

# Bike & Pedestrian Committee Monthly

## Meeting Minutes

**When:** Thursday, October 19, 2023, at 6pm

**Where:** 1st Floor Conference Room, Independence Hall & Via Conference Call Bridge

**Audio recording:** [Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee - 10/19/23 - YouTube](#)

### Committee members in attendance

- Tim Callahan (TC)
- Mike Allen (MA)
- Steve Gniadek (SG), Chairman
- Tom Keane (TK) - Vice Chairman
- Anya Mezak (AM) - Secretary
- Dave Peck (DP)
- Tony Wellman (TW)

### Town Dept Representatives

- Engineering – Bill Hurley
- Health – Santina Jaronko (SJ)
- Police – Sgt Wiltsie (SW), Officer Kovac (EK), Frank DeAngelis (FD)
- Schools - VACANT

The meeting was called to order at 6:06pm

Motion to approve minutes from September 21, 2023 - passed unanimously

### Town Department Updates

- Health Dept (SJ)
- Engineering Dept Q&A (WH/MJ)
- Sustainability Update (MH)
- Police Dept (EK)(FD)

### Vacancy on the Committee

- 4 applications have been submitted
- We need someone more bike than pedestrian, currently pedestrian heavy
- We currently have one woman and one person (same person) with young kids so worth considering

### Newsletter

- Our input into the First Selectwoman's Biweekly Email Update is our main form of communication to the public right now  
Asking all members of the group to think about what would be important for the general public that we/they can write up.

### Committee Progress

- Feeling a sense of accomplishment - us coming together, more participation from the group

### Treasury report

- We have no official budget

- We have no formal way of soliciting donations, it's just people give when they want
- Last contributions were in early 2022 (\$100 and \$50).
- Currently we have \$692.20
- Looking for ideas on what can we do with our existing money...

#### World Day of Remembrance (WDR)

- Town is planning to do a "proclamation" for World Remembrance Day, which is the 3rd Sunday in November every year, November 19<sup>th</sup> this year WRD is meant to remember road traffic victims and emergency crews. This year's theme is Safe Streets for People.
- AM is heading to Hartford for a big event that day. Anyone is welcome to join

#### Email review

- Monica Murphy emailed about North Benson Road.
- FBPC should be the conduit to get the ball rolling on issues, not to be the ones to address it themselves. We're not problem solvers, we're expeditors.
- It's a state road so the university has no less power than the town to address
- SG will reply to Monica Murphy.
- TW will create a write up for the standardized process for expediting a road safety request.

#### Health Department Update [SJ]

- Grant officially closed out on the continuation of sidewalk on South Pine Creek. Spent about \$15K on it. Just under budget a little bit.
- Purchased 600 little packets with stickers for the kids in the bike rodeo. Bike safety stickers and coloring book (safety and importance of wearing a bike helmet). Would be great to distribute at Bike Rodeo. Also have pedestrian bracelets, bike hangers and reflectors.

#### Engineering Department Q&A

- 30 streets have additional sidewalks that increased our sidewalks from 110 to 125 miles.
- 2 dozen roads have a bike route on them
- 50 bike racks and/or repair stations have been installed in the last 10-11 years
- \$14-15m grant money recently completed or coming up in next year's design.
- Today going to capital planning meeting for next April where they're going to for \$8-10m for bike and mostly pedestrian improvements with complete streets elements, sidewalks, RFP and pavement markings. These are grants and funding requests.
- [SG] Traffic Calming needs to be in the Master Plan. It's out there, getting comments, BH hasn't seen the PC or First Selectwomen to discuss this with them. Was "approved" in March but no final approval. This is in the top 3 things we want to focus on.
- Updated version will likely be presented in the winter with updates [BH]
- Villa Ave: BH says there is enough room for cyclists with the upcoming design improvements. At the narrowest point, cars will have ~9.5 (bikes will have 3 or 4). AM to email BH for exact numbers.

#### Police Update – Sgt Wiltsie and SRO Kovac were in attendance.

- Ed Kovac (SRO, Student Resource Officer) presented his materials for teaching kids.
- Covers a mix of public and private schools. Public schools include 9,000 kids enrolled.
- Have 4 School Safety Officers (SSO) and 2 SROs that are stationed at Fairfield Warde and Ludlowe. Also in Tomlinson, Ludlowe and Woods Middle Schools.
- 4 SSO's do a SHAPE (Safety, Healthy and a Positive Environment) Class - designed to take the place of DARE to be covered at the 4th and 5th grade level. - bullying, internet

safety, drugs, stranger danger etc. It touches on bikes and bike safety with respect to good decision making.

Specific Bike & Ped related material includes

- A problem of the day - Ex - if all your friends are riding to school today and you want to join them, what do you do?
- Let them know about wearing helmets.
- Discuss sidewalks, and which direction to walk or ride bikes. Safest way to cross the street means walking the bike across the sidewalk (what if they fall). If sidewalk is clear, ride there. If a pedestrian is there, they have the right of way.
- Talk about stop signs and traffic lights and what to do there.
- Talk about pedestrians having the right of way.
- Follow the rules of the car road even when on bike. What to do with yield signs. How to use hand signals.
- Places where kids bike more, are more familiar with how to bike safely. Sherman Elementary is an example of this.

What's being done for 3rd or 4th graders? Police are not teaching them at those grades, but worth asking the Health Department.

Bike Workshop Idea [AM]

- Sounds Cyclists provide workshops for kids and adults on bike riding and safety - for free! Which Fairfield audience can benefit from this education?
- Ideas that came up: Maybe at the Bike Rodeo in May? Each school has a walkathon - could pedestrian safety education tie into that?
- No one volunteered to coordinate this with the Sound Cyclists to bring free bike workshops to Fairfield.
- AM will send info to the group

Note - Someone from Fairfield PTA could be a good contact for the FBPC.

Park Ave Bike Lanes [TC]

- In August 2022, Bridgeport approached Fairfield and SHU focusing on bicycle infrastructure on upper Park Ave. SHU expressed interested in doing something
- TC has been following for our group, emailing Cathy Fletcher for updates - they've moved in a different direction - put in bike lanes in different parts of Bridgeport. put on the back burner.
- This could be a way to see if building bike lanes is something people want.

Speed Tables / Humps [DP]

- Pretty much every neighboring community endorses them and has a process for requesting them (ex. New Canaan, Newtown, Norwalk, Bridgeport, Wilton, Westport, Hamden, Redding)
- There is no doubt that Speed Humps work given the research.
- Public works is most of the opposition as it relates to snow plowing, Fire Department a little opposition as it slightly slows emergency response time
- For the last 25 years, ingrained in the police commission that speed humps should not be done
- A good speed hump is about \$15K.
- The Police commission is afraid to open Pandora's box, that everyone will want them all over town. However, DP believes that if we do them with criteria, this could work.

- Recommendation from the Fairfield Bike & Ped Committee to create a pilot program - survey the neighborhood, get signatures, to give the commission a feel for the neighborhood.
- In November 2019 Police Commission meeting, Brian Farnan was an RTM member did an informal traffic survey of his constituents, 180 respondents said the area was dangerous and people said they wanted police presence and speed tables. He presented this to the commission and nothing came of it.
- SG believes presentation needs to go to the Board of Selectman first. Says we're willing to present this to the Police Commission.
- All these other towns can't be wrong while Fairfield is right.

Motion to Adjourn at 7:49pm

Respectfully submitted by Anya Mezak and Steve Gniadek