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June Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2016

Attending were Mark Deshon (chair and resident), Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO and Newark Bike Project), Karl Hassler (resident), Brian Bahnson (resident), Paul Moser (DelDOT), Susan Grasso (resident), Taras Gerasimov (Newark Police), Sean Watson (resident), Al Porach (resident), Barb Hughes (resident), John Bare (Bike Delaware), Tom Coleman (Newark Department of Public Works and Water Resources), Joe Spadafino (Newark Department of Parks & Recreation), Joel Schwaber (non-resident), and Amy Roe (resident).

Guest in attendance: Darryl Saunders (Newark Police)

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

The committee agreed that the Mayor should feature the “Bike Basics in a Minute” event, which was a collaboration of a number of groups.

On May 12, in collaboration with the English Language Institute, UD’s Graduate Student Government, DelDOT, the Newark Bike Project, White Clay Bicycle Club, and Newark Police, the Newark Bicycle Committee set up posters, a free bike tune-up stand, bike skills course, and a lot more in front of Memorial Hall to give English Language Institute and UD students an opportunity to learn about riding safely around campus and town. This event engaged over 100 students, and the committee plans to build on this first experience to offer similar opportunities to inform students about safe biking practices, beginning this fall.

- *Celebration of progress since this time last year*

Over pizza and drinks, we cited the following progress in Newark—some major, some minor—over the past year:

- Initiated Delaware Avenue two-way protected bike lane (proposal, feasibility study, and into engineering stages) project.
- Initiated Cleveland Avenue task force (ad hoc committee of the city) to explore design options for multimodal inclusion and improvements along the corridor.

- Helped coordinate second annual Mayor's Fun Ride 2.5- and 8.5-mile events.
 - Contributed to University of Delaware master planning initiative through participation in and providing feedback to its Transportation and Accessibility subcommittee.
 - Supported continuing efforts to initiate a community Bike Share program to be administered by the University of Delaware.
 - Conducted four bicycle safety checkpoint events on UD's campus with partners DelDOT and Newark Bike Project.
 - Organized and held "Bike Basics in a Minute" day-long educational event on UD's campus with partners DelDOT, White Clay Bicycle Club, English Language Institute, and UD Graduate Student Government.
 - Helped organize a Bike to School Day event at John R. Downes Elementary School.
 - Submitted application for Safe Routes to School funding for engineering changes to Casho Mill Road that would promote more and safer bicycling to and from Downes Elementary.
 - Organized National Bike to Work Day event in Newark, partnered with the University of Delaware, City of Newark, DelDOT, and the Newark Bike Project and supported by local businesses. The event drew close to 100 participants.
 - Produced a brochure ("Bike to Work, Newark!") to help encourage commuting by bicycle, which lists benefits of and tips for successful commuting. This item, which was funded by the University of Delaware's STAR Health™ program, is being distributed strategically throughout the community.
 - Helped advocate for bicycle-related improvement funding for Main Street and a Paper Mill Road bike/ped bridge.
 - Partnered with Bike Delaware to have a presence at two community bicycling events.
 - Created four internal subcommittees: Communications (the primary motive being building our community support base and making known what the committee is involved with), Education/ Encouragement, Safety and Enforcement, and Engineering.
 - Beefed up our Facebook presence and added Twitter and a bi-monthly newsletter ("The Messenger Bag") to our efforts to interact with the community. Also issued an interest/relationship survey to attract more to participate into our efforts.
- *Formation of Safety and Enforcement subcommittee*

New committee member Barb Hughes agreed to head the Safety and Enforcement subcommittee. Committee members Susan Grasso, Al Porach, Taras Gerasimov (Newark Police Department), Mike Baez (UD Police), and Bike Delaware's John Bare agreed to serve. Its first meeting is to be scheduled.

- *Formation of Engineering subcommittee*

Mark Deshon proposed that the committee form an Engineering subcommittee to help identify and prioritize low-stress connectivity bike routes and other projects that involve infrastructure and/or engineering improvements. This subcommittee will comprise Mark, Tom Coleman (City of Newark Public Works and Water Resources), Paul Moser (DelDOT), Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO), Karl Hassler, Al Porach, Susan Grasso, and Joel Schwaber. Mark will act as subcommittee head. The first meeting is scheduled for July 8 at 10 a.m. at the Newark Municipal Building.

- *Presentation of recommendation of code changes with regard to bicycling on sidewalks for review by NBC*

Mark Deshon told the committee that he, Heather Dunigan, and Tom Coleman got together to help craft a proposal for code changes that the committee could recommend to the city. The committee reviewed it and engaged in a lengthy discussion on several issues related to bicycling on sidewalks in Newark, both pro and con. [The proposal is attached with these minutes.]

As an aside, prior to the discussion, Tom indicated that a contracted refresh crew had painted lane lines over the entire existing city street grid during a single overnight shift, before the city could take any action to provide direction and guidance in particular instances. Even some of the wrong markings that had faded out had been repainted, much to the city's (and everyone else on the committee's) regret.

Tom explained that the State Code prohibits sidewalk bicycle riding within a business district. Locally, this applies to the downtown area on both sides of East Main Street, Delaware Avenue, and South Main Street (to West Park Place). Tom said that, as a precursor for this meeting's discussion, the task for him, Heather, and Mark was to try to 1) simplify the City Code language where possible and 2) specify where one cannot legally ride on sidewalks.

The language still remains somewhat vague as it applies to westbound on Delaware Avenue because of the lack of a westbound (i.e., legal) bike lane.

John asked if the proposed changes deal exclusively with sidewalk riding. He was assured that that's what we're trying to accomplish here.

There were two main and opposing concerns regarding bicycle riding on sidewalks in general within the city: 1) Are we incurring more risk by allowing bicycling on sidewalks, except where specifically prohibited? and 2) If sidewalk riding is prohibited, are we discouraging the very behavior (bicycling for general transportation) we are trying to encourage? Amy Roe spoke forcefully about the danger to pedestrians, with regard to allowing bicycling on sidewalks in general. Susan insisted that we would do a big disservice to our cause by limiting bicycling to on-street use. Most agreed with Susan about this.

Many, including Susan and Brian Bahnson, felt that a lot more education and enforcement is necessary, along with more signage that would help indicate where one cannot ride legally on sidewalks. Brian also suggested that in the bigger picture, the STAR campus is problematic, largely due to the lack of good connectivity for bicycles over the bridge on South College Avenue. South College was cited as a "key corridor" because of the linkage to downtown and the central UD campus from the south. Karl wondered aloud about the legality of crossing the street in a crosswalk while riding a bicycle, because the language seemed to hint that it is prohibited.

A number of situational problems were likewise brought to the discussion (e.g., the disappearance of a bike lane where cars park in front of Morris Library along South

College)—what are bicyclists supposed to do and/or what options do they have with respect to sidewalks on streets like this?

UD Police officer Darryl Saunders advised that we must remember that money is involved in making changes to rectify problems that aren't significant, data-wise.

Paul made a motion, that was seconded by Joel, to forward our suggestions, as is, for changes to the City Code, most of which simply echoed sections that are already part of the State Code, to the city's Traffic Committee for their review and feedback. The vote was in favor of doing so. Tom volunteered to take this document [attached] to the Traffic Committee.

- *Old or new business / announcements*

- Kudos to Kirsten Jones

Mark introduced the publication titled Bicycle Transportation Inspiration, written by a collaboration of authors, including former committee member Kirsten Jones, reflecting on last summer's European field seminar, which was hosted by the University of Oregon. Kirsten is now employed in the metro New York City area.

The meeting handouts included the cover page, collaborators page, and the two articles that Kirsten wrote—"Reclaiming Streets: Roads aren't built for cars; they're built for people," and "Bikes and Business." [The full publication PDF is attached with these minutes.]

- "Idaho stop"

Barb, John, Karl, and Mark plan to attend the White Clay Bicycle Club's executive meeting on July 11 at 6:30 at REI at the Christiana Mall to discuss the "Idaho stop" and how the club feels collectively with regard to the potential for change in legislation statewide. John suggested we might consider using a term other than "Idaho stop" to refer to the concept that bicyclists can yield at a stop sign, rather than come to a full and complete stop, as is current Delaware law, because he feels there's something about the term itself that infers illegality, rather than common and sensible cyclist behavior.

- Bike Share

Heather indicated that Delaware Transit Corp. is taking over the administration of potential Bike Share projects statewide. This may impact the University of Delaware's ongoing project, but Heather feels it makes sense for there to be coordination under one organization.

- Education and Encouragement

Al says that the city provides a package for new residents and wondered if we could push for including some sort of brochure in this package. Mark will contact Mike Fortner and discuss this with him.

Susan will be talking with UD's Director of Student Life about including some sort of bicycle-related education material at orientation.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, July 21, at 4 p.m. at WILMAPCO.
Call-in #302-737-6205 x126.