

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
MAY 3, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Nancy Rosett, Chair; Christine Bisceglie; Sam Ebert; Tanner Thompson;
Barbara McCabe, Colin Grotheer

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner; Michael Yeosock, Principal Engineer,
TMP; Audrey Cozzarin; Gary Washinsky

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CALL TO ORDER

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

Mr. Craighead stated that he is one of the co-founders of the Norwalk Green Association and we are in the process of trying to create a pedestrian plan for the Norwalk Green neighborhood and have support of the neighborhood. He said he would like to gather support and raise initiative to further move the pedestrian plan forward.

2. APPROVAL OF APRIL 5TH MINUTES

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

**** MR. EBERT SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. CHAIR' S REPORT

Ms. Rosett reported and thanked Ms. Bisceglie for writing the letter in support of the grant request for the commission and she did a fantastic job.

Ms. Rosett said that the commission received an email from Alan Kibbe stating that along with additional bike lanes we should be teaching bicyclists the rules of the road to reduce hazards to riders, and although this is important for kids to keep them safe, he is more concerned about the adult riders because they don't understand that they should obey the same right of way practices as automobiles. She said that she did explain to him that the commission is very much in favor of both bicycle and pedestrian education but that the issue is figuring out how to do it and encouraged him to send any suggestions. She said she also

contacted Mr. Travers and he is planning some educational projects in the future and she requested that he keep the commission apprized and that we would very much like to partner with them.

Ms. Rosett said she also met with Mr. Chenard who is the manager of Transportation and Planning and Marketing for the Transit District along with Ms. Hebert who is a consultant to the Transit District as their Special Projects Manager and Mr. Chenard is very interested in working with the commission to gather information on bus use both by pedestrians and bicyclists to plan possible route revisions as well as some bus shelter placements. She suggested to him that a more productive thing to do is speak to the Pedestrian Committee. Mr. Thompson said that he had connected with Mr. Chenard and one of his tasks is to do a ridership study of all of the lines. He said that had invited Mr. Chenard to work with himself and Mr. Ebert because independent of the commission we have been working on putting together a bike co-op and Mr. Chenard will be getting involved over the summer.

Ms. Rosett said that she had spoken at the April 19th Traffic Authority meeting in favor of returning the traveling lanes on Strawberry Hill Avenue for the northbound traffic to the way they were. She said she also said that the commission was happy to see that they had approved the adoption of the bike lanes and sharrows on the Conn DOT connectivity grant which is the east/west route in the city that the commission has been working on for a number of years.

Ms. Rosett said that she is planning to step down as Chair at the end of her term which is on June 30, 2021, and Mr. Thompson will become the next chair which the Mayor has approved. She said she knows the commission will give him the support that they have given to her over the years to continue to move the commission's work forward. The commission members offered Mr. Thompson their congratulations. She said to fill her term beginning July 1, 2021, she has requested that the Mayor appoint Ms. Cozzarin. She said that Mr. Ebert's term also ends on June 30, 2021, and she has requested that the Mayor also reappoint him for a three-year term.

Mr. Thompson thanked the commission for all of their encouragement and especially thanked Ms. Cozzarin and said he hopes the work that we do will not just be limited to the commissioners and Ms. Cozzarin has set a great example on how much impact someone can have without being a formal commissioner and he hopes to find a lot more people to work with us.

Ms. Cozzarin said that Ms. Rosett did a great job as chair of the commission and her guidance has helped her with the pedestrian committee.

a. Transportation Planner

Mr. Pacelli reported and said that the grant proposal has been submitted in the amount of \$18.6 million dollars for the pedestrian facility projects and staff appreciates the letter that the commission put together in support of the grant on such short notice. Mr. Pacelli said the city has received \$ 1.4 million dollars of the request for the West Rocks project that includes new sidewalks throughout the entire corridor and improved pedestrian crossings. Ms. Cozzarin said the Malta house which is a residence for homeless women who are pregnant or have small babies will be moving behind All Saints School in June so sidewalks are needed in the area. Mr. Washinsky asked if there is a clear plan for the right of way for the whole stretch of the area. Mr. Pacelli said the entire corridor will be surveyed prior to the design phase of the project. Mr. Washinsky said that it needs to be clear where the right of ways are located for the type of work this commission would like to see done

Mr. Pacelli said we are in the final stages of the connectivity grant and are putting together the final designs for the DOT to review. He said the project will double the amount of bike lanes and

the Traffic Authority has approved the 10' travel lanes, and the city has requested jurisdiction approval from the state for the use of bike boxes and once approved would like to use the standards for other bike boxes for areas we would like to target going forward. Ms. Rosett asked Mr. Pacelli if he had any intersections in mind to install the first bike boxes. Mr. Pacelli said that staff is looking at the area of route 136 at Seaview Avenue and Fort Point Street.

Mr. Pacelli said the city is submitting a grant proposal from the healthy communities grant program to assist a community-based project for installing and planting trees along designated street roadways so TMP along with the city is asking the commission to write another letter in support of for the grant of \$30,000 to fund the West Main Street area to install and maintain street 84 trees in the neighborhood, and he would need the letter by May 20, 2021. He said staff would also like the commission to be a part of the public community outreach and that the Norwalk Tree Alliance and the Tree Advisory Committee will also be involved. Mr. Grotheer asked if there is a reason that a residential neighborhood is being chosen rather than a commercial district. Mr. Pacelli said the pedestrian infrastructure was there and staff felt this was a good area to use as a demonstration project. Mr. Grotheer asked if there is any concern with the power lines because it appears there may be some line that could conflict with the plans. Mr. Pacelli said that is something that will be looked at and a survey of the area will be done but at this stage we are just gathering the information for the grant submittal.

**** MR. GROTHEER MOVED TO APPROVE THAT THE COMMISSION SEND A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE TREE CANOPY PROJECT.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Pacelli said there needs to be a better inventory of the sidewalks throughout the city and asked if this is something the commission would like to assist with. Ms. Rosett said that the Pedestrian Committee has been looking at sidewalk audits and suggested that he meet with Ms. Cozzarin and Mr. Thompson so that the areas of higher priority can be focused on first.

Mr. Grotheer said that he had noticed a new crosswalk being installed on Union Avenue @ Eclipse Street and asked what the timeline of the project was and if there will be more extensive improvements. Mr. Yeosock said that was a TMP project and there will also be a crosswalk installed on William Street that will include RFP's. Mr. Washinsky suggested that DPW be instructed to perform construction mitigation of the areas.

b. Bike Plan

There was no report given.

c. Events

Ms. McCabe reported and said that Connecticut has become the first state in the union to be 50% fully vaccinated.

Ms. McCabe said that May is National Bike/Walk month but cannot hold an event due to Covid-19 but will be holding a gathering around the bike repair station at Calf Pasture Beach and that

Mr. Ebert will do a demonstration on how to use it. She said it will be held on Saturday, May 8, 2021, and she has sent an email to the commissioners.

d. League of American Bicyclists

Ms. Biseglie reported and said the League of American Bicyclists has been cosponsoring the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (UTCD) and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and said it has not been updated since 2009 so there is an opportunity for people to provide input to make it better because it is being emphasized that it is car driven and to increase traffic flow. The partners who are not the advocacy groups and other organizations and transportation officials are very firm in requesting that it includes safety, equity and livability so we have an opportunity to provide comments but the deadline to provide comments is May 14, 2021. Mr. Grotheer said the manual is a standard for the control devices and less of a design guide for the intersections and asked staff for their opinion. Mr. Yeosock agreed and said it is a guideline that engineers use to design roadway improvements so there is consistency from state to state. Mr. Washinsky said that the CONN DOT must have their recommendations that they have already but together and suggested that Mr. Travers get what they are and share them with the commission. Mr. Thompson suggested that the members of the commission read up on it and familiarize ourselves with it and submit our own personal statements.

Ms. Biseglie there is a national competition and there is an opportunity to receive an award if we can provide bike data and could get the echo counters and have people help us with the data. Mr. Thompson said he has spoken with Mr. Travers about doing bike counts in advance of the new bike lanes being installed. He said that he will speak with Ms. Biseglie off line regarding the competition.

e. Pedestrian Plan

Ms. Cozzarin reported and said that the Pedestrian Committee did not meet in April but the focus going forward will be on specific projects related to schools and there is pedestrian signage that the Commission has purchased and have identified three schools that could use them. She said it comes with a caveat that someone will need to take ownership of them.

Ms. Cozzarin said the Pedestrian Committee has been focusing on curated walks and in the last three weeks there have been two curated walks around the Green and have begun to identify locations where there are walkways with a curb cut to nowhere and want to make the Norwalk Green a lot safer and more welcoming.

Ms. Cozzarin said that on Spring Hill Avenue just above the cemetery which is above the new missing link for the NRVT. There are some breaks in the walls and woods that lead into the roadway within the cemetery that lead down to the NRVT as connector for all of the neighborhoods in the area. She asked if the NRVT has a relationship with the cemetery and if not, she would like to reach out to them

f. Social Media

Mr. Thompson reported and said he will continue to work on getting more public input and that he has created a google map to pin all suggestions regardless of merit. He said when he took over social media there were 120 followers and are now at 180 and will try to keep growing.

Mr. Thompson said that Chelsie McCarthy who works on the social media for the Norwalk Green Association has volunteered to help him with the social media which he will need with the increased responsibilities. He also said if anyone on the commission is interested in being more involved with the social media presence to contact him. Ms. Cozzarin said that the library is a great place for disseminating information as well.

g. Strategic Plan

Ms. Rosett reported on the highlights and said that Mr. Pacelli has kept the commission updated on east/west and north/ south bike routes. Mr. Pacelli said we are targeting for them to be installed this year.

Ms. Rosett said the Pedestrian Plan was updated with the assistance that was provided to Tracey School with their parking.

Ms. Rosett said that there will be a community outreach event this Saturday and hopes the commissioners will be able to attend.

Ms. Rosett said that the commission applied for one grant in which we did not receive but have been helping TMP by sending letters of support for grants they have been applying for.

h. Walking Update

Ms. Cozzarin said that Ms. Green has been recording a lot of the walking paths that are part of the NorWALKer program, and she did a walk with her at Oak Hills Park and she records along the walk and posts them on the Health Department's website. She said that Ms. Mc Cabe has also been recording nice walking areas around the city.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business discussed this evening.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Oyster Festival Participation

Mr. Thompson said that he has heard that in the past that the commission has done valet bike parking at the Oyster Festival and asked if that is true. Ms. Rosett said that she does not recall that. He asked the commissioners if they thought that would be well received by the community and something that the commission can do. Ms. Rosett said that her one concern would be is how it would be staffed because it's a lot of hours to cover. Mr. Grotheer said that he likes the idea of promoting ways to get to the festival via bike and suggested contacting the Seaport Association. Mr. Ebert said that he will contact the Seaport Association.

7. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. THOMPSON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. EBERT SECONDED THE MOTION.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd