

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 8, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Manuel Salgado; Emily Burnaman; Christine Bisceglie

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; Ben Hanpeter; Paul Chenard

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 four (4) committee members in attendance. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Lauricella said on February 4, 2024, it is Rosa Park's birthday, and the State Department of Transportation has decided to note it as Transit Equity Day, and through the city there will be some sort of event/press conference held and she will be sure the commission is invited, but the plans are still in the offing. She said she will also be attending a meeting with the Norwalk Transit District on Friday.

CT DEEP 2024 RECREATION TRAILS GRANT RELEASED

Mr. Thompson said the Connecticut Recreational Trails Grant is one of several grant programs that the state does to provide money for infrastructure related to walking and biking. He said the reason that it is on the agenda is because there is a larger regional initiative underway called the Fairfield County Greenway Partnership which is a coalition of city advocates, city employees, and city leadership from towns from Greenwich to Bridgeport. He said it started in Greenwich and Stamford and they applied for this grant to plan and design a trail to connect Greenwich and Stamford and got the grant in the amount of \$270,000 and was matched with a 20% match. The initiative is larger than just Greenwich and Stamford and a few months ago one of the leaders of the coalition reached out to him saying it may be a good time for Norwalk to start thinking about the next phase of this idea to extend the trail concept from Stamford through Darien to Norwalk, and he has connected with a representative from Darien and together had drafted an email to the Darien Board of Selectmen. Ms. Burnaman said she was able to review a completed application with Andrea Gartman of the NRVF because they had applied with the Town of Wilton last year and she was very helpful in providing additional documentation and pieces of the application and she is happy to help the commission, but a scope of work and project will need to be

determined prior to applying. Mr. Thompson requested that Ms. Burnaman forward him copies of applications that Ms. Gartman had shared and that the application deadline is March 1, 2024, and the commission will be taking the lead of filling out the application and TMP will provide support. Mr. Pacelli said that TMP is happy to partner with the commission and will be able to assist but requested that the commission give TMP enough time to fill out the necessary sections of the application to meet the deadline. Mr. Thompson said the commission will start the application and have the first pass draft goal by the next commission meeting and he will take the lead and set up a working group and schedule a meeting. Ms. Bisceglie, Ms. Burnaman, Mr. Salgado, and Mr. Hanpeter volunteered to be part of the working group. He also said there is a webinar that DEEP has scheduled for January 11, 2024, at 1:00PM.

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE EDUCATION MATERIALS UPDATE

Mr. Salgado provided an update and said a file of media things has been created that has developed into a library of information that can be pulled from, and they are in the process of scheduling a meeting to meet as a subcommittee and will also be scheduling a meeting with the Norwalk Hospital as well as the Transportation Director from Norwalk Public Schools to make connections with the schools. He said they also discussed the first video project talking about the green bike lanes and what they are as a form of education on social media and can also include something on Transit Equity Day and also figure out how to do e-bike education. Ms. Bisceglie said there is a group called Watch for Me Connecticut and there is a new law that just passed that when a driver's license is renewed you are required to watch a pedestrian bike safety video. She also said the League of American Bicyclists has a lot of material on the e-bikes. Mr. Thompson requested that the subcommittee have a deliverable to present at the next commission meeting. Mr. Pacelli said once the video has been finalized to share it with TMP staff before it is posted so that they can provide feedback and input. Mr. Thompson requested Mr. Pacelli check with TMP staff to see if they would be interested in being in the video.

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES APPLICATION

Mr. Thompson said if the award is received the commission will be seeking guidance on how to have a celebration effectively along with the rating and will work with Ms. Woods- Matthews on a press release. Ms. Bisceglie said the idea of bike friendly businesses recognition should also be included. Mr. Thompson agreed and said if a goal is determined it can be included in the press release.

OPEN STREETS PLANNING CONTINUED DISCUSSION

Ms. Bisceglie said that she and Mr. Hanpeter have a meeting scheduled for tomorrow with Mr. Stowers. Mr. Hanpeter said the purpose of the meeting the meeting is to discuss the open streets event and once he is onboard there will be follow up meeting with the other stakeholders to discuss to go over the plan and will submit the e-approval application and once that is process will present to the Traffic Authority in March.

COMMISSION BUDGET REVIEW AND EXPENDITURES

- Discuss purchase of light sets for bicycles.

Mr. Thompson proposed spending \$1,800 on light sets to take advantage of the deal that Smart Cycles has offered which beats any comparison price. The commissioners agreed but Ms. Bisceglie noted that the pedestrian piece also needs to be kept on the radar.

****MS. BISCEGLIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE BIKE LIGHT SETS FROM SMART CYCLES FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$1800.**

**** MR. SALGADO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TMP PROJCT UPDATES

- FY 2024-25 Capital Budget Requests

Mr. Pacelli said the 2024-25 fiscal year capital budget request was for the \$ 5 million dollars which was the same amount as this fiscal year and will report back to the commission on the amount that gets approved, and he will share the items that were requested via e-mail withing the next couple of weeks. He said the Planning Commission will be hosting the public information meeting beginning February 1, 2024, to review the department's budget requests. Mr. Thompson requested that the capital project requests be presented to the commission at the next meeting. Mr. Thompson shared the capital budget calendar and said that the public input opportunity begins on February 1, 2024. Mr. Thompson asked if there is a line item on the existing request for the local match for the Recreational Trails Grant. Mr. Pacelli said there is not a specific item for that, but he will go through the line items to see if it is included somewhere else. Ms. Bisceglie asked if there is a way the commission can assess how its operating budget is spent annually. Mr. Thompson said that TMP has the official record, but he has a working spreadsheet which he has shared.

- Complete Streets Design Guide

Mr. Pacelli said that TMP is continuing to coordinate with FHI Studios on the draft of the design guide which will also be implemented into the city's guide and will be implemented into the city's existing city standards and specifications of roadway standards. He said as part of the design guide process they are targeting a spring demonstration project timeline where the temporary roadway project will be implemented and will be used to pilot the long-term design solution at the intersection of North Main Street and Ann Street and asked that the commission not only participate but also encourage members of the public to assist as it is a community project. Mr. Thompson asked for an update on the steering committee meetings. Mr. Pacelli said in discussions with the consultant they are looking to schedule one in the next few weeks. Mr. Thompson said there were surveys that went out in October and November and asked if the commission is interested in looking at the data that was collected who they would request that from. Mr. Pacelli said TMP but he does not know if the information can be shared but he will have a discussion with the consultant to see if it is sharable. Mr. Thomspon asked if there is a rough estimate on when the design guide draft will be released for public comment and review. Mr Pacelli said he is not sure, and they are not doing a deep dive into the design guide but that may be discussed at their next staff meeting.

➤ NRV T Boardwalk

Mr. Pacelli said the project is continuing and there is just some minor work that needs to be completed on the handrails and the estimated completion date is the first month in February. Mr. Thompson said holding a more proper grand opening had been discussed in the past and asked if TMP is interested. Mr. Pacelli said it has not been discussed. Mr. Thompson asked if once the trail is completed if he intends to have those conversations. Mr. Pacelli said other city departments will also need to be involved in those discussions. Mr. Thompson requested that when those conversations do happen, to be sure the commission is included. Ms. Burnaman said the NRV T is excited to celebrate the trail and they are having their board meeting this Thursday at 5:00PM and she is hoping that will be a topic.

➤ Transportation Master Plan

Mr. Pacelli said they have been working on the Transportation Master Plan for a few years and the draft plan is available on the Norwalk Tomorrow website and they have received a lot of comments, and they are now working on finalizing the plan and it is a very important document for the city and they look forward to implementing it. Mr. Thompson asked what the next step is. Mr. Pacelli said to put out the final version and it should be completed by the spring.

➤ Seaview Avenue Complete Streets Project

Mr. Pacelli said they are continuing to review and implement the recommendations based on the feedback that was received from the last public meeting that was held on May 22, 2023, and will apply them to the concept plan. He reminded the commission there is zero funding for the project as far as construction, but they are creating a strong plan so when a grant does become available there is a plan in place. He also said there needs to be much more public input as the design is advanced, so this was not the last opportunity for the public to provide feedback. Mr. Thompson asked if the money that has been allocated to the project will get them to the 30% design. Mr. Pacelli said “yes” but after they will need to look at additional capital funding, but they are not at the point to advance it to 90% design at the point.

➤ Wall Street Corridor

Mr. Pacelli said the Landmark Square-East Wall Street section, which is Main Street to Brook Street, is slated to begin construction in the spring and phase I of the project is being funded as part of the CTDOT Lotsip program. He said as far as the remainder of the corridor they are continuing to work with the design consultant and will be scheduling another public information meeting over the next few months and will provide an update on the plan that is proposed during the last public meeting.

➤ Bike Rack Order

Mr. Pacelli said they have been collecting quotes from vendors for the hoop style bike racks and are just waiting for one more quote and once that is received, they will move forward with the low bidder and place the order. Mr. Thompson asked if any bike racks will be placed in the Wall Street area, especially along Wall Street as they are needed. Mr. Pacelli said probably not because of the Wall Street projects as well as utility work.

➤ Valet Bike Rack Order

Mr. Pacelli said he received the invoice and submitted it to the purchasing department, and he will reconnect with the company to be sure they received everything and get a timeline on when they will be shipping the valet bike rack. Mr. Thompson said the first event that they will be looking to use the valet bike rack will be in April for the Earth Day celebration.

Ms. Bisceglie said that Travis Simms, who is the representative for the South Norwalk district, is on the Transportation Committee for the State of Connecticut and suggested having him speak at a future commission meeting. Mr. Thompson said it thinks it makes sense to engage with him if the commission has any opinion or input about state level policy.

APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 4TH, 2023 MEETING

**** MS. BURNAMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** MR. SELGADO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. BISCEGLIE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. SALGADO SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd