

**City of Norwalk
Bike/Walk Commission
Special Meeting
June 21, 2021**

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk You Tube channel, Specific instructions and links can be found at <http://www.norwalkct.org/meetings> .

Attendance: Nancy Rosett, Chair; Tanner Thompson; Barbara Mc Cabe; Jud Aley; Christine Bisceglie; Sam Ebert; Colin Grotheer

Others: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Michael Yeosock, Principal Engineer, Transportation, Mobility and Parking; Jonathon Hopkins, Redevelopment Agency, Audrey Cozzarin, Gary Washinsky

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Rosett called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

1. APPROVAL TO BUY 7 CROSSWALK STANCHIONS OR OTHER OPTIONS

Ms. Rosett said that if the funds remaining in the operating budget are not spent by June 30, 2021, they will go back to the city and when we met last week we had discussed a few options of things to purchase. She said that one of the things that she had suggested was to install another repair station and over the weekend she observed that a number of people were using the pump at the repair station that is located at the beach. She also said that the people trying to use the pump were having difficulty and suggested that if any of the commissioners are at the beach with their bikes to try and use the station and if they find it not to be working correctly to contact her so that she can schedule a repair to be done. Mr. Ebert said he was there with a friend and when he tried to use the pump it did not work and he will go and look at it tonight. Ms. Rosett said if there is an issue to let her or Mr. Yeosock know so that a repair can be scheduled.

Ms. Rosett said that the company where Mr. Ebert works will be donating some bike repair stations so the commission thought we might want to use the funds on bike corral which would require using a parking space but Mr. Pacelli spoke to Mr. Travers who did not think this was a good time to do that, so she suggested purchasing more of the sidewalk stanchions because there are schools that need them and they are \$380 each so seven of them could be purchased with the remaining funds that are in the budget. Mr. Thompson asked Ms. Rosett if she had a picture of the stanchions available to share with the commission. Ms. Rosett said she does not. Mr. Aley added that he believes they say “yield to pedestrians at

crosswalks” and there is one located near his residence and he observed that they do get motorists to stop when people approach the sidewalk and he finds them very helpful.

Mr. Thompson said he supports purchasing the stanchions but Mr. Grotheer had emailed him a statement which he read into the record as follows:

I am in support of using the remaining funds for additional bike parking resources in advance of a finalized location and it is highly likely a location can be found in one of the desired districts that does not impact revenue generating parking spaces which should not be prime driver

Mr. Thompson said he shares his sentiment that impacting revenue generating parking spaces should not be a prime driver and that it is very likely another location can be found however, he has no intentions on voting against purchasing the pedestrian stanchions. Ms. Rosett said they corrals can be ordered out of next year’s operating budget. Mr. Thompson said he Mr. Grotheer also pointed out that he supports purchasing the stanchions.

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE STANCHIONS AS DESCRIBED.**

**** MS. MCCABE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. APPROVAL TO SEND A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR NORWALK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY’S GRANT APPLICATIONS

Mr. Thompson said the commission was contacted by the Redevelopment Agency because they are applying for two grants and that one is due at midnight tonight. Mr. Ebert added that it is to take a parking space for parking and using it for bicycle infrastructure. Mr. Thompson said it is to also fund a feasibility study for a fixed guideway bus route between the South Norwalk Railroad station and the Wheels hub and would also include a study of complete streets and would establish guidelines for complete streets on all types of streets that are in the neighborhood of the bus route. He said the reason he thinks the commission should support this is because both the Redevelopment Agency and Mr. Travers have expressed to him is they see this as a way to jumpstart the citywide complete streets standard.

Mr. Hopkins said that he reached out to Mr. Thompson last week regarding the two grants. Mr. Aley said several years ago he had heard that the Wheels Hub would be moving to the South Norwalk Railroad Station and asked if that is something the Redevelopment Agency is also looking at. Mr. Hopkins said that has been discussed but one of the issues is that there is some state and federal funding that was recently put into the Wheels Hub so if it is moved the city would need to reimburse some of those funds so in the short term are not looking to move the entire hub, but are interested in expanding bus service at an intermodal center at the South Norwalk Railroad Station for buses and shuttles and as well as other transit services. Mr. Aley said whether the current Wheels Hub stays or not he would like to see Burnell Blvd. reverted back to a two-way street. Mr. Hopkins said that could be studied as part of this grant if it is awarded.

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO APPROVE SENDING A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Thompson provided an overview of the second grant and said it focuses on repairing the first mile last mile problem and infrastructure developments around transit stations and this grant would focus on the South Norwalk Railroad Station. He said the grant would be for the implementation of changes to the streetscape around the station, and that the grant application is due the day after the next commission meeting so it can be discussed further at that meeting if necessary and that he is happy to write a letter of support for the grant and the commission supports the implementation of complete street and bike and sidewalk redevelopment in the neighborhood.

Mr. Hopkins requested if possible if the committee could develop some ideas and thoughts and share them with the Redevelopment Agency which would be helpful for the application process.

Mr. Grotheer joined to meeting at 6:30PM.

Mr. Grotheer asked if there is a deadline to when the comments and letter of support is due. Mr. Hopkins said the letter of support by midnight on July 12, 2021, and there is an ongoing planning effort around the South Norwalk Railroad Station that includes also a lot of multi-modal transportation and transit-oriented development planning that is ongoing and the comments would be helpful for that which will be ongoing this summer and finish in the fall.

Mr. Ebert asked what the estimated timeframe before the conclusion of the research is on the first grant. Mr. Hopkins said the rough timeline is to have the study complete in 2024, but that could change once we determine if the grant is awarded. Mr. Ebert asked if there will be public comments through the process. Mr. Hopkins said "yes" and as part of the grant some of the funds have to be used for public meetings and outreach efforts.

Ms. Cozzarin said we want to be able to get people to and from the train station safely whether they are walking or biking and there are some artistic efforts going on in the city as well as other movements that may be able to make the area interesting, and when we identify the last mile, we should try and make it interesting to the eye so that traffic slows down and people understand and see where the route is in and out of the train station.

Mr. Hopkins left the meeting at 6:35PM.

Mr. Thompson presented the area in which the grant will pertain to and said the South Norwalk Railroad Station appears to him to be car oriented for people to drive in and transfer to the train which is how it was designed especially on the west side of the tracks where there is a parking garage and pedestrian access is possible, but is clearly not what the building was designed for and he would like to see improvements next to the building. Mr. Grotheer also suggested to connect the embankment near the stairs on Martin Luther King Drive to allow people to walk until they can cross the street. Mr. Thompson agreed and said the commission would love for that to be a walkable area and suggested Martin Luther King to be a three-lane roadway. Mr. Grotheer suggested an edge line so that the traffic can be narrowed and more trees can be planted and still maintain the road width.

Mr. Thompson said that Ms. Lauricella also submitted a statement regarding FTA and RAISED Grant that he read into the record as follows:

Please include the South Norwalk community in a public discussion with the FTA grant before it is sent out which includes the planning and creation for the expansion of the South Norwalk bus hub and asked

the commission to spell that out in the support letter because many in the area walk and bike to their jobs and shop either by choice or need.

Mr. Thompson said he agrees with Ms. Lauricella's comments and he will include them in the letter especially given the infrastructure changes that would be made using the money from the grant and should serve the people in the vicinity. He said so far the conversations have been around the west side of the tracks but more of the people who currently live without a car by necessity are on the east side so that community should be engaged in these conversations and he would like to see the station engage the neighborhood such as a pedestrian plaza and or though fare. Mr. Grotheer said there are people that are working on ideas like that in that area and there is currently a public application that is for the north end of the block.

Ms. Rosett suggested to include encouraging the Redevelopment Agency to make every effort to involve the South Norwalk community in those discussion and to do outreach to that community in the letter of support.

Mr. Grotheer suggested to include high level discussion about sidewalks or road improvements and revise the city standard detail for street trees and lamp posts as well as the lack of trash cans. Mr. Thompson agreed and said installing trash cans goes a long way in helping with the littering in public areas. Ms. Cozzarin also agreed and also suggested adding dog waste stations.

Mr. Aley left the meeting at 6:56PM.

Ms. Bisceglie asked if the people that want to bring their bike on the train have to bring it into the elevator. Mr. Thompson said "yes" or carry it up the stairs. Ms. Bisceglie suggested that signage is installed so that is visible to people that bikes can be brought into the elevator. Mr. Thompson also suggested adding signage on the platform on which cars of the train have bike racks.

Mr. Thompson said if anyone on the commission has any additional ideas to forward them to him and he will include them into the draft letter and forward them to Mr. Hopkins.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** MR. THOMPSON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd