

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
March 3, 2025**

ATTENDANCE: Emily Burnaman, Chair; Nicholas Pappas; Manny Salgado; Becca Stoll;
Christine Bisceglie

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; Jaleah Green, Norwalk Health Department;
Tracy Walker, CT State; Melissa Murray; David Tattersall

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>.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Burnaman called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Burnaman called the roll and all those that are listed in the attendance were present

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Rosett said she is a Friends of Norwalk River Valley Trail board member, and they are responsible for raising the money and getting the bids for the design and construction of the trail and maintenance. Fortunately, the city has taken over all those functions in Norwalk, particularly TMP. The problem came after the trail was officially opened, the maintenance and the NRVt thought the city was responsible for the trail, including the maintenance, however, the city has become two different entities within the city, and the rest of the trail in Norwalk is either on public roads, sidewalks, or public parks until the newest section was opened Recreation and Parks has always maintained it, but the Riverside Trail does not fall under that category, so they don't think it is their responsibility to maintain it. TMP can't maintain the trail and have been working with DPW to get the grass cut. Unfortunately, the NRVt cannot remove snow. They are currently negotiating with the city to maintain that section of the trail for mowing and snow removal and will meet with DPW in a couple of weeks. She realizes it's a frustrating situation for

everyone involved. She hopes to have something worked out with the city, where the city, in cooperation with volunteers from the NRVt will be adequately able to maintain the trail.

Ms. Burnaman thanked Ms. Rosett for providing a background and working with the city on this.

Mr. Salgado joined the meeting at 6:05 PM.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Approval of February 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Sono Rail Trail Guest Speakers: Melissa Murray & David Tattersall

Mr. Tattersall presented the SONO Rail Trail and said that it is a concept for a public park that runs on an old railway line and begins at South Norwalk Station, which is now abandoned and littered with trees. The vision is to have a public park that connects the neighborhood, schools, public housing, businesses, and major transit hubs with a 5–15-minute safe journey and could provide safe, clean, and green journeys to and from school for both the students and people who work or are visiting. It also opens connectivity around the neighborhood and in total will be approximately one and a half miles of a new potential park and shared some photos of other cities with similar trails as well as the proposed area in South Norwalk.

Mr. Tattersall provided a timeline of the project and said that he thinks the time is right so will be spending the first half of the year engaging with everyone and socializing the idea and has engaged with almost all of the property owners along the way, and luckily a lot of the property owners that have bought portions of this land and is in their interest for this to be developed this way and have had productive discussions. The consensus is that this should be built. In the second half of the year, I would like to have a contract to do feasibility study or design work, and in parallel to all of this, is fundraising.

Ms. Murray said one of the things that is different about the SONO Rail Trail is that it is only just over a mile and will have businesses along the trail. The main focus is safe routes to school, leading up to the new SONO School.

Ms. Bisceglie and Ms. Green joined the meeting at 6:10 PM.

B. NRV T Maintenance Requests

Ms. Burnaman said she was approached and emailed with some maintenance requests for a specific trail segment, specifically for snow and ice removal. She recommends anyone reporting issues to use the Click and Request app. Ms. Stoll asked which section of the trail is being referred to. Mr. Pacelli said the portion is just north of Union Park.

C. Walk Bridge Construction Fort Point Street Closure

Ms. Stoll said she received an email from Eversource announcing some upcoming road closures related to rerouting for the Walk Bridge project. A map delineating the detour was also included but did not specify whether it would affect bicyclists or pedestrians, so she wrote back and asked. They responded that pedestrians would not be affected, and cyclists should follow car traffic. She requested that information be included going forward.

Ms. Stoll said that during a meeting with the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, the Mill Pond condominiums being built on Cemetery Street were discussed. She raised concern regarding crosswalks because the current state of the crosswalks in East Norwalk is not adequate. She was sent a helpful map showing where the crosswalks will be. Still, again, she feels like the information is coming secondhand instead of from the city, alerting the affected constituents that these things are happening.

Ms. Burnaman asked if the city works with Eversource to advise them. Mr. Pacelli said this is part of the Walk Bridge program, which the CTDOT manages, but the city is also well involved in what they are proposing, is directly aligned with everything, and provides comments on detour plans. This item was presented to the Traffic Authority last week and was approved as it is needed. The map that Eversource shared in their e-mail is the full detour plan, which allows pedestrian access through the Fort Point Street section where vehicles have to be rerouted onto South Smith Street. As for cyclists, there are no dedicated facilities in the area, but it would be advisable to follow vehicular traffic. Ms. Stoll said she does not have an issue with the detour, just the dissemination of the information. Mr. Pacelli said he will talk to the team regarding the messaging to ensure they communicate the detour plans to the rest of the public.

VI. DISCUSSION

A. East Avenue Improvements East/Cemetery

Mr. Salado asked what the plans are for East Norwalk and if there are any plans to enhance pedestrian walkways, especially leading to the train station. Mr. Pacelli said if there are any questions about any development throughout the city, there is a development webpage with the projects' status on the Planning and Zoning webpage. Mr. Pacelli said Planning and Zoning approved the Mill Hill Condominiums, and the Walkbridge representatives are working alongside the developer to combine improvements.

Mr. Salgado asked who is responsible for clearing snow from the sidewalks. Mr. Pacelli said that, as part of an ordinance passed years ago, the property owner must clear the sidewalks at the front

edge of their home even if they are within the public right of way. However, there is a grace period of 24 hours after the storm.

B. Bike Safety Training & Education Update

○ CT State Norwalk Physical Activity Subcommittee

Ms. Walker provided an update and said the Wellness Committee at CT State Norwalk is collaborating with Ms. Green and Ms. Burnaman to promote community events and hold some events on campus. When she and Ms. Burnaman recently met, they discussed in-classroom road safety on April 15th and on April 22nd, and will have a portion of the parking lot blocked off and have Chaz Foster from Sound Cyclists do the remainder of the road safety course to have people attend the Earth Day celebration on April 26th. She said they also discussed doing some pop-up maintenance tents on campus from May through August. She said there will also be a wellness walk with Ms. Green on March 26th and the inaugural spring walk on campus. Lastly, they discussed working with the police department on bike donations, refurbishing them, and doing a learn to ride session in the area in the fall.

○ LCI Training w/ Christine

Ms. Bisceglie said she shared a flyer for the training with Ms. Burnaman today. Ms. Green will participate in a class she holds and has invited the commission members to attend. Ms. Stoll asked if the training is free. Ms. Bisceglie said “yes” but is an internal class for the commissioner, the health department staff, etc. And will be limited to five attendees. Ms. Burnaman suggested the police department’s cadets. Ms. Stoll asked if the attendees need to bring their bicycles. Ms. Bisceglie said “yes” along with a helmet and will be required to sign a waiver.

Ms. Burnaman asked Ms. Green if she could confirm her registration for the LCI training in New Haven.

○ April Sound Cyclists Bike Rides & Safety Classes with Chaz Foster

Ms. Burnaman said that Mr. Foster has offered to lead/run the bike safety courses for the family-friendly introduction to biking and the best practices leading up to the Norwalk Earth Day Bike Ride. Ms. Green said “yes”.

C. Filling in The Blanks

Mr. Salgado said last month they had the opportunity to go to Filling in the Blanks and distribute literature on walking and bicycle safety. They also distributed bike locks and lights. One of the great takeaways was connecting to a completely different community, informing them of the Bike/Walk Commission, and sharing educational information. He said they will return this Saturday from 8:00 AM to 9:30 AM to do the same thing.

D. Norwalk Earth Day Event Walks, Rides & Bike Valet

Ms. Burnaman said Ms. Walker from CT State Norwalk offered to host the locations for the bike safety courses that are family friendly. Mr. Foster from Sound Cyclists and Mr. Boland will lead one bike ride on Earth Day. She said the commission will coordinate walks and bike rides and is excited to have the bike valet service as a free opportunity for people to ride to the event and park their bikes. Mr. Pappas said the format will be very similar to last year, and he will send documentation outlining how the bike/valet service works. He is also looking for commissioner volunteers to help man the table.

E. Budget Spend 24-25 Items/Quotes

Mr. Pacelli emphasized that a list of items must be finalized, and quotes obtained because the money needs to be spent by June 30, 2025. This included the micro-grant and the city budget. The remaining money from last year was carried over into this year, but we cannot guarantee that again for this year.

The commission discussed the expenditures for both the micro grant and the city budget. Ms. Burnaman requested that the commissioners bring quotes for any items discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Pacelli said there is also a reimbursement process for lower-cost items.

Ms. Stoll suggested partnering with local businesses that cater to multimodal commuters during bike-to-work week.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. STOLL MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. PAPPAS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd