

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 1, 2022**

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

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; TMP; Jahliah Green, Health Department; Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Shari Brennan; Diane Lauricella; Pete Franz; Paul Chenard; Phil Chiaia; Jerry Silber; Willem LeComte; Carly Kramer, Redevelopment Agency

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>.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Lauricella stated that she has lived in Norwalk for over 35 years, and she is an environmental consultant by trade and open space and Parks and Recreation advocate and wanted to thank and congratulate Mr. Thompson and the Bike/Walk commission for going above and beyond and working with the new staff at TMP and others to make things happen a lot faster.

Mr. Chenard stated that he is a resident of Norwalk and lives south of South Norwalk and is a transportation planner by trade and a cyclist.

3. GUEST SPEAKER- JERRY SILBER, PEOPLE FRIENDLY STAMFORD

- o Fairfield County Bicycle Partnership**
- o Overview of PFS, successes & failures**

Mr. Silber stated that he is a resident of Stamford and ten years ago a group was formed called “People friendly Stamford” and when they started were just a bunch of radicals, and no one cared including the mayor but that changed when David Martin the previous mayor came aboard and hired Jim Travers and Mr. Bolella and they put them on the map. He said they are an all-volunteer organization and are a citizen

advocacy group that started with the mission of making Stamford a safer place to bike or walk and last year for the first time developed a score card for all the board of representatives. He said the organization has been evolving and has moved into transient orient development.

Mr. Silber discussed the partnership they have formed with Greenwich and have been meeting over the last six months to discuss how they can work together and have put together a preliminary path that starts in Greenwich and goes into Stamford and are planning to extend it to the Darien border. He said they are now called the Greenwich-Stamford bike partnership and Mr. Travers contacted him and asked if Norwalk could join and connected him with Mr. Thompson and are considering changing the name to the Fairfield County bike partnership. He said that Mr. Thompson has already put him in contact with someone in Fairfield and will now just need someone in Westport and the Darien and asked the commission if anyone knows of any volunteer bicycle advocates in Darien to follow up with Mr. Thompson because that would be the next critical step to make this happen. Mr. Chenard suggested contacting Danny Cycles to see if they know anyone that is passionate about trying to transform Darien. Mr. Thompson said he would stop in at Danny Cycles.

Mr. Silber said they are working with Bruce Donald who is the regional coordinator of the East Coast Greenway, and he is excited to provide support to help create a safe and pleasurable path and provide economic benefit.

Mr. Thompson asked with the route between Greenwich and Stamford if they are envisioning just signage or some sort of infrastructure. Mr. Silber said they are just in the beginning of the preliminary stages, but he is viewing formal bike lanes with sharrows and at some point, maybe a protected bike lane. He said that Mr. Donald is also on a committee that has access to state and federal funds that could be used for design so once the preliminary map is laid out it would be good to work with some professionals who can then refine it and identify where some infrastructure work may need to be done, and come up with a price and based on that could then look for some more significant state or federal funding to do more significant infrastructure work.

TMP UPDATES

o CT. Community Connectivity Grant- Notice to Proceed

Mr. Pacelli reported on the connectivity grant and said they have received a notice to proceed from the CTDOT regarding the striping and the sidewalk construction on Hunters Lane and will now advertise for the construction bid as well as the installation of the overall project for the bike routes and sidewalk portion. He said they will also need to put out a bid process for signage for the bike routes due to the large amount of signage that will be needed and will continue to coordinate with the CTDOT and DPW regarding the striping because some of the roads are planned to be paved later this year or early next year so the striping may need to be done in phases, but will get as much done as they can when the roads are newly paved. He said the notice to proceed has also now allowed the city to submit more projects for the next round of funding for the connectivity grant and can be up to \$600,000. Mr. Thompson shared the map of the proposed bike lanes and congratulated Mr. Pacelli and said this was a very big milestone and asked what will be on the signage. Mr. Pacelli said they will mainly be bike lane signs and bike route signage with arrows if there are multiple avenues to take. Mr. Aley asked if some portions will go out to bid this year. Mr. Pacelli said that

they are utilizing the in-house striping contract to do some of the roads but there are some roads that will need to be paved first but will do as much as they can this year and will coordinate with DPW to have the roads that need paving done before they are striped. He said the DOT will also be paving portions of Wilson Avenue, Fort Point Street and Van Zant Street later this year and will also coordinate with them and whatever is left will be done early next year.

Below is the link to the map of the proposed bike lanes that Mr. Thompson shared.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1-tNkRHKwsiLF4gptq1m69ietHeFhqVo>

o Fillow St. & Hunters Lane- sidewalks, paving and striping

Mr. Pacelli said that Fillow Street was recently milled and in working with DPW Fillow Street was added as an amendment to the paving schedule for this year because the pavement was deteriorating so TMP staff has looked at the sidewalks a cross sections and will be installing 5' sidewalks with 3' amenity zone between North Taylor Avenue and Fox Run Road. He said that DPW is also milling Hunters Lane and as part of the connectivity grant will be expanding the sidewalk network between Lancaster Drive and Ponus Avenue and there will be a crosswalk in front of the school, and the sidewalk will continue all the way to Fillow Street which will improve the walkability in the entire area which serves three schools.

o Highland Ave. Sidewalk Project Update

Mr. Pacelli said there was a press conference held last week commencing the start of construction for Highland Avenue sidewalks and is another milestone project with many more to come. Mr. Thompson introduced Willem as a NCC student as well as an alumnus of Brookside Elementary and Roton Middle School and as such spoke at the press conference and did an excellent job.

Mr. Thompson asked for a status update on the sidewalk audit. Mr. Pacelli said they have been getting samples from data base but is still in the process of being completed but is much further along then it was a few months ago.

ARTISTIC BIKE RACKS WORKING GROUP

Mr. Ebert said that he had sent an email last week to try and get some people to meet about the artistic bike rack locations but received no response and proposed meeting this Thursday at 12:00PM and/or this Saturday at 10:00AM and he will put it in an email to the group. Mr. Thompson said the bike rack wish list that he and Mr. Hanpeter made is not limiting and it is just meant to be a starting point and said the wish list can be find at bikenorwalk.org or on walknorwalk.org. Mr. Chenard said when choosing a bike rack to be sure it is the right size for the location that it will be going and also suggested approaching a local artist to see if they can design something.

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY APPLICATION

Mr. Thompson provided an update and said this was discussed last month and TMP is on board to help the commission prepare for the February deadline, but the deadline that is for the end of September is too early and he spoke with Mr. Travers and he said that the summer is TMP's busiest time of the year and will have more access to TMP's staff time later in the year, and a lot of the projects that are in progress now will be completed by then. He said that Mr. Travers also suggested that the commission start the application and Mr. Thompson proposed starting a working group for the bike friendly community application. Ms. Bisceglie said it brings all of the work that the commission is doing but education is also a component, and the application is extensive but is worth doing and will be extremely exciting for the city. Mr. Chiaia, Mr. Hanpeter, Ms. Burnaman, Mr. Frantz and Ms. Green volunteered to part of the working group.

BIKE SAFETY CLASSES

Ms. Bisceglie said that Karen Jenkins who has been with the League of American Bicyclists for many years and works with the New Haven Coalition for Active Transportation who offers free classes to anyone and receive private funding and Karen would like to come and speak to the commission regarding the bike friendly application.

Ms. Bisceglie said she is a league certified instructor for the National League of American Bicyclists, and she is the only one that is certified in Norwalk, and there are only 25-30 certified instructors in all of Connecticut and in order to get the certification need to take a series of classes. She said she would like to start to offer some classes and the goal is to get people trained at a higher level in bicycle safety and education. She said she contacted the Recreation commission about using a public park to hold a class and she is hoping that the commission can find funding in the budget for her to be the instructor. Mr. Aley said that REI teaches bike riding classes and suggested reaching out to the to see if they are interested in partnering with Ms. Bisceglie for the bike riding portion. Ms. Bisceglie said it makes a bi difference to have a certified league cycling instructor, which there are none in Norwalk besides herself. Mr. Thompson requested that Ms. Bisceglie present a formal proposal with a cost so that the commission can vote on it. He also requested that Ms. Bisceglie send him he information of how to become a National League of American Bicyclists certified instructor and he will send it out to the group. Ms. Bisceglie said there is information that can be found on the National League of American Bicyclists at:

<https://www.bikeleague.org/content/become-instructor>

UPCOMING EVENT- NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Mr. Thompson said the event is held annually and is a nationwide event that police departments do throughout the county to do outreach in their communities. He said the event will be held on September 27th and the commission will have a table at the event and the more people that can attend the event the better because it is a great opportunity to talk to the public to not only educate them about biking and walking, but to also learn what people see as impediments to biking and walking in Norwalk. Mr. Aley said he spoke to Alex of Smart Cycles, and he will be giving away bike locks and is planning on having a table at National Night Out. He said he is also hoping that all of the new swag is received by then and will have a table next to his so that they can work together to promote biking.

Mr. Thompson said last Friday he met with Mr. Stowers of Recreation and Parks and discussed with him the many ways to get to Calf Pasture Beach without a car, yet the city doesn't advertise any of them and Mr. Stowers said that was a great point. He said that he also contacted Ms. Woods-Matthews and made these points, and she put a social media post out last Saturday and shared it with the commission and she said she will also be updating the website to include how to get to the beach without a car. He said if anyone on the commission thinks of anything the city should address to send them to him and he will have a discussion with city staff.

Mr. Aley said the East Coast Greenway passed through Norwalk and each summer he sees several long-distance bike travelers and he often stops and talks to them and twice he has had people come and camp in his yard and encouraged the group to stop and talk to them when they see them. Ms. Bisceglie said that would be a great article for The Hour or Nancy on Norwalk. Mr. Thompson agreed and asked Mr. Aley to contact Nancy of Norwalk and ask that she do an article on this.

APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JULY MEETING

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd