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April Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2016

Attending were Mark Deshon (chair and resident), Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO), Mike Fortner (City of Newark Planning), Tom Coleman (City of Newark Public Works and Water Resources), Karl Hassler (resident), Brian Bahnson (resident), Kirsten Jones (UD student), Susan Grasso (resident), Paul Moser (DelDOT), Sean Watson (UD Residence Life and Housing), Ban Phommachanh (UD Parking), and James Wilson (Bike Delaware).

Guest in attendance: Al Porach (resident), Jake Thompson (WILMAPCO), Andrew Emanuele (Federal Highway Administration), Polly Sierer (Mayor)

Regrets: Taras Gerasimov (Newark Police), Jeff Riegner (resident), and Karen Rosenberg (resident) sent regrets.

One correction to last month's minutes: James Wilson had pointed out that Carol Ireland should have been noted as being affiliated (in this instance) with Bike Delaware, not the Delaware Bicycle Council. Official minutes were updated to reflect this correction.

- *One accomplishment to feed Mayor Sierer for Apr. 25 City Council meeting*

The committee agreed that the Mayor should feature John R. Downes Elementary School.

In celebration of National Bike Month, Downes Elementary School is working with the Newark Bicycle Committee, WILMAPCO, and the City of Newark to advance its Safe Routes to School Program. Two initiatives are underway. The first is to apply for a Safe Routes to School bicycle infrastructure grant. Downes facilitated an online parent survey and a safety audit with a variety of stakeholders to explore potential infrastructure changes that would improve the safety of those who wish to bike or walk to school, with an emphasis on bicycle travel (see minutes later in this document). Second, on Tuesday, May 10, Downes Elementary School will kick off a "Biking Tuesdays" program with the celebration of National Bike to School Day. Newark Mayor Sierer will be on hand to greet students and distribute small tokens to those who bike (or walk) to school and read the National Bike to School Day Proclamation. Bicycle education material is being provided to all Downes families on how to bike to school safely.

- *Discussion and input to City of Newark re: bicycles on sidewalks*

The City Code seems to be a one-size-fits-all approach right now. With regard to Main Street, the current language indicates a prohibition of bicycles on sidewalks on “both sides of East Main Street [between] Tyre Avenue and South College Avenue.” In other instances/locations, things like pedestrian volume, what type of bike amenity is available, and age of bicyclists should be taken into consideration.

Heather Dunigan was asked to get counts data from WILMAPCO so that whatever we recommend can be reinforced. We sensed that there are a limited number of places where bicycling on sidewalks is a problem, and we need to have the Code address those, i.e., specifically list how bicycling on a sidewalk should be regulated where allowed. We should seek public feedback where there have been reported problems.

James Wilson asked if bicycling is currently allowed on sidewalks except where signage indicates it is prohibited. Tom Coleman said that there is now MUTCD-compliant signage along Main Street and new pedestrian-zone decals on its sidewalks.

Susan Grasso said she worries about limiting bicycle access, particularly among younger riders. James summarized that the committee is fine with the Main Street restriction. If there are other streets that need a similar or location-specific restriction or application, our committee should come to the next meeting (May 19) with suggestions. We should review the relevant Code sections (attached) and try to come up with recommendations for modifications that we think would work in all instances except where specific exceptions need to be noted.

- *Bike Month items*

- Mayor’s Fun Ride – April 30

Joe Spadafino reported that \$12,000 in sponsorships has been raised so far and that 48 participants have pre-registered. This is about double the number of those who pre-registered last year. T-shirts have been ordered. Two Trek 820 bikes and water bottles have been donated for giveaway by Bike Line. Newark Bike Project will be donating three kids’ bikes for giveaway. The family-friendly group FishCastle will be performing.

There will be a bicycle skills course, organized by committee member Brian Bahnson, for children and adults alike.

- Bike to School Day at Downes Elementary School – May 10

Mayor Polly Sierer will be on hand to welcome bicyclists and walkers at the school, read the National Bike to School Proclamation, and give out prizes. This event is meant to draw attention to and launch “Biking Tuesdays” program at the school.

This year's focus will be encouragement only, including rules and riding tips. Wellness teacher Sandy Hudson already runs a walk/bike program at the school; this event is meant to build on what she has implemented.

○ Bike Basics in a Minute at UD (south side of Memorial Hall) – May 12

Paul Moser and Susan have partnered with Tim Kim (English Language Institute), Stan Kushari (Graduate Student Government) and John & Ceci McCormick (White Clay Bicycle Club) to put together a program for the day for ELI and other UD students who are interested in learning more about bicycling in Newark, bicycling safety and tips, and bicycle maintenance. Free food from Jimmy Johns has been planned. An optional end-of-day ride around town is also planned.

The hope is that this first session can become a model for regularly offered sessions that primarily target the ELI population, new groups of which matriculate about eight times a year.

○ Bike to Work Day – May 20

Mike Fortner, who is heading up the organization of this event reported:

- Speakers to date – none confirmed yet
- Special guests expected – Mayor Polly Sierer, City Manager Carol Houck
- Sponsors to date – none confirmed yet, reaching out to past contributors
- Awardees (two) – attendance of Gov. Markell and Charlie Emerson unconfirmed
- Bike captains/trains – Brian Bahnson organizing this facet of the event
- Publicity for event (before and day of, including photography) – flyer attached
- Volunteers needed (set up, clean up) – will be soliciting help from NBC database

To date, no rain date has been chosen.

○ Press Release info on all bike month events in this area

Mark Deshon indicated he would put something together for City of Newark (Kelli Bachman) to issue in a general National Bike Month press release.

• *Quick status/progress reports on/from*

○ Cleveland Avenue project task force

Susan reported that a second meeting will take place on April 28. She indicated that the task force will continue to identify stakeholders and bring them into the meetings. There was an “off-line” meeting with DelDOT; the City will investigate the possibility of an off-road alignment north of the car dealerships on Cleveland Avenue.

Tom Coleman said that DelDOT is modeling everything, including a roundabout at Paper Mill Road and changing Margaret Street to a one-way, in-only street. James asked if that model can predict what the effects of eliminating parking would be on traffic speed. Tom said he thought so.

○ Communication subcommittee

Sean Watson reported that there have been 55 respondents so far to the NBC relationship/interaction survey. We will continue to use this tool to build a community database.

- Email newsletter – Susan volunteered to get this vehicle, which was the most requested mode of communication by survey participants, started.
- Facebook – Sean said there has been “good” interaction since we recently ramped up NBC’s activity on this platform.
- Twitter – Mark asked Sean to make sure we’re following many of the relevant local Twitter feeds, so that there can be some good “cross-pollination” (sharing/retweeting).

○ Education/Encouragement subcommittee

Paul reported that UD’s “Bike Basics in a Minute” program (see minutes above) is intended to be akin to “bicycle safety checkpoint on steroids.” The date is May 12, and the rain date is May 19. Partners (ELI, UD Grad Student Gov’t, WCBC) were confirmed last week. As far as the educational component, plans are for a more informal approach, using tent and posters and interactive exercises to teach about bike laws, violation costs, etc. Our hope is that this initial effort will prove valuable enough that UD will want to sponsor it regularly.

It was mentioned that another potential audience for such a program would be the bike-delivery-service businesses (e.g., Jimmy Johns).

○ UD Transportation/Accessibility visioning committee meeting 2

Heather reported that this visioning committee is part of the process to create an overall master plan for the UD Newark campus. During the second of three meetings, the group received some feedback from the consultants hired by UD to guide the process, as we continue to go through the myriad related issues on campus. UD is looking for what directions the committee should be giving to the consultants. On May 19, there will be a “Town Hall Meeting” on the history of master planning at UD.

As far as the involvement of NBC on this committee, Ban Phommachanh is representing UD Parking, Heather is representing WILMAPCO, and Mark is representing NBC. Heather has recommended that there be a DelDOT representative on the committee, because of its inevitable involvement in many of the roads that cut through or border the campus.

- Delaware Avenue two-way protected bike lane project

Tom reported that at the most recent meeting it was noted that everything from Tyre Avenue to Library Avenue (i.e., in front of Newark High School) is now in parallel with this project. Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson has organized a city-led meeting with Newark High School to discuss potential solutions in this part of the Delaware Avenue corridor. Tom also indicated that some of the specific conditions and issues regarding bike signalization may result in first-in-the-nation solutions. James said that there are scores of locations nationwide where these signalizations are now being used.

- Safe Routes to School – John R. Downes assessment/proposal

Heather reported that a safety audit was held last week with about a dozen stakeholders (including a parent her Downes student) and was also attended by the Mayor. The ravel and bike lanes along Casho Mill Road are currently very wide, which encourage speeding traffic. During the audit, it was noted that the speed limit actually increases from 25 to 30 mph before getting to the school (where the road widens after the Church Road intersection).

Susan reported that the grant would make available up to \$125,000 of funding during each year of a three-year project. The draft infrastructure improvements plan includes a variety of elements, the most significant being the construction of buffered bike lanes (wide paint strip) or protected bike lanes (use of physical elements, like plastic bollards, to separate bikes from car lanes) along Casho Mill Road from Barksdale Road to Nottingham Road. Other noteworthy proposed changes include the relocation of a crosswalk, the addition of an ADA ramp and the addition of curb extensions in selected locations along this oversized corridor. Plans are to be finalized on April 28 and the grant is to be submitted by the end of May.

- *Old or new business / announcements*

- Mark and Paul will be meeting with Rusty Lee (T2) on April 25 to explore potential partnership with NBC. Mark and Susan will be meeting with Trish Fitzgerald (UD Recreation Services) on May 2 to explore the possibility of partnering with NBC to offer a bicycle education item within their curriculum of classes.
- The Walkable/Bikeable Summit is scheduled for Thursday, May 5, in Dover. This year's summit will focus more on pedestrians; Delaware has the highest per capita pedestrian fatality rate in the nation. Featured guests may include an administrator from FHWA.
- The city's Department of Public Works and Water Resources will be working on plans to add buffered bike lanes on Apple Road and a pedestrian refuge island at unmarked mid-block crosswalk on Apple Road near Sunset Road (at entrance Apple Road entrance to shopping center). Public comment workshops will follow.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, May 19, at 4 p.m. at WILMAPCO.
Call-in #302-737-6205 x126.