

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
March 4, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Manuel Salgado; Christine Bisceglie; Jud Aley

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner, Jahliah Green, Health Department; Ben Hanpeter; Shari Brennan; Paul Chenard; George Touloumes

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.

At roll call there were three (3) committee members in attendance.

On page, 5, Line 3, change “Zanveter” to “Zanvettor”

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 5, 2024, MEETING

**** MR. PAPPAS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

**** MS. BISCEGLIE SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments this evening.

QUARTERLY REVIEW COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN

Mr. Thompson shared the Strategic Plan and reviewed the goals for the first quarter. He said the Strategic Plan is a set of goals for 2024, and the committee made them smart goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timebound) to keep themselves accountable to the goals that have been set. He said there are several categories, and every goal/category is assigned to an owner which he will follow up with this evening for an update. He also requested that the committee members go through and annotate the goals that they own and a plan.

Mr. Thompson said the first goal was to schedule a safe routes to school speaker, which Mr. Pacelli has already done, and the next goal was to equate a safe routes to school program. Mr. Salgado said he missed the two safe routes to school's meetings, so he is still amercing himself with the program but has connected to the right people. He said the educational bike events were discussed at the last sub-committee meeting and are actively being worked on and there has been great progress made. Mr. Thompson said on the three goals they have discussed they have decided on the Walk, Bike, Roll, to School Day event as the goal they would be working towards and will be an informational event to get families out to learn how they could walk, bike, and roll to school and asked if there has been any discussion regarding a date. Mr. Salgado said although the school district would like an event like this, they don't have it in their bandwidth at the moment and suggested revisiting it in the fall. Mr. Thompson said there are two dates nationwide that National Walk, Bike, and Roll dates are held, and one is in May and one in October and suggested setting a goal to have an event with some or all of the schools in October. Mr. Salgado agreed and said that it is worth pursuing.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to post educational material once every two weeks either original contract or shared. Ms. Green said she will need to connect with Ms. Burnaman offline, but the goal is still attainable and will just need to do her part with sharing and making sure they are hitting the every two-week goal.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to create a video and to send it to TMP every quarter for their review and asked if that was done before this meeting. Mr. Salgado said that he has not done that, but he has a rough version that he was going to share with the education sub-committee and with TMP to review that he will send either tonight or tomorrow morning. Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Salgado if he still thinks this is a reasonable goal to make a video every quarter. Mr. Salgado said "yes".

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to email a newsletter every quarter which was assigned to Ms. Burnaman, but he does not think he saw one this quarter, but he will follow up with her. Ms. Bisceglie said that she will follow up with Ms. Burnaman regarding Spanish content.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to provide bike valet services at least at three events in 2024. Mr. Pappas said he has not yet made any tangible progress on this but asked when the Earth Day event will be held. Mr. Thompson said it is Saturday, April 27th and provided that the racks come in on time the commission is lined up to provide bike valet parking for Earth Day. Mr. Hanpeter said they have also been discussing doing the bike valet for the open streets event. Mr. Thompson asked if that event will be held on May 4th. Mr. Hanpeter said "yes" Mr. Thompson suggested that Mr. Pappas begin to make contact with the contacts from the Oyster Festival and the Nice Festival to begin the conversations of having bike valet at those events. Mr. Pacelli provided an update on the bike racks and said he reached out to the vendor, and he said they will be shipped either the end of last week or this week and he had told him they need the items by mid-April, and he said he should be able to meet that timeline.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal was to have a table at five community events. Mr. Pappas said he will try and identify some specific events. Ms. Bisceglie said that National Night Out needs to be included. Ms. Green said that Earth Day should also be added. Mr. Chenard said that Bloomin' Metric and Sound Cyclists will be having an event in May and there will be a lot of cyclists in the area and their ride leader training will be held at City Hall on Monday, March 11th at 6:00PM for anyone who would like to attend. He said being a member of Sound Cyclists is not required and they will provide ride leader training and suggested having a table at the event for the commission to get exposure.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal was to host an event with at least 500 attendees. Ms. Bisceglie said they have been meeting every Tuesday so a lot of progress is being made and the applications are in, and the meeting to get the last approval is on March 13th, and the event will be held on May 4th.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to host an event in 2024 with a community group that represents an underrepresented population. Ms. Bisceglie said beyond doing outreach and extending invites to the open street events to these community groups she is not sure what else will be realistic for 2024.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to check in once a quarter with the commission which they are doing now. He said he has a plan for checking in with the mayor and the Common Council once a year and is planning on doing it this time of year because it is right after the Strategic Plan is finalized but before bike month.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to apply for a grant to conduct planning and design for a section of the East Coast Greenway or Fairfield County Greenway Trail and have tried to get the application in by the March 11th deadline for the Recreational Trails Grant but were not able to make the deadline, but he is still looking for other grant opportunities to apply to this year. Mr. Pacelli said there is an active transportation grant that came out that may be a good candidate for a goal for this year.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to draft a first proposal for a bike share vendor and present it to city officials and that he has not yet made much progress, but he still thinks it's still a good goal for 2024.

Mr. Thompson said the next goal is to improve the bike friendly communities award and the deadline to submit the application is June 25, 2024. Mr. Pacelli asked if he is requesting to the city to submit the application in June again because June is a tight month for TMP because that is during construction season and asked how much the application will be changing from last September when they last submitted from an infrastructure perspective. Mr. Thompson said he thinks it should at least be examined to see what the deadline will be and that they are making progress at a good rate so it may be worth submitting and if the complete streets is done or even mostly done by then that will already represent a big change.

Mr. Thompson said the last goal is to get a League of American Bicyclists certified instructor which Ms. Bisceglie and Ms. Burnaman are working on, and he will get a status update from them.

Ms. Bisceglie left the meeting at 6:30PM.

HOSPITAL HILL SAFETY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT INFORMATION MEETING RECAP

Mr. Pacelli reported and said the hospital hill public information meeting was held last week for the improvement project and there is a dedicated project website. He said they are looking at intersection improvements at the intersection of Steven Street and Stuart Avenue as well at Steven Street and Magnolia Street, and the comment period on the concept plan is open until March 15th. He said a few weeks before the public information meeting was held there was a stakeholder meeting held with a lot of the business and property owners. He said once the public comment period is over, they will analyze the comments and look to incorporate those comments into the 30% design plan and will continue to advance the plan to final design and the goal is to have the plan finalized late spring/summer and begin construction by the fall 2024. He said once the project is complete there will be plenty of pedestrian accessibility as well as other streetscape amenities.

Mr. Aley joined the meeting at 6:35PM.

BIKE RACK ORDER UPDATES

Mr. Pacelli provided an update and said a purchase order was recently issued for the hoop style bike racks to be placed in various areas and as soon as they receive the order they will be installed, and they should be installed by mid-spring. He said that a dozen bike racks were ordered and will be installed at various locations including the Main Street lot as well as the police department.

Mr. Pappas asked if there is shipping tracking information for the valet bike racks. Mr. Pacelli said “no” but he will be following up with the vendor again.

Mr. Thompson said he rode by the NRVt bridge and saw that there were no barriers up anymore. Mr. Pacelli said there will be a press conference on Wednesday at 10:30AM and will be held on the boardwalk.

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES RANKING

Mr. Pacelli said that Ms. Bisceglie had emailed him and would like to discuss outreach to make the public aware of the ranking. Mr. Thompson said it was put on the city’s social media page which is great and was also covered in the Norwalk Hour and he had emailed Ms. Woods about doing a press release and she said she would discuss it with the team, but he has not yet received a response, but he will follow up with her.

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mr. Salgado provided an update and said they are moving towards the May 4th event and now that a date has been solidified and are able to collaborate with the open streets event they are working on the details. Mr. Hanpeter said the special event application was submitted yesterday and are looking to get on the Recreation and Parks Committee agenda for their March 13th meeting and will also need to go before the Traffic Authority before going to the Common Council for the final approval. Mr. Pacelli suggested that he email Mr. Benjamin and copy Mr. Bolella to be put on the agenda for the Traffic Authority. Mr. Thompson said in speaking with Ms. Burnaman she said the education subcommittee is making great progress and that there is a lot of momentum, and he commended the education subcommittee for creating that momentum.

EVENTS DISCUSSION

Mr. Pappas said there has not been much tangible progress in terms of the events that were identified for the valet bike racks other than the open streets event on Calf Pasture Beach Road in which the date has been set for May 4th and there has been collaboration with Norwalk Public Schools. He said that Ms. Bisceglie has also been working on collaborating with the Norwalk Hospital and Mr. Hanpeter has also submitted the approval applications through the city and that is where a lot of the attention has been focused on. Mr. Pappas asked if there was anything Mr. Thompson would like to share regarding the Earth Day event. Mr. Thompson said “yes” and as mentioned it will be held on April 27th from 12:00PM to 4:00PM and the walking and biking tours will be held that lead to the green before the event and he and Ms. Burnaman will be organizing those. He said the goal is to get as many people to the event without a car as possible and he would like to see more participation from the Transit District regarding how people can get to the event by bus. He said he is also working on a proper website because in the past the event did not have its own site and it will include how people can get to the event as well as information about the guided walks and rides. He said if anyone is interested in leading one of the rides to contact him.

Mr. Pappas suggested making a list of all the events that the commission has participated in for 2023 and discussing if they would like to participate in them in 2024 and include them on the Strategic Plan. Mr. Thompson agreed and requested that Mr. Pappas draft a 2024 event plan.

Mr. Thompson said that the CTDOT has just announced their active transportation micro grants program and is intended for non-infrastructure projects up to \$5,000 that support walk, biking, and rolling in Connecticut and the applications are due by Tuesday, March 26, 2024. He said one of the ideas he had was using the grant to purchase a cargo bike and lease it out or swag to give out at events. Mr. Pappas agreed and said it is important to have giveaways at the events. Mr. Thompson requested that Mr. Pappas read through the materials for the application and decide if he would have the time to work on the application.

Mr. Thompson said last month Ms. Kramer reported on a grant they were applying for regarding streetscapes around the South Norwalk Railroad Station and invited the commission to write a letter of support in which he did so.

Mr. Pappas said there was an email sent to the commission mentioning the volley center at 365 Dr. Martin Luther King Drive and asking if parking cars on the sidewalk is allowed and who they should call when there are multiple cars parked on the sidewalk. Mr. Thompson suggested they call the police department, but he will respond to the email. Mr. Pacelli said they should reach out to the customer service center and submit a ticket.

Mr. Touloumes said this is his first time joining the Bike/Walk Commission meeting and he is interested in biking and is trying to get a sense of what there is in Norwalk. Mr. Thompson said if he is interested in connecting more with the commission, he would be happy to meet with him.

ADJOURNMENT

****MR. SALGADO MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MR. PAPPAS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**
The meeting was adjourned at 7:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd