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December Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2014

Attending were Mark Deshon (chair), Mike Fortner (City of Newark Planning), Linda Smith (UD HealthyU Employee Fitness), Tim Filasky (on behalf of Tom Coleman, City of Newark Public Works and Water Resources), James Wilson (Bike Delaware), Karl Hassler (resident), Tom Price (Newark Bike Project), Brian Bahnson (resident), Lauri Webber (resident), Frank Warnock (Delaware Bikes), and Angela Connolly (Delaware Bikes).

Special guest: Tommy Atadan (City of Newark Planning and Public Relations)

Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO), Ban Phommachanh (UD Parking), Anthony Aglio (DelDOT), and Christine Schultz (resident) sent regrets.

- *Feedback to University of Delaware on STAR Campus master plan*

Mark Deshon shared that subsequent to our November committee meeting, Heather Dunigan created a few pages of bike-amenity recommendations for the master plan that he, in turn, submitted to UD's V.P. of Facilities Alan Brangman. These included lane-width changes that would accommodate a paint buffer for bike lanes along the major streets on the campus, width adjustments to some multi-use paths, and a call for bike trail connectivity at the south entrance to the campus.

Brangman replied by email, "These are excellent comments. Thanks to you and the [committee] planners for sharing. I have forwarded the package to Peter Krawchyk and asked him to forward it to the STAR planning team."

Current master plan details and diagrams can be seen at www.udel.edu/star.

- *University of Delaware*

- *Community Bike Sharing*

Ban Phommachanh indicated to Mark that, beyond what was reported in last month's committee meeting, UD is looking at Aramark, Pepsi and other potential sponsors for the planned Bike Share program.

Mark mentioned that, after the November meeting minutes went out, committee member Jonathan Kirch expressed displeasure with the potential for Pepsi's name to be on all the bikes, as sodas are a leading cause of obesity in the U.S. Brian Bahnson said that, as a faculty member, he is opposed to corporate advertising "on The Green" (meaning that these bikes would be seen throughout campus). Though she doesn't disagree with the fact that it would send a mixed message, Linda Smith reminded the group that all major corporations try to do good. She feels that one of the "wins" that Ban Phommachanh sees is the advertising dollars paying for the program.

Though Mark suggested that the good that the BikeShare program would do would probably trump the soda advertisement, James Wilson stated that he feels certain that having the Pepsi logo on BikeShare bikes on and off campus would create a lot of "cognitive dissonance." He said that sugary beverages are a major emphasis at the state level with regard to health. Karl Hassler and Brian suggested that UD should consider other suitors for sponsorship but should insist on having the University of Delaware be the featured message on the bikes themselves, much like what is done at other academic institutions (see photo examples—U. Cincinnati, F&M, UMass).



Mark asked the group if they felt it might be necessary to go to the top and raise such a P.R. issue with President Harker. This might be a good thing, considering the flak UD had taken on another recent enterprise—The Data Centers/power plant fiasco. For now, we'll hope that UD finds a more acceptable sponsor if it *has* to have a sponsor's name on the bikes at all.

- *HealthyU Employee Wellness programs*

Linda reported that right now there are no program plans underway, but she stands ready to implement anything relevant.

- *Efforts to begin Bicycle Friendly University (BFU) application process*

Mark asked if anyone from the University of Delaware knew if any progress was being made on applying for Bicycle Friendly University status. No one knew that anything was currently being done toward an application. Mark asked Linda about the status of UD's bike-related committee, and she replied that she hasn't heard anything about it recently.

• *Report from Newark Bike Project*

Tom Price reported that this is a "slow time of year" for NBP. The number of bike repairs has dropped. NBP is cutting back to Tuesdays 5–6 p.m. for sales, 6–9 p.m. for walk-in repairs, and Saturdays from 12–3 p.m. through January.

Tom mentioned that NBP would be donating a small number of bicycles for needy children at two local elementary schools—West Park Place and John R. Downes—within the next few days, so the kids can have them for Christmas.

• *Initiating efforts to encourage Bicycle Friendly Business (BFB) applications*

We had a brief discussion about how to best get Newark businesses involved in promoting bicycle-friendliness. The consensus was that our committee should approach individual businesses that might want to be deemed "Bicycle Friendly" and urge them to apply for this status (giving them the League of American Bicyclists criteria and info on how to go about it, of course) as well as the Downtown Newark Partnership (DNP).

Mark said that he thought Fusion Fitness might be a good bet for an initial business. Angela Connolly said that HomeGrown might very well be interested as well. Mike Fortner said even the City of Newark would consider applying. The question was asked whether larger employers, like DuPont or Bloom Energy, should be considered as well. Some suggested that first approaching the DNP might help later in dialoging with individual businesses.

• *Progress report on Delaware Avenue cycle track*

Mike reported that the City of Newark has been working with UD's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) to do "pre-engineering assessment" for the cycle track. He said that IPA has made a head-cam video of the route along Delaware Avenue.

As of now, the City will apply for United Planning Work Program (UPWP) funds on behalf of DelDOT for preliminary work. Tim Filasky added that the City has engaged the engineering firm Johnson, Miriman & Thompson. Things are really "up in the air" at this point, though everyone asserted that the parties all seemed very positive about such a project.

Mike concluded by mentioning that he was at an American Planning Association meeting recently, during which he spoke with Gov. Markell. He said the governor was knowledgeable about the cycle track proposal for Newark.

- *Discussion on Encouragement section feedback from the League of American Bicyclists*

An opening question was asked about “open-street” events: Do events like Community Day, New Night Downtown, etc. count as open-street events for cyclists? It seems a stretch to consider them such. Whereas, an event like the annual Ride of Silence may be, even though it’s really a “rolling” street closure for cyclists. Possible streets that might be successfully closed to cars for an event are West Park Place and Academy Street (though Academy St. has undergone so much adjacent construction that the street cannot be considered bike-friendly at this point).

In terms of “reaching out to new and nontraditional partners,” James suggested getting Dogfish Head to sponsor a cycling event (bikes-n-beer). Not everyone warmed up to this, but his point was well taken—that Dogfish Head is well known and will draw people simply because of its name and reputation. He also said we should hit up realtors, banks, and practically any local restaurant. In terms of partnerships with the business community, Karl asked if this meant *sponsoring* or *helping promote* an event like Bike to Work Day. The majority attending felt it meant that we could get businesses more involved to expand and multiply promotion.

As to the question of getting the University of Delaware to apply for a BFU award from the League, this might take some strategic planning. Someone suggested maybe to begin near the top by talking with UD Provost Domenico Grasso, who is very much an ally to the biking community.

- *Where is bike parking most needed now?*

Tommy Atadan explained that the award money the City of Newark received as a competitive winner in the state program “Healthy Communities” needs to be spent and that there is an excess currently of about \$6,000, about \$2,500 of which could be spent on bike racks. He thought planning staffer Ricky Nietubicz would help the city do some crowdsourcing around the question of where do people see the need for more bike parking. Without hesitation, Tom Price said “South Main Street.” Everyone agreed. Another location that was mentioned is at the historic Newark Railroad Station.

Mike mentioned that Vintage Metal would create the units in the same basic “n” shape as seen along East Main Street. In discussing a rollout scenario for South Main, Lauri Webber suggested the City offer a couple at a time to interested businesses in order to incentivize others to want them too.

- *Begin discussion on Bike Month events*

- *Bike Summit*

James said the 2015 Walkable/Bikeable Delaware Summit will take place on Thursday, May 7, somewhere on the Legislative Mall in Dover. Sponsors from last year will do so again this year, with the addition of the Dover/Kent Co. MPO.

- *Bike to Work Day*

Bike to Work Day this coming year will be on Friday, May 15. Mike again agreed to be the lead organizer of this annual event here in Newark. In light of the earlier discussion about getting more businesses involved in promotion, Mark encouraged him to begin working on this event in January and seeking help from members of the committee as needed.

- *Mayor's Ride*

Mark met with Mayor Sierer and listened to her excitement about planning a Mayor's Ride. We discussed possible timing; Mark suggested that Saturday, May 16, might be a good crescendo to the Bike Week activities. The mayor indicated she already has a corporate sponsor for the event, which she and Mark both agreed needed to be child-friendly and involving a distance/course that is doable for nearly all cyclists (and maybe a shorter option for young kids). The discussion included talk of event T-shirts and other amenities. They wondered whether the event ought to be completely free or include a nominal (very affordable) registration fee.

The consensus of the committee was that this event should be free of charge and that other corporate sponsors could be courted to help with event expenses. We also discussed ride length and most thought a ride in the 5- to 10-mile range would be doable for just about everyone, including families.

Mike indicated that he is ready to help organize this event. Mark suggested that his handling two events within the same week might not be the best idea, believing that Mike will have his hands full with planning the Bike to Work Day event. Mark said he would ask Jeff Riegner and Joe Spadafino to work with the Mayor on the organization of this event on behalf of the committee.

- *Old or new business*

- *Outreach to local elementary schools*

Mark met with Sandy Hudson and Connie Spedden from John R. Downes Elementary School as a gesture to begin dialogue on our committee's interest in their education and health programs with regard to bicycles. He will go to West Park tomorrow morning as NBP bicycles are being delivered to begin dialogue with that school.

- *Facilitator and notetaker for January meeting*

Tom agreed to team with Heather Dunigan to cover these needs for our next meeting. Mark thanked everyone for attending, and, on behalf of the committee, particularly expressed his gratitude to Frank Warnock and Angela Connolly for their service on the committee over the past several years. They are each stepping away from committee work, though they each said they would like to be kept informed of what we're doing.

The next meeting of the Newark Bicycle Committee will be on Thursday, January 15, 2015, at 4 p.m. at WILMAPCO.