

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 4, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Christine Bisceglie; Jud Aley; Audrey Cozzarin; Sam Ebert

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

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. APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH MEETING

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Lauricella stated that in the coming months she will be reaching out to Mr. Thompson and the members of the Bike/Walk Commission regarding a pamphlet she picked up about bike safety. She thanked the commission for all their great work in trying to keep the residents of Norwalk safe because this is the connection directly to health, but said how can we have health if we fear for our safety. Mr. Thompson said the pamphlet looks like it is from the League of American Bicyclists. Ms. Lauricella said “yes”. Ms. Bisceglie said the pamphlets are given out at events. Mr. Aley presented postcards that the commission had printed that have pedestrian and bicycle safety tips on them. Mr. Thompson requested that Ms. Bisceglie coordinate with Ms. Green and Ms. Argondezzi offline regarding the inventory of materials and what will need to be printed for the Earth Day celebration.

Ms. Lauricella said there will be a meeting regarding the Harbor Loop on April 6, 2022, and she hopes to see the members of the Bike/Walk Commission and looks forward to hearing their comments.

Mr. Thompson said after the meeting in March he was invited to and attended the Public Safety Committee meeting and spoke on safety for walking and biking where he pointed out the gaps in the sidewalk and bike lane network and explained how much more effective it is to have infrastructure that is built to be safe then it is to just have personal protective equipment and it was very well received.

Ms. Cozzarin stated that the Earth Day celebration will be held on April 23, 2022, and there are over 20 groups including the Bike/Walk Commission that will have a table at the event and there will be one bike tour and two guided walking tours are encouraging people to walk or bike to the event or at least leave their cars at a distant location.

4. GREG PACELLI

a. Wall Street Project

Mr. Pacelli provided an update and said that the state funding was allocated for the Wall Street project and Senator Duff made the announcement for that and there was \$3.5 million dollars allocated to the intersection at Wall Street, Belden Avenue and Mott Avenue. He said there are also city funds allocated through ARPA to improve the area. He said that Fuss & O'Neill will be doing the design work and data collection and will begin soon and as part of that will be holding a lot of public meetings which will begin over the next month or so and he would like the Bike/Walk Commission to participate in that process.

Mr. Pacelli said there was already a design for the East Wall Street project and they have been developing design plans for a small section of East Wall Street between Main Street and East Wall Street, and Fuss & O'Neill has taken over that and is looking to install bike lanes as part of that project which were not included in the previous design plan. He said dedicated bike facilities will be built along the entire corridor which is the goal for the entire area of Wall Street and building upon that even further providing a continuous bike lane throughout not only the Wall Street area but looking at West Rocks Road where the city was just allocated \$1.4 million dollars to perform sidewalk upgrades. He said it's not just looking at one corridor but is to build upon the existing and what is being planned for the future as well so that there are connected bike facilities and not just isolated ones. Mr. Thompson said the city received \$1.4 million dollars from the federal government and there was a press conference held two weeks ago and the funds will help to build sidewalks on both sides of West Rocks Road from end to end. Mr. Ebert asked if this would potentially be an opportunity to install a bike paddock of some sort. Mr. Pacelli said they do not want to have a net loss of parking in the area and Fuss and O'Neill will work within the design restraints but there may be some potential for a bike rack in the on-street parking area if the sidewalk space allows for it. Mr. Ebert said bicycle parking would increase parking spaces. Mr. Pacelli said that on street parking is needed in the area and Fuss & O'Neill will take everyone's input at the meetings and come up with the best plan for the city. Mr. Thompson said he agrees with Mr. Ebert and he would love for the public to be made aware of the benefits of replacing car parking with bike parking, but in his experience on both the consumer and business side they are convinced that they need on street parking so if we are going to try and shift public opinion the best place to start is on Washington Street because there is a lot more bike traffic there. Mr. Aley added that he agrees with Mr. Pacelli in that they are not ready to take away a parking space on Wall Street yet.

Mr. Hampeter asked if bike lanes will be included in the project on West Rocks Road. Mr. Pacelli said “yes” and that sidewalks will be installed while maintaining the cross section to provide bike lanes throughout the entire corridor. Mr. Thompson asked when a consultant is hired if public input sessions will be held. Mr. Pacelli said “yes” absolutely.

b. Highland Avenue Sidewalk Project

Mr. Pacelli reported and said the bid package went out last week for the safe routes to school project on Highland Avenue for sidewalk work from Meredith Court to Charcoal Road on the east side of Highland Avenue and are also looking to install a sidewalk on the west side of the road for ¼ mile starting at Devils Garden Road and want to keep the cross sections at a minimum of 30’. He said after the road is paved, they plan to install bike lanes as well as installing a raised crosswalk between Soundview Avenue and Lenox Avenue and a regular crosswalk near the entrance to Brien McMahon High School. Mr. Aley asked what the timeline of the project is. Mr. Pacelli said the goal is to select a contractor and have the work begin this summer and get as much done as possible before school is back in session. Mr. Thompson asked how the project was funded. Mr. Pacelli said each year TMP requests safe routes to school funds in the capital budget, so it is a city funded project.

Mr. Thompson shared a photo and spoke about illegal parking on a sidewalk and said it is illegal to park on a sidewalk and said if anyone observes someone parking on the sidewalk, they should report it to the Norwalk Police Department and they will ticket the car.

c. SoNo Train Station garage bike rack

Mr. Pacelli provided an update on the SONO train station bike rack and said staff is working with the consultant on allocating the space for bike parking and what the design could potentially look like. He also said later this week another RFP will go out for a bike rack vendor to help expedite the process of biking bike racks.

d. CT Connectivity Grant plans

Mr. Pacelli provided an update on the Connectivity Grant and said that the state has completed their review process and will be sending back any additional comments they may have had, and staff will be putting together the final bid package to submit to the policy and planning bureau at the DOT and are just waiting for the sign off from the engineering department for the encroachment permit. He said there is also sidewalk money available as part of the grant on Hunters Lane and have done the design work inhouse.

5. JIM CARTER- NRVY UPDATE

Mr. Carter provided an update on the Missing Link and said there is only one remaining construction area left to do and is as the trail approaches New Canaan Avenue and should be complete by the end of this month or early May and will then be ready to pave the rest of the trail so by May the entire Missing Link will be done, and a complete set of signage will be installed along the trail. He said they have also applied for a DEEP grant but did not receive the grant so are now working with the Norwalk Tree Alliance along with a few other groups to install some additional trees and shrubs along the trail, and the grand opening is planned for June. He said the WilWalk section of the trail is now complete and the ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for April 26, 2022, at 11:00AM. He said there is gap in the trail between Kent

Road and the sections near Orem's Diner that will cross the railroad track on Kent Road and run along the east side of the river and they are in process of securing leases for the properties along route 7 and appears encouraging. He said they are wanting to connect the WilWalk section under Grist Mill Road and connect to Glover Avenue and have received a conditional approval from Metro-North to pass through and are working with the city and BLT on funding for a public/private partnership.

Mr. Carter provided an update on the 7/15 project and said the DOT has accommodated the NRVt through the area and they took exception to that but while the routing that is proposed is great, the original NRVt routing was for the NRVt to be west of super 7 and have approached the DOT to allow the NRVt to piggyback through their new construction of the interchange and they will be discussing that option and there is another meeting scheduled next week to continue that dialogue. He said they have also been working with TMP to have a protected bike lane corridor that will go down Main Avenue from Stop & Shop to Perry Avenue or Broad Street.

Mr. Carter provided an update on the Harbor Loop Trail and said the junction at 40 Cross Street and the Redevelopment Agency has assumed responsibility of that section and it has been fully designed and funded and will be releasing the bids this month and should be completed by the fall. He also said that on Wednesday at 6:00PM the second public hearing for the Harbor Loop Trail SONO Wharf will be held, and that Ms. Rosett will be leading her group to walk the trail at 10:30AM at the Earth Day event on the Green and will meeting in the City Hall parking lot.

Mr. Carter said the plans for the trail for a bike lane around the outer roadway on Calf Pasture Beach Road to the entrance of the beach and have proposed the head in parking on the outer section of the beach be moved back so that a bike line can pass in front of it so there is a protector from the bike lane and will tentatively happen as the parking lots get repaved and redesigned which is scheduled in two phases beginning this fall and finishing next fall dependent of capital budget funding. Mr. Thompson asked how the commission and members of the public can support this Mr. Carter said to attend the public hearings for the Recreation and Parks.

6. CARLY KRAMER- RAISE GRANT APP. LETTER OF SUPPORT (SONO STATION)

Ms. Kramer said the Redevelopment Agency is reapplying for the raised grant this year and the scope will be the same with a higher level of detail added. He provided an overview of the scope of the grant which overall will expand the amount of parking so that people are able to access the train station and decrease the amount of vehicle miles traveled on the highways. She said the Bike/Walk Commission provided a letter of support last year and requested that a letter of support also be provided this year. Mr. Thompson said he still has reservations about the additional parking and asked if there is data supporting that the additional parking will reduce the vehicle miles traveled. Mr. Kramer said the Redevelopment Agency does not, but that the Parking Authority may have that data but was based on data of train stations and train station parking in the suburbs. Mr Thompson asked if there is any data on where the people are currently parking at the train station are driving from. Mr. Aley said that LAZ Parking would probably be able to provide that data and he will request the information Mr. Thompson said he does not support the grant as it is currently stated due to the parking increase without the data supporting that parking will actually decrease vehicle miles traveled, but if the rest of the commission is comfortable with the grant as written he will write the letter of support. Mr. Aley suggested finding a study that has been done somewhere comparable that may support this. Mr. Aley and Mr. Ebert agreed that the project is an overall good project, and that Mr. Thompson should write the letter of support and try to improve the biking and walking structures along this area. Mr. Thompson said that he will contact Ms. Bisciglie and Mr. Grotheer and if they are in support, he will write the letter. Ms. Kramer said the grant application is due on April 14, 2022.

7. CHRISTINE BISCEGLIE- BIKE MONTH

- Scavenger Hunt

Mr. Thompson said that Bike Month is in May and that Ms. Biscigle and Ms. Buraman have been working on an event for bike month. Ms. Buraman said they have been working with non-profits on having an all-month awareness campaign and in addition to the will be having a scavenger hunt with the bike racks and the Poet Laurette of Norwalk will be writing the clues, and that the next meeting will be held on April 6, 2022.

Mr. Aley said there are two price packages for swag and will work with Ms. Kramer on getting them to Mr. Pacelli.

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd