



www.wilmapco.org/bikenewark

June Meeting Minutes

June 19, 2014

Attending were Mark Deshon (chair), Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO), Mike Fortner (City of Newark Planning), Ban Phommachanh (UD Parking), James Wilson (Bike Delaware), Tom Coleman (City of Newark Public Works and Water Resources), Joe Spadafino (City of Newark Parks and Recreation), Karl Hassler (resident), and Jeff Riegner (resident).

Christine Schultz (resident), Anthony Aglio (DelDOT), Frank Warnock (Delaware Bikes), Angela Connolly (Newark Bike Project), Linda Smith (UD HealthyU Employee Wellness), and Karen Rosenberg (resident) each sent their regrets.

- *Brief review of Bike to Work Day*

Joe Spadafino commented that he felt the event was attended pretty well. Mark Deshon stated that there were 40 who registered and 40 who stayed for the group photo. Mark and Heather Dunigan estimates that there were between 45 and 50 in attendance.

Ban Phommanchanh asked who won the door prizes. We didn't record the winners' names. This led to a question from Heather about how we want to use the names and contact info of those who registered. The group thought that to thank them for attending would be a good idea. Mark mentioned that there were some who furnished a phone number rather than an email. Mark volunteered to draft a message to email and then personally call and thanks the others. Mike Fortner indicated that he has already thanked the event sponsors.

There was some discussion about the bike trains. Mike said he thought this was a great idea and, though there were very few who took advantage of this, we all felt it was something good on which to build. He added that it would be good for PR to get a mayor-led train together. We need to work on earlier advertising next year.

Considering the last-minute decision to postpone the originally scheduled event due to bad weather, everyone seemed to feel the event was a net positive. Mark asked about the timing of speakers and the beginning and ending time of the event, but no one had an objection or better suggestion regarding these details.

- *Discussion/formulation of planning goals and work program for the coming year*

Jeff Riegner opened up the discussion by suggesting we look at the *Newark Bike Plan* for targeting projects for the next year. Heather said we have not yet received specific Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) feedback from the League of American Bicyclists (LAB); she expects we'll know something by September.

Following on Jeff's suggestion, Tom Coleman advised that the projects we choose to focus on should be reflected in the City's budget going forward, as the *Newark Bike Plan* has been approved by City Council.

Almost all of the issues cited in the *Newark Bike Plan* list are on state-maintained roads. Below were the streets mentioned in the meeting and associated work proposed by someone in the group.

- **Academy Street** – looking to repave in 2016 or 2017
- **Apple Road south of South Main Street** – possible sharrows
- **Cleveland Avenue west of Paper Mill Road** – measuring for sharrows
- **Country Club Drive to Windsor to Delrem** – sharrows needed
- **West Park Place** – Jeff suggested bike lanes on both sides because the width will allow it. Tom suggested a mini-traffic-circle for the Apple Rd.-W. Park intersection.
- **Elkton Road from Casho Mill Road to Suburban Plaza** – Jeff felt this was a particularly problematic stretch of road that needs a good remedy for bikes traffic.
- **Elkton Road from Suburban Plaza to the Md. state line** – Heather felt that we should work early on with DelDOT with respect to their project. Mark suggested that we need to impress upon DelDOT the need to make biking to and from school possible along Elkton Road.

Everyone had fun sharing his/her own pothole location stories.

Tom said he'd like to initiate a city project for implementation of the Bike Plan.

Mark opened up discussion about solutions for two-way bike traffic on **Delaware Avenue**. James Wilson spoke about the many benefits of a "two-way protected lane" (a.k.a. cycle track). Mark indicated he was uncertain about the consensus of the group with regard to a cycle track on Delaware Avenue. James, Jeff, and Mike all felt this is the most important thing we can achieve as a committee project-wise. So, Mark asked those gathered to vote as to whether or not we really want this.

The committee then voted unanimously to make some configuration of a two-way protected lane for cyclists on Delaware Avenue a major planning priority. Tom suggested getting a resolution from City Council for this as well.

One of the hurdles is that DelDOT's current road design manual doesn't make this possible. Karl Hassler asked if we should participate with DelDOT in redesigning the

manual. James insisted that talking tactics is premature at this point. He explained that DelDOT needs a partner and that it is naturally reluctant to initiate change on its own. He pushed the idea of getting both the mayor and city manager to co-sign a letter to DelDOT indicating that the City of Newark is ready and willing to make this a priority. Mark agreed to speak about this on behalf of the committee with Mayor Sierer and Carol Houck and begin drafting a letter that would include language that would indicate the City is interested in getting this project done in the next few years and is not willing to wait until 2018, when its next BFC application is due.

Jeff said that because DelDOT has a strong focus on bicycle-friendliness right now, they are very receptive to implementing bicycle infrastructure. "The committee should request DelDOT's participation in as wide a range of projects as reasonable." Tom mentioned that DelDOT typically has agreed to pay for something as long as the city agrees to maintain it. He feels we need to suggest that the City pay for this project and get DelDOT to agree to maintain it. Jeff said he feels like this is a reasonable request.

In any case, it looks like active collaboration among the City, DelDOT, and our committee will be essential to get this project accomplished and to further show the LAB we're serious about bettering the city's BFC status. Mark asked if, in parallel with our committee's efforts, it would help if the University of Delaware would push for "Bicycle Friendly University" status. All agreed this would be a bonus for the City of Newark.

Main Street also needs repaving, another issue for which is the possibility of construction of a new parking garage.

- *Specific discussion about areas of current concern within Newark*

Most, if not all of the areas of concern were covered in the above discussion about where the committee needs to focus its efforts in the next year.

- *New or old business*

The State has implemented statewide bike/ped counters.

Heather said we received correspondence from a Bloom Energy employee who attended Bike to Work Day about the stretch of state road from Glasgow High School to downtown Newark. She indicated problems with wayfinding and other road issues. Someone from our committee will be assigned to follow up with her.

A question came up about the overall plan for the STAR campus. UD has apparently engaged another architecture team to redo its master plan to include previously proposed amenities for bicycles and pedestrians that had been removed from its previous plan version. Heather indicated that Alan Brangman was supposed to come to one of our committee meetings at least a year ago to discuss STAR campus plans, but that he never came. James suggested we invite him again and copy Scott Douglas on the correspondence. The consensus of the group was "don't let him say 'no.'"

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