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June Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2015

Attending were Mark Deshon (chair), Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO), Jeff Riegner (resident), Mike Fortner (City of Newark Planning), Paul Moser (DelDOT), Linda Smith (UD HealthyU Employee Wellness), Ban Phommachanh (UD Parking), Joe Spadafino (City of Newark Parks & Recreation), and Brian Bahnson (resident).

Regrets: James Wilson (Bike Delaware) and Kirsten Jones (UD student) sent regrets.

Guest: Polly Sierer (Mayor, City of Newark)

- *Getting businesses on the bandwagon for cycling*

Mark Deshon began the discussion by stating that it is his hope that the business community in Newark will begin to help drive the push for cycling in this city, because it'll foster a healthier City of Newark—both physically and economically—and legitimize claims of Newark as a “destination” for cyclists. He said there had been two good articles recently about the evolution of Ft. Collins, Colo., as a top example of cycle-friendly business climate (one Jeff Riegner emailed to him—<http://bikeleague.org/content/fort-collins-10-steps-diamond-bfc-status>—and another from *Bicycling* magazine that he gave to Mayor Sierer at the meeting).

Mayor Polly Sierer then suggested that this effort begin with the development of a focus group or committee within the business community and a list of goals. “There must be something in it for businesses *and* cyclists.” She suggested we contact Ft. Collins and ask about their strategic plan with respect to businesses and cyclists. She also insisted we need to get Bike Line and Wooden Wheels on board. She also suggested a splashy public relations launch.

Mike Fortner asked if we were simply interested in improving parking for cyclists downtown. Brian Bahnson explained his understanding that this impetus would both promote the accessibility of our downtown area to cyclists and to out-of-towners as a destination.

Mark asked if the City's Ricky Nietubicz is the right person to involve. Heather suggested that there needs to be reciprocal representation with our committee and the Downtown Newark Partnership (DNP). It was agreed that we should approach Ricky about his becoming a liaison from the DNP on our committee. No one present volunteered to become a regular attendee at DNP meetings, which take place on the second Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Heather said she thinks there are at least three approaches the we can take as a city:

- Encourage commercial applications for BFBs.
- Have businesses create incentives for cyclists.
- Get local hotels to engage in bicycle tourism.

The DNP may even want to launch a website catering to cyclists. Ban Phommachanh suggested that maybe bike infrastructure/amenities could be sponsored by businesses. We may well want to do all of the above along the way.

With respect to car parking, someone suggested that maybe more scientific observations are needed on metered parking along Main Street. Mike replied that we already have access to the smart-meter data. Heather mentioned that an application for TAP funds for larger curb extensions along Main Street (part of the city design committee's proposed plans) has been made. Jeff suggested that east of the Pomeroy Trail crossing provides a good opportunity for replacing street-side parking with an ample bike lane, as very few cars tend to park there now.

One thing our committee can do now to help is begin mapping comfortable cycling routes into downtown Newark. Mark thanked the Mayor for her participation today.

- *Cycle track progress review*

Mark presented an overview of the most recent committee meeting at JMT and mentioned that there was a bit of disagreement among the 14 gathered with respect to which side of Delaware Avenue is right for the proposed cycle track. At that meeting, after much discussion, JMT's Dave DuPlessis asked for a person-by-person "vote" (though strictly unofficial) on north or south side. The majority favored the south side, particularly those stakeholders who are on the Newark Bicycle Committee (Heather, Mark, Ban, and Tom Coleman). Mark said that the committee concluded that it should try to make a better judgment based on the critical intersections along the four-sectioned project.

Heather felt that JMT had come to conclusions that weren't based on enough data. She has since provided them with intersection counts. She also mentioned that the "low-impact" solution vs. the ideal solution will also play into this major decision. Mark said that the committee also discussed the potential removal of the bus stop by the 7-Eleven, as that location for a stop is no longer necessary and that one of the committee members will be contacting DART/First State about this. Deliveries will still tend to be problematic along Delaware Avenue's south side, however.

Heather also mentioned the committee's conclusion, after discussion, that the section in front of Newark High School (to the Pomeroy Trail) could be two separated one-way bike lanes.

- *Mock cycle track trial*

At the JMT meeting, Tom Coleman had volunteered to organize a mock cycle track along a portion of Delaware Avenue. In Tom's absence, Mark explained that the purpose would be for cyclists to "test" the cycle track concept for that location and that the JMT committee wanted the Newark Bicycle Committee to be responsible for this.

The committee discussed an appropriate opportunity and agreed that Community Day (Sept. 21) held the most promise for easy implementation between The Green and Academy Street, and that we could get some "focus groups" together that day, along with the general public to provide feedback.

(Subsequent to the meeting, Tom indicated to Mark that the JMT committee is interested in having this done by mid-July, so that it doesn't slow down the committee's progress toward a feasibility study final report. Mark suspects that Tom will likely need volunteers or a special meeting to arrange such a set up, so please be ready to help.)

- *Discussion/decision on next low-stress connector project(s)*

Heather mentioned that WILMAPCO had received a letter from the NAACP requesting better walking and biking access to the new housing development on Cleveland Avenue. Mark wondered whether, in connection with the recommendations in the Newark Bike Plan, we ought to push for a bikeway from the intersection of Cleveland Avenue and Kirkwood Highway north on the Dorothy Miller Park then west through McKees Park to a business easement behind the auto dealerships, which could then ultimately connect to Creek View Road. This could be the future connector to Paper Mill Park and the Pomeroy Trail.

There are several other areas that were mentioned as potential projects for better low-stress connectivity.

- Implement bike lanes, traffic calming, and/or mini-circles on Park Place.
- Develop a bicycle boulevard (e.g., Orchard Road/Chrysler Ave./Dallas Ave./Ritter Lane), something that DelDOT is also interested in implementing statewide.
- Better striping is needed along South College Avenue, along with removing on-street parking.
- Mark bike lane on the west side of North College Avenue between Cleveland Avenue and Ray Street.
- Create contraflow bike lane on one-way Ray Street.

- Shared-use path or off-road sidewalk widening on west side of Elkton Road is needed between Suburban Plaza and Casho Mill Road.
- Mark will draft a letter to Alan Brangman about keeping the access to the former West Campus open through all phases of closure, demolition, construction, and long-term use.

During our September meeting, we will begin to prioritize the above list, add any others not mentioned, and continue our discussion of low-stress connectors within Newark.

- *Old or new business*

We need to be informed about City of Newark and DelDOT repaving programs (e.g., Hillside Road). As a committee, we will request that these repaving schedules be communicated to us.

Ban said he had met with City Manager Carol Houck about the UD/City Bike Share program. He said he needs help to get this off the ground. The goal is to get potential sponsors together to help fund this effort. UD's Office of Public Relations is helping in terms of promotion and potential sponsor contact. The idea is that there would be 100 bicycles, half of which would be University of Delaware-branded, half City of Newark-branded. Ban added that the other important piece of the puzzle is discussing a strategy for locating the exact Bike Share stations.

Ban also needs a truck to transport the volume of abandoned bicycles on campus, so that a nonprofit would either take them or agree to auction them off.

Karen Rosenberg volunteered to contact (either by phone or email) each of the Bike to Work Day attendees and find out what their level of interest is in our committee's work.

- *Summer meeting schedule announcement*

There will be NO MEETING NEXT MONTH. On August 20, our normal meeting day, we will have a special light-on-committee-business get together. Committee member Kirsten Jones will be making a presentation on her summer trip to Amsterdam. We will also celebrate our successes of the past year or so with pizza and liquid refreshment. The location for our August meeting is to be announced. Ban and Paul Moser will be seeking a larger room, maybe on the UD campus.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, August 20, at 4 p.m. at a location TBA.