

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 5, 2023**

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

STAFF: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner, Ben Yeung, TMP; Senior Traffic Engineer,
TMP

OTHERS: Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Phil Chiaia; Paul Chenard; Audrey Cozzarin;
Jeremy Leung; Paul Chenard; Wendy Bjerke; Andrew Sinclair; Nicholas
Sinclair; Sarah Roy; Manuel Salgado

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. Sinclair said that he had attended one of the mixers at the Beer Garden and wanted to attend a meeting.

Ms. Roy said that she is an outreach and engagement specialist for the CT Rides Program for the Stamford region which includes the Norwalk area, and she is excited to attend her first meeting.

Ms. Cozzarin said that driving behavior and enforcement is an issue. Mr. Thompson said that he met with Mayor Rilling last month and he discussed the issue of enforcement and focused on enforcement of speeding and parking on the sidewalk, and he said that he has discussed these two issues with the police chief and is on the mayor's radar and needs to be addressed.

Mr. Yeung introduced himself and said he recently joined the team at Transportation, Mobility and Parking as a Senior Traffic Engineer and he is looking forward to working with the commission on improving cycling, pedestrian mobility, and safety in the city. Mr. Grotheer said that Sam Swartz who is Mr. Yeung's previous employer gave a keynote in Norwalk and his book Street Smarts is an excellent read and is worth reading.

BIKE MONTH RECAP

Ms. Bisceglie said that she had attended a bike ride in Westport and was surprised that electric bikes were allowed to be part of the ride and requested that electric bikes be included on the agenda for discussion.

Mr. Thompson said that May was National Bike Month, and the commission had several events that the commission had organized and executed. Ms. Burnaman said the commission held several events in collaboration with the city as well as the hydration stations that were put up during bike week, and some of the things the commission got involved in were the NRVt trail progress celebration and it went very well and had a lot of different organizations involved and there were a lot of interested parties. She said the other thing the commission did was the hydration stations and had met a lot of commuters and gained a lot of traction. She said the commission also collaborated with the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center and had a June walk/ride event last Saturday and invited the commission to attend and to have a table and some of the commission's followers attended and so it was good to see some of the volunteers get involved.

Ms. Burnaman said there was also an open streets event on Calf Pasture Beach Road and half of the road was closed and was open just for cyclists and pedestrians. Mr. Thompson thanked TMP, DPW staff, and most of all Recreation and Parks for helping to organize and executing the event.

Ms. Burnaman asked for feedback from those that were involved in the breakfast hydration stations and ideas on how it can be improved next year, as well as feedback on the pros and cons that they would like to share. Ms. Cozzarin said that she stopped by two of the hydration stations and loved the t-shirts that were given out and although there were not a lot of cyclists, they did seem engaged, and the presentation was very friendly, and she would love to promote the bike to work week next year and suggested lawn signs and volunteered to design them. She went on to say that this is the first year the event was held and was a big effort and takes time to get the traction but there was a lot of press, and she was very impressed and suggested a planning committee to spread the news further for next year's event.

Ms. Bisceglie asked how many people attended the events over the month Ms. Burnaman said over 100 people had attended.

Mr. Thompson said he learned a lot about promoting events and the open streets event was a good first pass but got the approval at a late notice and only ended up having a week to promote it and the one thing he learned is that any event that is held in conjunction with the city the promotions must go through Michelle Matthew-Woods of the city's department of communications and thanked her for having News 12 at the hydrations stations, and in the future if the commission wants to get a lot of publicity for an event through media outlets and will need to work with her department early to get them out. Ms. Bisceglie asked if there was any negative feedback received from the open streets event, and if there are any plans to hold another open streets event this summer as it was extremely popular. Mr. Thompson said that he and Ms. Burnaman met with Mr. Travers and Mr. Stowers and there was some feedback from the city that it did not look well attended and speaks to the promotion which could have been done better and if the event is done again they may target the fall and probably not the summer because it is beach season and would focus on more promotion and programming Mr. Chiaia suggested involving the surrounding communities for the next event. Ms. Burnaman said that Ms. Roy had reached out after the event that there was potential for involvement with CT rides and suggested collaborating with her on routes to get to Norwalk using public transit. Ms. Roy said that she would be happy to work with the commission on that and can also promote the events on their social media. Ms. Cozzarin suggested to also include the Board of Education.

NACTO DESIGNING CITIES CONFERENCE

Mr. Pacelli said that he had attended the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) for the designing cities conference during bike to work week and some of the ultimate goals were to build a stronger economy and a better quality of life for cities. He said there were 1200 planners that attended the conference from across North America as well as some consultants and a lot of the sessions were presentations based upon various cities presenting what they have done and implemented across their city and best practices, and there was a plethora of interesting topics and good exchanging of ideas. He said they also participated in updating Urban Bikeway Design Guide that NACTO put out in 2011 and was exciting to be a part of that. He said they also highlighted projects in Norwalk and had highlighted the Transportation Master Plan. Ms. Roy said if anyone is interested in attending the NACTO conference in the future they offer scholarships, and she encouraged people to apply.

BIKE/WALK COMMISSION BUDGET FY 2022-2023

Mr. Pacelli said there is still an outstanding balance in the budget for this fiscal year. Mr. Alely asked how much is still left. Mr. Pacelli said approximately \$5,000 and shouldn't wait until June 30th to make purchases and suggested ordering t-shirts, safety vest, and swag items for next year. Mr. Alely asked what the deadline is to spend the money. Mr. Pacelli said that he would like to have everything ordered within the next two weeks. Ms. Bisceglie suggested ordering bike safety materials and getting a lifetime membership to the National League of American Bicyclists. There was further discussion ensued and it was decided that Mr. Thompson will obtain quotes for bike lights, Mr. Alely will obtain quotes for locks, and Ms. Burnaman will obtain quotes for printing materials and t-shirts and Mr. Thompson said he would like to have the quotes obtained by the end of this week and have them sent to Mr. Pacelli by the close of business on Friday.

**** MR. GROTHEER MOVED TO APPROVE TO SPEND THE REMAINING AVAILABLE BUDGET OF APPROXIMATELY \$5,000 ON APPROXIMATELY 150 T-SHIRTS, FOR A SUM OF \$1,500, AND AN EQUAL NUMBER OF LIGHTS AND LOCK SETS FOR A SUM OF \$2,000 ON LIGHTS AND \$1,000 ON LOCKS TO BE BALANCED ON THE MORE EXPENSIVE ITEM AND THE REMAINDER ON PRINTED MATERIALS WITH AN INITIAL BUDGET OF \$500**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TMP PROJECT UPDATE

a. Community Connectivity Striping and Signage Project

Mr. Pacelli provided an update on the community connectivity striping and signage project which has been in the works for some time, and this year have begun the layout for the striping and started installing the signs. He said they have been working with the state for the sign installation on the state road portion and on Wilson Avenue/ route 136 between and South Main Street has been paved by the DOT, and Richards Avenue to Route 1 will also be paved this year as part of the DPW paving contract, and most of the road will have dedicated bike lanes on each side of the

road. Mr. Thompson asked if this will all be implemented by the end of the summer. Mr. Pacelli said by the end of the year to be on the safe side due to the paving and 7.25 miles of bike lanes will be installed once this project has been completed. He also said as part of this project at the intersection of Fort Point Street and Seaview Avenue will be the city's first implementation of green pavement and red pavement for a bus pull-in area.

b. Concrete Services Projects

Mr. Pacelli said as part of the concrete services project they started putting together a list of smaller concrete related projects and will be done in close proximity to schools and high pedestrian traffic areas as well as recreation areas and will include a raised crosswalk at Union Park which connects the NRV and all of the projects have been designed internally. Mr. Thompson asked if it is feasible to provide a list of upcoming projects especially the small ones that will be done through the concrete contract on the TMP website. Mr. Pacelli said he will bring it the team to see if they can be on the website. Mr. Chenard said now that there will be a more robust bike network that they should begin discussing dedicated wayfinding as well. Mr. Thompson requested this be added to the agenda next month for further discussion as well as an item for E-bikes.

c. City Paving Projects

Mr. Pacelli provided an overview of the DPW paving contract and said they are currently working on Bayne Street and the West Rocks Road area, and their plan is to put 5' ADA compliant sidewalks along West Rocks Road between Creeping Hemlock Route 7 and will also be widening that section between Creeping Hemlock and Bayne Street in order to have dedicated bike lanes along that stretch. He said that 5' ADA compliant sidewalks will be added to Bayne Street with an extruded concrete curb and 5' dedicated bike lanes on a majority Bayne Street on both sides of the road as well.

NRV CROSSING ROUTE 1 BELDEN AVENUE @ RT. 7 RAMPS

Mr. Pacelli said based on the discussion last month staff recognizes the crossing at the NRV needs to be addressed at some point, but due to resources and other projects that they are in the process of working on they can't focus on this one at this time, and they will also need to coordinate with DOT and will continue to keep it on their list and he will continue to update the commission each meeting, but will need to look at it further to be sure it is done properly. Mr. Thompson said they agree it needs to be done properly but based on the conversation last month the commission is hoping that TMP staff as the experts can find a solution that is both proper but also timely. Mr. Pacelli said it is a lot of work on top of what staff has already committed to doing this year that have already been designed. Mr. Thompson asked why there is so much overhead on something that clearly is sub-optimal now to improve the intersection and reduce casualties and save lives. Mr. Grotheer said this is a completed project that crossed a state road that would have already been through a lot of the hurdles and due diligence and is baffling that staff does not have some of this data available. Mr. Pacelli said he was not able to find anything that has been done as far as counts as part of the NRV and these plans were done years ago. Ms. Bisceglie asked if a pedestrian sign can be installed for now. Mr. Pacelli said that it is a state roadway, but he will discuss it with the team.

Ms. Bisceglie asked if it would be helpful for a citizen like herself to call the DOT and make a complaint. Mr. Pacelli said “yes”, and he would provide a contact. Mr. Aley suggested this item to be included on the agenda for next month to provide time for Mr. Pacelli speak with staff. Mr. Thompson said what he would like to see next month is to help both sides understand each other and figure out why there is this gap between expected urgency and actual urgency.

SEAVIEW AVENUE COMPLETE STREETS CONCEPT

a. Concept is available on dedicated project webpage <https://www.norwalkct.gov/3415/Seaview-Avenue-Complete-Streets-Project>

b. Public Comment to remain open until July 1, 2023.

Mr. Pacelli provided an update on the Seaview Avenue complete streets concept and said they had a walkthrough and presentation two weeks ago and was well attended and gathered comments on the proposed concept and the public comment period is still opened until July 1st on the Seaview Avenue website which is included on the agenda. Mr. Thompson asked how the commission can help to get funding. Mr. Pacelli said if the commission supports the project an op-ed would be great to have the support from the public and especially from a commission of the city would help when applying for grant opportunities. Mr. Grotheer said that he will draft the statement. Mr. Thompson requested that he send it to the commission to review via e-mail.

APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM MAY 8TH, 2023.

**** MS. BURNAMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. GROTHEER 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 7:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd