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August Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2018

Mark Deshon called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Member attendees: Mark Deshon (Chair), Bob McBride (Treasurer), Barb Hughes, Dave Saunders, and Ismat Shah

Partner liaison attendees:

DelDOT: Paul Moser

City of Newark: Ofc. Greg D’Elia and Ofc. Darryl Saunders (Police)

University of Delaware: Ban Phommachanh (Parking) and Ofc. Chris Villaverde (Police)

Guest: Brooke Schultz (*Newark Post*)

Mark Deshon began by having everyone introduce themselves and their affiliations. For those who missed last month’s meeting, he also summarized the procedural change we made with regard to how meeting minutes would be accepted as final. Bob McBride said he’d try to do a quicker job getting out the drafts for review. Draft minutes will be sent out with a deadline for review (comment/edits). After that, any comments/edits will be dealt with and the minutes will be considered final by consensus and posted on the BikeNewark website.

Brief report on UD bike committee

Ban Phommachanh reported that the committee’s work—mainly focusing on safety—has been finished. Policy statements on bicycle traffic, parking rules, abandoned bikes, and ongoing bike-safety education are complete but will not be released publicly until approved by the UD Board of Trustees.

Project updates

- ***Delaware Avenue two-way protected bikeway project***

Five of those present had attended this past Monday’s DelDOT public workshop, which seemed very well attended. Bob McBride noted that, during the hour he was there, he counted 40 people. Mark Deshon said he was very impressed with how questions were answered by JMT consultants and DelDOT planners. Of particular note, the raised South College Ave./Delaware Ave. intersection will be an improvement for everyone—motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists—since it will force traffic to slow down and make movement by walkers and bicyclists more visible. For pedestrians and bicyclists, this will mean an at-grade crossing.

DelDOT's Paul Moser asked a question about placement of bicycle-specific signals at intersections, thinking that the plans are to have them placed either on the opposite side of intersections or on both sides. He felt strongly that the signals should be on the near side as bicyclists approach intersections. Mark said he'd touch base with JMT's Laura Berzina and verify.

Paul had an additional concern with regard to plans for the Delaware Avenue approach from South Main Street, specifically that design decisions to remove approaching bike lane from the south may likely be ignored by riders. Cyclists can take (use) the whole lane, however. Mark said that the premise is to reroute bicyclists up Amstel Avenue and onto Orchard Road to access the beginning of the bikeway. Paul suggested that it would make more sense to keep the approach bike lane from the south in place, though there was no discussion about how bicyclists on the righthand side of Delaware Avenue would then safely slide over two traffic lanes to access the bikeway at the Orchard Road intersection. Mark stated that there will have to be a massive education effort for all users. Mark suggested that Paul take this up with JMT consultant Laura Berzina and DelDOT's Tom Brooks.

- ***Cleveland Avenue pave-and-rehab project***

Mark confirmed that the "road diet" on the section of Cleveland Avenue adjacent to the car dealerships has now been implemented. Barb Hughes felt that there is currently not enough marking, but the City of Newark officials had assured her that final surface painting has not been completed. Bicycling on the road has certainly improved, but there is still some discomfort with the bike lanes disappearing near the intersections. This might be solved in some future intersection realignments, particularly at Paper Mill Road, and additional markings, though Mark thinks that sharrows may end up being used to indicate a shared lane approaching the Paper Mill Road intersection (and maybe others).

Mark noted to the Newark Police officers present that there are problems with commercial truck loading/unloading on the right side of the road (as had been the normal practice with the old configuration)—completely blocking the bike lane and impeding the traffic lane. Ofc. Greg D'Elia said he'd report this issue to the traffic division.

Editor's note: Mark will be talking with the City of Newark about urging DelDOT to consider an alternative off-peak-hours signal phasing at Paper Mill Road intersection that would facilitate through-traffic crossing on the Pomeroy Trail.

- ***"Pomeroy Connector" multi-use path***

Unfortunately, Joe Spadafino was not present to report on the progress of the "Pomeroy Connector." Mark indicated that this project might be delayed. City Council had approved project funding for 2018, but there are right-of-way issues that have to be negotiated, according to Newark City Councilman Jason Lawhorn, because some or all of this utility easement is on UD property, which might explain the slowdown. District 5 Councilman Lawhorn and BikeNewark are both interested in seeing this project completed as quickly as possible.

Upcoming Bike Central events, including 1743 Welcome Days and UD Safety Fest

- ***Freshmen move-in day (1743 Welcome Days)***

Freshmen move-in day is Sat., Aug 25. BikeNewark will staff a table from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. on the Perkins Student Center east patio. We need volunteer help, though. Barb and Bob McBride said

they could each help that day. Please email Mark if you can volunteer. It makes sense to share this with Newark Bike Project, and Mark will contact them about sharing tent/table. Barb reminded us to please emphasize potential First Friday Rides for new students, to help them learn how get around the city by bike.

- ***Safety Fest and other Bike Central events***

BikeNewark will have a Bike Central out on Delaware Avenue at The Green from 11:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 12. This coincides with UD’s Safety Fest, which will occur later that day. Ban asked that we encourage those who can’t take time to stop in mid-day that day to attend Safety Fest from 5:00–6:30 that evening on the east side of Perkins Student Center.

Future Bike Central dates are planned for Thursday, October 25 (times TBA), and Wednesday, March 13 from 11:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

- ***Bike Lights on Demand***

Barb said that we had a couple very successful bike light giveaway nights last year. She suggested that BikeNewark offer these stealth events again when early sunsets mean that more riders are on the streets in low-light conditions. Barb will take the lead on planning these, in partnership with UD Police Department staff.

Plan for Community Day presence

Newark Community Day is on Sunday, September 16, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mark is hoping for a better location for this year (i.e., closer to Delaware Avenue). We think we should also be adjacent to Newark Bike Project, since our messages overlap in important ways. Bob, Barb, Dave Saunders, and Ismat Shah each said that they could put in some time at our table that day. More volunteers are welcome. Email Mark Deshon if you’re interested in helping.

Initial discussion of nominations for BikeNewark officers for December election

According to by-laws, BikeNewark elects officers every two years. Mark initiated the discussion, saying that by December we need a slate of nominees for the election of four BikeNewark board positions—Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary—and continued by saying that he’ll be stepping down after this, his fifth, year as Chair. He also reminded everyone that Bob has faithfully been doing both the Treasurer *and* Secretary’s duties this calendar year and that we really need a Secretary.

Mark pointed out how lean we are right now in terms of active membership and that Karen Rosenberg will be on sabbatical during the fall 2018 semester, even though she says she can help maintain our online calendar. Mark noted that we don’t really have sufficient membership for our committees to function as we had envisioned in 2017 and that we may need to rethink this activity. Paul said that the activity of committees is very valuable in between partnership meetings; Mark agreed but said that we’ve had a difficult time scheduling these and noted that the Engineering Committee had been meeting on an as-needed basis for the past several months.

He reminded all that only BikeNewark members only are eligible for board positions. According to our by-laws, partner liaisons can neither serve in these positions nor vote.

One talking point to suggest to Mayor Sierer for September City Council meeting

The consensus was that we should suggest to that Mayor that she highlight the Bike Central events that will have taken place prior to the first City Council meeting in September and those that will occur thereafter this fall.

Monthly financial report and adoption of report

As of August 16, 2018, there had been no new donations or expenses since the last meeting. We now have a cash balance of \$543.49 with \$241.84 balance in our PayPal account.

It was moved and seconded that the financial report be adopted; the motion was approved.

Old or new business

- ***First Friday Rides changes and potential spring event***

Barb Hughes noted that First Friday Rides would now start at 6 p.m. to better accommodate working participants who might not be able to come at 5:30 and said that we will be eliminating FFR during December, January, and February due to typical weather conditions and darkness. From now on, FFR will take place March through November. She also said she's been talking with the Newark Arts Alliance about partnering with BikeNewark for a special themed FFR in the spring of 2019.

- ***End-of-summer community event at Dickey Park***

Greg reported that tomorrow, August 17, there will be a Newark Police-sponsored event in Dickey Park that will include a K-9 demo, kids bounce house, State Police Horse Troop, school supply backpacks, and a cookout.

Next meeting

Our next meeting will take place on September 20 at 4:30 p.m. at WILMAPCO.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Minutes were taken by Bob McBride.