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March Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2014

Attending were Mark Deshon (chair), Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO), Mike Fortner (City of Newark Planning), Karl Hassler (resident, UD), Angela Connolly (Newark Bike Project), Joe Spadafino (City of Newark Parks & Rec), Ban Phommachanh (UD Parking), Linda Smith (UD HealthyU Employee Wellness), Jeff Riegner (resident, engineer), James Wilson (Bike Delaware), Bob Bennett (resident), and Jillian Farley (UD grad student).

Anthony Aglio and Christine Schultz sent regrets via email. It was also noted that we really need to have liaisons from UD Campus Safety and the Newark Police Department present.

- *Final prep for Heels and Wheels Summit*

Heather Dunigan reported that there are only five slots left for tomorrow's Heels and Wheels Summit at Clayton Hall on UD's Laird Campus. Dan Burden, a nationally known expert in the world of walkability/bikeability, will be the featured speaker. There are 75 registered to participate in the post-summit group walk on the Pomeroy Trail, which is being led by Charlie Emerson and Mike Fortner and for which Heather has furnished maps. There are around 70 who will participate in the post-summit bike ride, which is being led by representatives of the White Clay Bicycle Club.

NBC will have a table at the summit, which Mark Deshon will help man during breaks. Heather has printed bike maps and other materials related to our committee for the table.

- *Bike to Work Day plans*

Bike to Work Day (B2WD) in Newark is Friday, May 16. Mike Fortner reported that he has developed some publicity (and passed around a flyer) for Bike to Work Day and has downloaded the event guide from the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) website. He also mentioned that National Bike to School Day is on Monday, May 12, and wondered if there's anything we can arrange with the local schools (Downes Elementary and West Park Elementary, in particular). Mark mentioned that he'd have his wife touch base with the physical education teacher at Downes and see what can be done.

Mike said that one possibility for B2WD is for each city councilperson to organize a “bike-in” from his/her district to the meeting area. Ban Phommachanh asked if the Trabant Center patio had been reserved yet. It hadn’t, and he reminded the committee that if a student organization could reserve it on NBC’s behalf, then it could be done for free. Mark suggested to Linda that she might touch base with the UD Cycling Club and see if they wouldn’t mind doing this for us. She said that she’d try to get Healthy Hens (UD’s student wellness organization) to do this.

Mike brought up the idea of the Citizen Bicycle Advocate Award and asked who might be deserving of the award this year (last year—Niki Suto, for starting the Newark Bike Project). Mark suggested that Dan Lacombe, who recently retired from DelDOT would be a good choice, because of how active he had been with NBC and all the time he put in coming to Newark to help with bicycle safety checkpoints, Newark Community Day, etc. It seemed to everyone in the room a good choice. A vote was then taken to make Dan this year’s award recipient; no one voted “no.”

Mike talked about inviting special guests (politicians, department heads, etc.) and mentioned that Mayor Polly Sierer will be out of town. Mark suggested that City Manager Carol Houck, who had enthusiastically supported the event last year, be asked to speak on behalf of the City of Newark. Everyone agreed. He also suggested to Mike that he contact UD President Pat Harker’s scheduling secretary Susan Williams to try to book him for the event as representative of the University of Delaware—the host institution and partner.

- *Walkable Bikeable Delaware Summit*

On May 1 in Dover, senior transportation officials from two platinum-level biking communities—Portland, Ore., and Boulder, Colo.—will be the keynote speakers at this year’s Walkable Bikeable Delaware Summit, James Wilson reported. LAB head Andy Clarke will be on hand to announce the new national ranking for Delaware as a Bicycle Friendly State (BFS); currently Delaware is #5, and #1 east of the Mississippi. Jeff Riegner said that the bike/ped coordinator for one of our competing states in the BFS ranking might attend as well.

This is an important event for this state in terms of influencing legislative “buy-in” and will focus on how DelDOT and advocates can work together to improve our state’s ranking.

James asked Heather and Jeff if DelDOT has “ghetto-ized” biking. Jeff and Heather responded that there is more support across the board at DelDOT these days and that we’re lucky to be in Delaware. James voiced the reasonable concern about what will happen when Markell is no longer governor and stressed that we must work hard to influence more within the core of the organization (DelDOT), not just the heads, to make sure that support will continue long after a change in administration.

Mark asked if there would be a Legislator’s Ride in conjunction with the summit this year. James didn’t think so.

- *City of Newark Comprehensive Development Plan status*

Mike said that the next City of Newark Comprehensive Development Plan workshop is on Tuesday, March 25. Having been through a few look-throughs by DelDOT as well as the state's PLUS process, at this point the City is "fine-tuning" everything. The plan will be on the April 1 agenda of the Planning Commission, and on May 6 a recommendation will be made to City Council to adopt the plan. Mike said that he had no idea what the council would choose to do at that point.

- *Spring safety checkpoints*

Anthony Aglio could not make the meeting but had emailed Mark and Heather about his availability for coming up for safety checkpoint events at UD. After a short discussion, it was decided that the two spring safety checkpoints would be as follows:

Tuesday, April 8 from 12 noon to 3 p.m. on north campus (at the bridge)

Wednesday, April 16 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Delaware Avenue (at The Green)

- *UD HealthyU Employee Wellness/Healthy Hens bicycle education events*

The Wednesday safety checkpoint time (see above item) was chosen to coincide with the day that UD HealthyU Employee Wellness and Healthy Hens will be holding a bike safety event at the Carpenter Sports Building from 4–6 p.m. Linda said that there would also be another similar event on The Green on April 23 from noon to 2 p.m. Each of these events will include bicycle registration, courtesy of UD Public Safety personnel. Newark Bike Project will be assisting Linda with these events as well.

UD (Linda) is also partnering with Newark Bike Project (Angela Cunneely) to present a bicycle-commuting workshop at Newark Bike Project on April 10.

- *Brief review of survey responses*

Mark spoke about the survey that was emailed to all on the NBC email list, and said that, while not perfect, the survey data did indicate that we should keep meeting monthly at our regular day/time. Also mentioned was the strong preference for using social media (including our new Facebook page) and other appropriate apps as communication tools. Mark mentioned that he and Karl Hassler had discussed this and that Karl had suggested we set up a Google group to better facilitate online sharing and discussion among committee members.

Mark said that he was a bit disappointed that he received only 13 survey responses out of the 24 distributed. Angela felt strongly that we should cut the list down to those who are serious about attending the meetings. Jeff commented that the members who responded are more than likely the ones who will be the key players on the committee anyway, but he also suggested that the committee essentially keep two lists, one larger (that would

include committee members and “friends of the committee”) and one smaller one (comprising committee members). This seemed a reasonable path forward to everyone. Mark concluded the discussion by asking everyone to read through the data and come ready to discuss at a future meeting.

- *New business*

Ban said that on May 19 at UD’s Employee Benefits Fair, UD Campus Safety will be registering employee bicycles and handing out seat covers. He requested brochures and related biking stuff that they could hand out.

Jeff suggested that we keep some kind of archive of activities that feed into our next Bicycle Friendly City award application. Karl said that Google groups would be helpful in archiving these and that he’d set it up and track progress based on the stated goals in the Newark Bicycle Plan.

Mark asked Jillian Farley what the status of the Bicycle Friendly University application was. She said that UD has received “Honorable Mention.” Mark spoke on behalf of the committee and thanked her for her successful initiative and urged her to work with the committee and especially its UD liaison members in future applications. Jillian also mentioned that she’s working to get a bike-sharing program on campus with the official backing of the Student Government Association, through project partnership with Josh Berkowitz. She will consult with Ban about this.

Our next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Thursday, April 17, at 4 p.m. at WILMAPCO.