seems to be some confusion and he will follow up with Mr. Pappas after the meeting to discuss. Ms. Burnaman asked if the next event for the bike valet will be the SONO Half of October 6th. Mr Pappas said that is the target.

o SoNo Library event for health walks

Ms. Green said they have been partnering with the SONO library to do some walks with the community to get people out and walking and have had pretty good success and said the first walk had 23-25 attendees which was amazing and has been averaging 10-15 people per walk and the next one will be held on September 25, at 10:00 AM. She said they have also partnered with Connecticut State College, and they had funds to purchase signage to go around the college to mark where the maps are and can scan the QR code and look them up on their phones. She said the official launch will be held tomorrow at 12:30 and there will be a walk held along with a ribbon cutting so people are aware that it's there and welcomed the members of the commission to attend. Ms. Bisceglie suggested having tee shirts for the commission to wear at the events and to also hold some of the walks on the weekends.

o NTA event for tree walk/tree ride/Treeples Gathering (October 2024)

Ms. Burnaman said a tree walk was discussed with the NTA in October and may be able to tie that event on of the walks with the Health Department and she will add it as a discussion item at the next educational committee meeting.

o Proposed Route 7 improvements public meeting hosted by CT DOT- Tuesday, September 10th at Cranbury Elementary School

Mr. Pacelli said that the CTDOT will be hosting the meeting and presenting a concept plan so a lot of members of TMP and the City will be attending and encouraged the members of the commission to attend and see what they are proposing and provide comments. Ms. Bisceglie said they are accepting comments via email through September 24th.

EDUCATIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mr. Salgado said there is a meeting scheduled for September 25th at 5:00 PM to discuss the Bike, Walk, and Roll and ways to promote it. He said they will also be discussing putting a video together about the Bike/Walk Commission.

- o NPS Walk Bike Roll Event on October 9th

Ms. Burnaman said the commission is also supporting the Safe Routes to School program and they will be hosting and Walk and Roll to School event on October 9th Mr. Salgado took the initiative and connected some of the commission contacts with the public schools and has discussed reaching out to the PTA's to further engage people.

- o Other Media/Communications updates

Ms. Burnaman said that Ms. Green has updated the website with fresh content.

NORWALK PEDESTRIAN & BIKEWAY TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2012)

Ms. Burnaman said she discovered there is an existing sheet of information with comments from previous commissioners on updating this document. Mr. Thompson said keeping the Bicycle Master Plan and the Pedestrian Master Plan up to date are responsibility of the commission in the city's code and he brought this up a few months ago to address. He said the official plans are from 2012 and was done by a consultant. He started an inventory of how many of those recommendations had been put into place, especially from tier I and he determined it to be 35%-40% and recommended doing the process again and at the last meeting invited all the commissioners to read the entire plan. Ms. Burnaman said there are pieces of the plan that the commission can comment on and asked Mr. Thompson what the commission can do to make a clear path forward for updating the document. Mr. Thompson said he suggested the commission read it first to figure out how useful it still is as it may just need to be updated incrementally or if not where the plan is on the spectrum. He said it would also be useful to finish the inventory that he started to determine how much of the plan is done so that the commission can say how much of the plan is done and shared the inventory that he has completed to date. Ms. Burnaman suggested that some volunteers or interested commissioners continue to work on the this. Mr. Thompson suggested finding a volunteer to complete this document in which he is happy to advise and discuss it with TMP at a future meeting for their input. Ms. Bisceglie volunteered to work on the inventory. Mr. Thompson said he will schedule a meeting with her to go through it and explain the methodology. Ms. Burnaman said she would also like to attend.

REINVESTIGATE BIKE SHARE PROGRAM- NEXT STEPS

Mr. Thompson said there are no new updates but as a recap the mayor had suggested that the work that was done a few years ago to bring a bike share to Norwalk be started up again and he had a few working group meetings with some members of the public but there are some outstanding actions items that are mostly around funding and asked if there is someone on the commission who would like to take this on. Ms. Burnaman said the City of New Haven has just recently released an e-bike/ride-share program that went live last week. Mr. Thompson shared their program. Ms. Burnaman asked Mr. Pacelli if he had any

recommendations on what the next steps the commission can take. Mr. Pacelli said the major component is the funding. Ms. Burnaman said that she will meet with Mr. Thompson to see how this can be moved forward. Mr. Pappas also volunteered to help.

OPEN STREETS EVENT-BIANNUAL EVENT

Ms. Bisceglie it was discussed to keep this event as a bi-annual event and to have one in the spring and one in the fall.

Mr. Thompson said the Sustainable Streets group will be hosting a happy hour event at the Beer Garden 314 on Thursday from 6:10 PM-8:00 PM and the public is welcome to attend.

APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 5, 2024

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MS. BURNAMAN SECONDED THE MOTION**
**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION MS. BISCEGLIE.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MS. BURNAMAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd