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May Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2016

Attending were Mark Deshon (chair and resident), Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO), Mike Fortner (City of Newark Planning), Karl Hassler (resident), Brian Bahnson (resident), Kirsten Jones (UD student), Paul Moser (DelDOT), Karen Rosenberg (resident), and Al Porach (resident).

Guest in attendance: Andrew Emanuele (Federal Highway Administration) and Barb Hughes (resident)

Regrets: Susan Grasso (resident), Taras Gerasimov (Newark Police), and Sean Watson (resident) sent regrets.

- *One talking point to feed Mayor Sierer for June 13 City Council meeting*

The committee agreed that the Mayor should feature a wrap-up of local National Bike Month events (see specific reports below).

- *Bike to Work Day – May 20: Last-minute items*

Mike Fortner said he's been happy with the level of pre-event publicity for Bike to Work Day.

Mike reported that the city's Department of Parks & Recreation are dropping off stuff for the event at Mentors' Circle by 7:15 a.m. tomorrow. This will include tables (3), podium, and sound system. He was not sure about their "healthy communities" tent. Mark Deshon said he assumed that DelDOT would be bringing their tent, and we might not need more than one because the weather will be good.

Mike also said that Charlie Emerson will be there to accept the newly redesigned and framed Bicycle-Friendly Community Leader Award. Mark will be the emcee, and UD Provost Domenico Grasso and City Manager Carol Houck will speak. State Sen. Dave

Sokola and Rep. Paul Baumbach will also be in attendance and will be giving the opportunity to speak. The official ceremonies will conclude with a group photo.

Most everyone at the meeting said they'd be present. Karen Rosenberg and Susan Grasso will be helping out with the registration table. City Community Affairs Officer Megan McNernan will be taking photographs. Heather Dunigan said she would also take some photos. Mark thanked Brian Bahnson for organizing the "bike captains" for the event.

- *Discussion on enforcement, public relations campaign, education*

Barb Hughes came to the meeting to relate a recent incident she had experienced with the Newark Police and participate in the discussion. Mark asked Barb to begin by explaining what had happened.

Barb explained that she works in both the Louise and David Roselle Center for the Arts (CFA) and Hartshorn facilities on UD's campus and typically bikes between these two venues during the day. Recently, she had left the CFA, heading south on Orchard Road. When she came to the Winslow Road intersection, she used a lefthand turn signal, moved into position within the lane to make a left turn onto Winslow, checked to see if the way was clear, and proceeded to turn onto Winslow.

Right after that, a City of Newark Police officer (P. Craig) approached from behind with lights flashing and siren sounding and pulled her over for not coming to a complete stop at the stop sign back at the intersection before making her turn. [We found out later that the officer was primarily targeting cars for failure to stop at the same intersection.] The officer admitted and commented that she had been acting in a safe manner. Barb said that he had said, "You were really cautious, but you did not stop," explaining to her that she "has to put her foot down" to make a complete stop. Barb was noticeably upset, and the officer asked her to calm down, but there was no conversation regarding context; it seemed to her like this was strictly an enforcement stop. She was issued a \$77 citation, which is apparently the standard fine for bicycle violations.

While Barb admits she didn't stop, she feels the officer really missed an opportunity and feels that there are so many misunderstandings about bike laws and road laws. She said it seems crazy that a bicyclist would have to actually stop in every instance, as the officer suggested.

Al Porach said he had researched the law, and the officer is correct that in Delaware a cyclist must come to a complete stop at a stopsign or red traffic signal, but he also noted that several states have exempted bikes from the complete-stop law. He suggested we work on getting the law changed. Karl Hassler suggested we investigate the Idaho law ("stop as yield"). Mark suggested we (NBC) might contact our local state legislators to advocate for a bill to change the current law.

Brian noted that the officer was misinformed about a requirement to "put [one's] foot down" in order to achieve a legal stop (e.g., trackstand).

Karl summed up the feelings of the committee when he noted that public safety was not at issue in this instance and that there are far more egregious bicycling violations for which the Newark Police Department's energy could be used. Karl suggested everyone look at bikelaw.com (a network of attorneys who deal with litigation associated with biking incidents, crashes specifically).

- *Continuing discussion on needed code changes and input to City of Newark re: bicycles on sidewalks*

We decided to table discussion until the June meeting. Heather mentioned that it will take some more time for Tom Coleman to sift through the data she gave him.

If there are other streets that need a similar or location-specific restriction or application, our committee should come to the next meeting (June 16) 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.

The question was raised as to how to go about getting the City Code changed (i.e., to whom we should present our recommendations). Mike said we should present to the city's Traffic Committee first, and then it will go to City Council.

- *Quick Bike Month event reviews*

- Mayor's Fun Ride

Heather commented that she felt the Newark Shopping Center was a good venue for this event. There was a good feel about the whole event, which took place on April 30, though the committee felt there were some improvements that could be made:

- tent and music could have been in closer proximity to bikers within the event corral
- food vendors should be included within event corral
- emcee would help to encourage folks to try the skills course in between rides

Mark said that for the Mayor's post-event committee meeting, Jamie Magee of the Newark Bike Project suggested that the longer ride begin along Main Street. Mark noted that there are up sides and down sides to this. While cross streets and parking lots are an issue, most felt this would not be a major problem for so short a time period, but it probably would require a police escort.

- Bike to School Day at Downes Elementary School

Heather reported that this was a nice event, despite the day's drizzle and cooler weather. There were T-shirts and health-centered trinkets given away to the kids (more for those who biked or walked) as they entered the school building. She said that, because there were two or three kids not wearing helmets, we stress helmets next year and provide to those who don't have one. Newark Bike Project donated ten bicycles to

the school, and Mayor Sierer read the Bike to School Day proclamation over the loudspeaker at the beginning of the school day.

- Bike Basics in a Minute at UD

Paul Moser reported that this event, which was held on May 12 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the south patio of Memorial Hall on the UD campus, was a lot of fun and similar to an extended bicycle safety checkpoint, the objective of which was to communicate bike laws and bike safety to students (both ELI and UD students).

The UD Graduate Student Government had produced four nice posters, which illustrated bike laws and indicated fine amount for violations. Jimmy John's had donated \$250-worth of food; one had to successfully ride a skills course set up by trainers from the White Clay Bicycle Club in order to qualify for the free food. The T² organization at UD had created surveys for this event that were completed by 145 participants. Paul said that, unfortunately, the survey was geared way too much toward eliciting travel data. He'll be looking at the data to see what he can deduce about the event participants as a group.

- *Quick status/progress reports on/from*

- Cleveland Avenue project task force

There was no formal report, but Heather and Karl both indicated there might be a public workshop with respect to the Cleveland Avenue project in June.

- Communication subcommittee

Karen reported that over the past week, our Facebook post-engagement is *way* up (659%), and our people reach is up by 321%. This seems to be due to the Bike and Walk to School Day event photos, which received 1,300 clicks, 157 likes, and 35 comments/shares/reactions.

Our Twitter feed now boasts 11 followers, up from 6 since our last meeting. Post reach isn't that high yet, as we still are in the following/building stage.

We now have data from 70 respondents to the membership survey, up from 51 when we sent out NBC's inaugural newsletter. From those who received the email newsletter, about two-thirds actually opened it (i.e., the email) up.

Mark commended the progress of the Communications subcommittee.

- Education/Encouragement subcommittee

No report

- UD Transportation/Accessibility visioning committee meeting 3

Heather reported that she, Mark, and Ban Phommachanh were each at the third of three of these UD committee meetings, which was held on May 12. The group's role is advisory with respect to transportation and accessibility to the larger UD effort to create a new campus master plan. Much of the meeting was spent with the consultants summarizing input from the previous two meetings and doing some general campus analysis. One major issue that was discussed at length was the challenge of getting from origins to destinations.

Heather said that it was unfortunate that UD had not initially recognized the need to invite City of Newark and DelDOT officials to participate, since on this often non-contiguous campus, transportation inevitably includes both city-maintained and DelDOT-maintained rights of way.

- Delaware Avenue two-way protected bike lane project

There was no formal report, but Paul indicated that DelDOT Solutions is still working away on the project, in conjunction with Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, which had done the initial feasibility study.

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

Heather indicated that she had submitted the proposal to DelDOT (see last month's minutes for further detail).

- *Old or new business / announcements*

- Formation of new subcommittee to work on recommendations to City for interconnectivity projects and prioritization

Mark indicated that he, Paul, and Tom Coleman have been communicating about the potential for working on a list of projects and helping the City prioritize them. Tom has said he welcomes that help from our committee. So, Mark suggested we form a subcommittee to deal with low-stress connectivity projects, using some of Peter Furth's GIS data on Newark, which DelDOT has.

Karl asked about the raw data. Paul said the data are used to assign labels; however, no human experiential analysis has been done to date. Heather added that the Newark Bike Plan includes corridors but is not based on data. Karl said he is very interested in working with Paul, Mark, Heather, and Tom on this subcommittee.

- Presentation to the board of the Downtown Newark Partnership (DNP)

Mark began by indicating that the DNP board has NBC on the agenda for its June 9 meeting but said he would be out of town on that date. Kirsten, whose major work was used for the February presentation to City Council, is not available on that date either. Karl said that, rather than push theory on the business community, he would like to pitch specific ideas. Brian agreed that this should be the strategy. Heather felt that NBC

ought to pause on this, at least until the planned streetscaping on Main Street has been completed. We were all in agreement, and Mark will cancel the meeting.

Heather insisted that we should invite a representative of the DNP to liaison with our committee. Everyone agreed that this was a good idea.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, June 16, at 4 p.m. at WILMAPCO.
Call-in #302-737-6205 x126.