



www.wilmapco.org/bikenewark

facebook.com/bikenewark

@BikeNewark

July Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2016

Attending were Mark Deshon (chair and resident), Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO and Newark Bike Project), Karl Hassler (resident), Susan Grasso (resident), Mike Fortner (Newark Department of Planning), Taras Gerasimov (Newark Police), Ban Phommachanh (UD Parking), Sean Watson (resident), Al Porach (resident), Barb Hughes (resident), James Wilson (Bike Delaware), 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).

Guests in attendance: Jeff Riegner (resident), Katie Gifford (resident), Nick Wasileski (resident)

Regrets: Karen Rosenberg (resident) and Paul Moser (DelDOT)

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

Karl Hassler suggested that Mayor Sierer mention potential funding through an application that we are interested in having the city submit for a technical assistance grant through the People for Bikes program called "The Big Jump." Some key community leaders will be asked to sign and/or write letters of support for this application. We agreed that this would be a good item for her to mention (see agenda item below).

- *Update on feedback from Newark Traffic Committee on our proposed code changes re: bicycles on sidewalks*

Mark Deshon introduced the topic by saying that he, Tom Coleman, and Al Porach attended the city Traffic Committee's recent meeting, during which our suggestions for amending the city code with respect to bicycles on sidewalks was discussed at length. He said that no one on the Traffic Committee was comfortable with removing the existing restriction against bicycling on the Delaware Avenue sidewalks in either direction, the code for which the city and state are in congruence because of its designation as part of "the business district" in Newark.

Mark stated that the Traffic Committee was happy with the rest of our recommended changes, as long as we deleted the proposed words “eastbound on” in the specific restrictions, explaining that most of our recommendations involved bringing the city code into congruence with the state code while removing two unique paragraphs that the NBC perceived included ambiguities that were not helpful. Lt. Fred Nelson of the Traffic Committee had asked if we would like the recommendations passed on to City Council with the aforementioned deletion. Mark said he told Lt. Nelson that he felt that, because we were merely asking for their review at this point, it should go back to NBC for discussion.

Amy Roe was adamant that NBC had not thought this through well enough and felt strongly that its proposed recommendations, if ultimately adopted by City Council, would increase the vulnerability to injury of pedestrians on sidewalks.

Joel Schwaber, Susan Grasso, Heather Dunigan, and Karl each spoke about the reasonableness of not limiting cyclists to the roads. James Wilson said that, though Delaware has ranked at or near the bottom of the list of states with respect to pedestrian safety, the City of Newark is *not* the problem area. Even though most everyone disagreed with Amy, we decided to table this discussion until the next meeting. Mark suggested that Amy come back with some suggestions for additional restrictions for specific roads and/or portions thereof that would make sense in terms of improving safety for pedestrians while not discouraging bicyclists from using bicycles for transportation.

- *Community Day participation*

Mike Fortner announced that Community Day this year will be held on Sunday, September 18, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. There was some discussion about what kind of interaction with the public might be good during this event, recalling that last year we featured the Delaware Avenue cycle-track project. It was decided that we would concentrate this year on getting feedback from the public on what they consider low-stress routes in Newark. As of this meeting, no one volunteered to help during this event, but Mark issued the invitation.

- *“SafetyFest” participation*

Ban Phommachanh reported that NBC will be participating in this year’s UD SafetyFest event, which will take place on Tuesday, September 27, from 5–7 p.m. on UD’s “Harrington Beach.” This event is something that is held each fall for incoming freshmen. NBC will be helping freshmen register their bicycles and, with help from UD Parking and Newark Bike Project, will be conducting bicycle safety checks during the two-hour event.

- *“Bike Basics in a Minute”*

Susan Grasso and Paul Moser are hoping to apply what they learned from organizing this spring’s event on UD’s campus to better plan future “Bike Basics in a Minute” (BBIAM) events. Susan reported that they plan to have two BBIAMs each semester, noting that the SafetyFest involvement would count as their initial semester education/safety check event.

Subsequent BBIAM events are currently scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 13, from 1–3 p.m., Wednesday, Mar. 29, from 1–3 p.m., and Thursday, Apr. 13, from 1–3 p.m.

- *People for Bikes “The Big Jump” grant opportunity*

Having asked the committee to either attend the webinar held earlier today or read the online material regarding “The Big Jump,” Mark began discussion about this opportunity by explaining that this People for Bikes project is about helping build complete networks of comfortable places to ride within communities that are already working on low-stress connectivity enhancements (e.g., protected bike lanes, bike boulevards). The Big Jump is a “retooling” of People for Bikes’ Green Lane Project, which was dedicated to the adoption, design, and implementation of protected bike lanes. The project is all about bicycling as a tool for reaching broader community goals.

The Big Jump will work with ten communities nationwide between 2017 and 2020 through a competitive grant program for technical assistance funding and a customized assistance package for each winning community. The online Notice of Interest submission is due on August 18, with grant applications due on October 28. Notification of award will be made in January of 2017. There is an important upcoming webinar on August 4 for potential community leaders and supporters.

It must involve active and engaged community leaders on a diverse leadership team of up to 20 people for the three-year project term. Local funding will also be critical to demonstrate local commitment. A lead individual must be chosen to interact with People for Bikes as program liaison and be responsible for seeing that program requirements are met.

Susan, Mark, and Jeff Riegner, who had each attended the day’s webinar, agreed that this is the type of project that is tailor-made for Newark, as it can really boost our progress citywide and bring Newark into the national spotlight, which would also provide additional incentive for DelDOT to help the city be successful.

There was some discussion about who would be the appropriate project lead. Though MPOs like WILMAPCO are eligible, Heather said she felt someone on the city staff who deals with transportation and/or planning would be most appropriate. We asked Tom and Mike to take this on and see if they can gather interested supporters (i.e., community leaders, local political leaders, business leaders, and community organizations) to attend the August 4 webinar and subsequently apply for this grant, with support from NBC.

(Selected slides from The Big Jump webinar are attached. More info at peopleforbikes.org.)

- *Quick status/progress reports on/from*

- Cleveland Avenue project task force

Tom reported that the next meeting of the task force will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 16, at 6 p.m. in City Council chambers. He also said that DelDOT had nixed the concept of a roundabout at the intersection at Paper Mill Road.

- Delaware Avenue two-way protected bike lane project

No update; Tom said the project is still in design phase (DelDOT).

- Safe Routes to School proposal

Heather reported that is still awaiting word on the results of the proposal.

- *Quick subcommittee updates*

- Communication subcommittee

On behalf of Karen Rosenberg, Sean reported that the subcommittee is considering increasing the frequency of “The Messenger Bag” online newsletter, though Susan would have to agree to this. He reported that Facebook has updated its algorithm, so it’s important that each of us “like” the NBC page, “share out” articles, and “comment” on posts. We will not consider paid promotions, because that will likely be detrimental to our traffic. The subcommittee is trying to set up a meeting in August.

- Education/Encouragement subcommittee

Susan reported that she’s been in touch with both UD Student Residence Life and New Student Orientation staff about NBC’s willingness to help out with bicycling-education opportunities in conjunction with their events on campus. She said NBC has been invited to participate in 1733 Welcome Days as well as SafetyFest (see notes on SafetyFest above). They’re hoping to be present at three locations on campus (east campus, Ray St., and Laird Campus).

Susan said that we’ll be engaging with students on Sunday, August 28, during Wellness hours activities, by offering a casual “Welcome to Newark” bike ride. She also mentioned the potential for working with campus RAs and the student group Down to Earth.

On Wednesday, Aug. 31, NBC will have a presence at UD “Ask Me” tents, which are staffed by faculty, staff, and students.

Susan also mentioned a new initiative that she and Barb Hughes are organizing—First Fridays at Five casual rides in Newark. The first ride is scheduled for Friday, Aug. 5. Contact Susan or Barb for details.

- Safety and Enforcement subcommittee

Barb reported that the subcommittee has had difficulty scheduling a meeting that everyone on the subcommittee could attend. Al Porach had apparently not been notified of an initial meeting; Barb, Susan, and John Bare had gotten together, though they did not constitute a quorum. Mark reinforced the importance of attendance by our NBC representatives from law enforcement—Newark PD (Taras Gerasimov) and UD

Police (Mike Baez). [Barb and Taras spoke after the meeting; however, she has had no response from Mike.]

- Engineering subcommittee

Tom displayed updated plans for the Apple Road project (between South Main Street and West Park Place), which buffered bike lanes and mid-block pedestrian crossing access to the shopping center. He said he has a meeting scheduled with Councilperson Marge Haddon in September to discuss these plans.

During our initial meeting, several of us met and discussed many potential low-stress routes on which to focus within the central part of the city. Orchard Road, as a bike alternative to South College Avenue and conduit to Delaware Avenue, and access to it from other roads became a major focus. We also talked about engineering that might make possible alternatives for crossing Main Street from North College Avenue onto either South College or Orchard Road that would help minimize bike traffic on the Trabant patio.

The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 12, at 10 a.m. at the Newark Municipal Building, during which we'll be furthering discussion and beginning to prioritize the various areas of interest we had mentioned during our initial meeting, as well as looking to extend outward from the center of town our ideas for low-stress connectivity.

- *Old or new business / announcements*

Nothing to report

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, August 18, at 4 p.m. at WILMAPCO.
Call-in #302-737-6205 x126.