

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 2, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Christine Bisceglie; Sam Ebert; Colin Grotheer

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli, Transportation Planner, Theresa Argondezzi, Asst. Director of Health; Jahliah Green, Health Education Associate; Carly Kramer, Community Planner, Redevelopment Agency; Emily Buraman; Brian Bolan; Shari Brennan

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

Mr. Thompson read the following comments that were sent via e-mail into the record:

Public Statement
NORWALK BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting, May 2, 2022

Re Agenda Item: "Earth Day Celebration on the Green", April 23, 2022

To the Bike/Walk Commissioners,

The "Earth Day Celebration on the Green" on Saturday, April 23, 2022, on the Norwalk Green was surely the place to be that day. As an organizer, I feel it was a big success, exceeding my expectations for this

first-time event. We received a good deal of press and the beautiful, sunny spring weather made it a real “photo-opp” kind of day.

Of note, the Earth Day event featured:

- 20 participating environmental groups and city departments with tables and displays, including the Bike/Walk Commission and Bike Co-op
- 6 City of Norwalk departments who offered assistance with planning and goods
- 2 guided walking tours and 1 bike tour
- “Keep Norwalk Beautiful” volunteers who did cleanups on their way to the Green
- Police presence and teen police cadets who helped at crosswalks
- Remarks by the Mayor, TM&P director Jim Travers, and Common Council members

In summary, events of this kind are “community-building” in intention, to foster networking with groups and individuals who care about the health of the earth. And we also did as much as possible to get folks to the Green without their cars—encouraging the public to arrive on foot, bike, or by public transportation. This was a grassroots effort met by city officials—a phenomenon that can’t be planned--but happened--and how amazing is that?! Let’s build on this.

The Earth Day planning team is looking towards Earth Day 2023 with a great emphasis on walking, biking, driving EVs, and using public transportation to get to the Green without fossil-fueled vehicles. Let’s hold a competition for the most original way to get there!

Thank you to the Commission for participating in the Earth Day event. We made a big impact and I look forward to more collaboration with the Bike/Walk Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Cozzarin

Public Statement - Monthly Meeting, May 2, 2022

NORWALK BIKE/WALK COMMISSION

Respectfully submitted by Norwalk Green Association, Brad Craighead Co-Founder

Re Agenda Item: “Earth Day Celebration on the Green,” April 23, 2022

To the Bike/Walk Commissioners,

As a community organizer for the Norwalk Green neighborhood and member of the planning group, I’m very pleased to report that the event was a huge success !

Collaboration and partnership with the NORWALK BIKE/WALK COMMISSION and the City's ongoing KEEP NORWALK BEAUTIFUL clean-up campaign proved a powerful combination towards raising awareness around environmental sustainability and urban ecology.

In advance of next year's Earth Day Celebration, I would propose that Bike / Walk and KNB create a more formal alliance to promote more walking trails / bike routes in conjunction with volunteer clean-up crews that ultimately lead to the mid-day event on The Green.

In order to ensure broad-based support for this working group on EARTH SATURDAY, a logical 3rd partner would be the Norwalk Board of Education / Norwalk Public School system.

A City-wide community building effort could therefore conceivably culminate on The Green to raise awareness around these environmental causes with prizes awarded to "Best Earth Day KNB Costume", "Best Earth Day Bike / Walk Costume", "Best Earth Day Vehicle Costume", etc.

In our view, the Earth Day Celebration was and is an opportunity to Celebrate Life and our shared values at the most basic level through community building and best expressed through PARTICIPATION.

Perhaps this letter of support for the BIKE / WALK COMMISSION and its outreach program will help generate further ideas for a broad-based community event centered on The Green for years to come.

We look forward to planning next year's Celebration!

Kind regards,

Bradford P. Craighead
Norwalk Green Association
85 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

o Earth Day Celebration Report

Mr. Bolan said that he had such a nice time at the event and the walking and bike tour were very interesting. Mr. Thompson said he and Mr. Mushak lead the bike ride and there were approximately 12 people that participated.

Ms. Bisceglie said she thought the event was wonderful and the bike repair station had a lot of attraction and Mr. Thompson and Mr. Ebert helped so many people and was wonderful to see. She said the bike tour sent a loud message that biking in Norwalk is safe and she would love to keep that going as an event on Sunday's and she would commit to that. Mr. Thompson agreed and said he will make sure that gets promoted on social media. Ms. Bisceglie suggested engaging people that are on the mailing list.

Ms. Brennan said she was helping at the Health Department table giving people information about walking in Norwalk and there are 17 walking neighborhoods and the energy in the park was amazing and was a positive event. She said the only complaint that she heard from people is that there were no bathrooms and suggested if the event is done again that there are portable bathrooms onsite.

Mr. Bolan stated that the Harbor Loop Trail is more of a walking path than a riding path and is an underutilized underappreciated walking and riding feature in town. Mr. Thompson said the Harbor Loop Trail is a vision for a trail that will loop around the harbor but is discontinuous right now, but the city is now in the process of doing the design work to plug some of the gaps and the city is on board with ultimately having the loop but there are some parts that will take longer than others.

Mr. Ebert thanked Mr. Thompson, Mr. Grotheer and Mr. Aley for manning the bike coop and it lived up to the initial conversation which led Mr. Thomson and himself to start it which was to primarily help kids, but also to get regular people to embrace alternative transportation.

- o SoNo TOD Draft Report is published; comment is due May 9th to koleary@norwalkct.org

Mr. Thompson said the Redevelopment Agency has been working on a TOD (Transit oriented development) plan over the past few years for the South Norwalk Railroad Station and have hosted many public meeting in which he had attended and in conjunction with the consultant have finally published a 50 page draft report and will be taking public comment on the report between now and May 9, 2022, and comments can be emailed to koleary@norwalkct.org or on the Redevelopment Agency's website and encouraged the members of the commission to provide comments.

- o CT Buses area fare-free through June

Mr. Thompson said thanks to the state government all public buses in the State of Connecticut are fare free until the end of June which he is hoping to promote on social media to encourage people to use the bus system.

- o CTrides “Drive Less Connecticut”

Mr. Thompson said there is group that is part of CTDOT called CT Rides and work with the bus transit authority and railroad authority to help people to drive less and are sponsoring a challenge call the “Drive Less CT Challenge” during the month of May. He said he will also be promoting this on social media as well and encouraged the members of the committee to join the challenge.

- o Drive Assets have been moved

Mr. Thompson said he has connected with Kaitlin Latham who had previously worked for the Health Department and had owned some digital assets on her google account that have now been moved over the Norwalkbikewalk@gmail.com

Mr. Thompson said the grand opening for the Norwalk River Valley Trail has been delayed due to a section of the Missing Link. He said because of the grade of the road it will be necessary to build a bridge or board walk but the parts have been delayed and are estimating that it will not be completed until the fall, but do plan on doing a soft opening of the rest sometime in May or June and have the grand opening in the fall.

4. BIKE MONTH EVENTS

- o Scavenger Hunt

Ms. Bisceglie said she will be writing a press release for bike month and asked if the committee should incorporate the CT ride challenge and the fare free bus rides into bike month. She said May is National Bike Month and the League of American Bicyclists sponsors this and she along with Ms. Buraman and Mr. Grotheer have been working on “Bike Rack Poetic Challenge” and are cosponsoring with the Norwalk Library and other various organizations. She said the poet Laurette had agreed to write a poem for the scavenger hunt and there are 29 city public bike racks and is a challenge that will run all month long. She said the idea is that people will put the poem together and take a video or photo of themselves and upload that that they have created the poem from each bike rack. She said the mayor’s office will also be sending out a press release and it will be advertised on social media. Ms. Buraman said to complete the challenge people will need to find the 14 different lines and put the poem together. Mr. Thompson said there is a link on the city’s website that shows where all of the bike racks in Norwalk are located. Mr. Grotheer said he is very excited about this, and he is hoping that people participate.

Mr. Thompson asked if the bike rack at the SONO Railroad Station Garage will be installed by National “Bike to Work day”. Mr. Pacelli said unfortunately they will not be. Ms. Bisceglie said as part of a larger event she would like to have a bus/bike demonstration. Mr. Thompson asked if there is an ETA on when the bike racks will be installed. Mr. Pacelli said not at this time and are still going through the design process and the RFP is still out.

5. SWAG

o Procurement Update

Mr. Thompson said that Mr. Aley provide an update of the purchase of swag and said he has received one price from a vendor which came in slightly under budget and are waiting on a second price and the second vendor is hoping to provide a price soon.

6. TMP UPDATES

o Connectivity Grant Update

Mr. Pacelli provided an update of the Connectivity Grant and said they have submitted the final review of the encroachment permit for the RT. 136 bike route to the CTDOT Engineering Dept, and while they are reviewing it staff is putting all the other documents together to submit to the CTDOT Policy and Planning Bureau for their approval. He said the other portion of the project is the sidewalk installation on Hunters Lane and the design plans have been done in-house and will be submitting those along with the cost estimate to the CTDOT for the funding. He said that DPW is also looking at installing ramps in front of the school which will connect the two sidewalk segments and will also be rebuilding the sidewalk segment along the school property as well so there will be a continuous sidewalk network in that area.

o Complete Streets RFP

Mr. Pacelli said that TMP had recently submitted and RFP for a consultant to create a complete streets guidebook for design standards for future roadway improvement projects around the city. He said there will be a public input process once the consultant has been selected and would want the Bike/Walk commission to join the public input process. Mr. Thompson added that there is already a statewide complete streets that requires the street redevelopment project to design a street that accommodates all users. Mr. Ebert said even if complete streets work it is still the job of the Bike/Walk Commission to advocate exclusivity for cyclists and walkers in an effort to be the balance for the legislative branch that contributes to complete streets.

Ms. Bisceglie said on Main Avenue @ Broad Street is in need of a crosswalk. Mr. Thompson asked what the most effective way is to report the intersections that the commission feels need to be addressed. Mr. Pacelli said to send an email to TMP staff.

Mr. Thompson asked if there is any initiative to get funding specially for improvements to connectivity to the NRVt. Mr. Pacelli said there are trail funded grants that do come out and TMP and DPW always request funding for sidewalks in the capital budget process.

o Design Updates on SONO Garage Bike Racks

Mr. Pacelli provided an update on the bike rack and said they will be moving a handicapped space and reallocating it to another portion within the garage and will be taking that space to build bike parking on the first floor and said staff is working with the Snyder Group on concepts to maximize the area to its fullest potential. He also said the RFP for bike racks is out to bid and they are awaiting the bid results.

Mr. Thompson said there is not a way for bike to enter the SONO Railroad Station Garage without going through the station and suggested installing a sharrow into the garage in the short term to make it accessible to bikes.

o Highland Ave. Bid Process

Mr. Pacelli provide an update on the Highland Avenue sidewalk project and said the bid process closed last week and will be going to the DPW committee for approval tomorrow night and will then go the Planning Commission for approval and then to the full Common Council for final approval.

o Update on paving/stripping work w/DPW

Mr. Pacelli provide an update on the paving and striping and said that the list of streets that will be paved are on the website but there is not a timeline on when the streets will be paved but staff continues to coordinate with DPW and will continue to evaluate the roads on an individual basis and put out the best striping layout for the road and will keep the commission updated. Mr. Grotheer asked for an update on West Rocks Road and said he has been noticing the quality of the patchwork that is being done temporarily is horrible and said someone from the city should be onsite. He also said there has been some recent utility work on Marshall Street and there has not been any traffic control. Mr. Pacelli said he will bring these items forward to DPW.

Mr. Pacelli said next Monday evening there will be an industrial waterfront study open forum and there is a link on the website.

Mr. Pacelli said the public input sessions for Wall Street will be taking place in earl June and once the date and time are confirmed he will forward it to the commission.

7. APPROVE MINUTES FROM APRIL MEETING

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. GROTHEER MOVED TO ADJOURN,
** MR. EBERT SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd