

REPORT OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, July 12, 2016 - 10:00 AM

Conference Room, County-City Building
1515 Strongs Avenue - Stevens Point WI 54481

PRESENT: Tori Jennings, Trevor Roark, Bill Fehrenbach

ABSENT: Scott Cole

STAFF PRESENT: Associate Planner Kyle Kearns, Assistant Police Chief Tom Zenner, Parks and Recreation Director Tom Schrader

ALSO PRESENT: Portage County Planning Department Director Jeff Schuler, Alderperson Heidi Oberstadt, Alderperson Garrett Ryan, Andrea Olson, Justin Seis, Ellie Corbin, Paula Kropidowski

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1. Call to Order.
2. Welcome Bill Fehrenbach as newly appointed member of BPAC.
3. Minutes and Actions from June 14, 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Meeting.
4. Persons who wish to address committee for up to three (3) minutes on a non-agenda item.*

Consideration and Possible Action on the Following:

5. Update on decision made by Portage County Highway Committee on McDill Avenue 4-to-3 lane reconfiguration, and discussion on Complete Streets/Paving Project Coordination Plan (see attached and below 4-to-3 lane conversion videos).
6. Discussion of video of Sherman Avenue – four to three lane conversion, Madison, Wisconsin <https://youtu.be/oqesvhPxIDg>.
7. Discussion of video of State Highway 13 – road diet lane conversion, Park Falls, Wisconsin (WisDOT video) https://youtu.be/_xUR6VHy4IY.
8. UWSP GIS/Geography student, Elizabeth Corbin, discussion of bicycle map project for Stevens Point.
9. Update on 2016 League of American Bicyclists, Bicycle Friendly Community award application.
10. Discussion on Stevens Point Bike Count – September 2016.
11. Discussion and possible action on winter path plowing proposal along Riverfront.
12. Schedule next meeting.
13. Adjourn.

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1. Call to Order.

Meeting was called to order at 10 AM by Tori Jennings.

2. Welcome Bill Fehrenbach as newly appointed member of BPAC.

Bill Fehrenbach was present.

3. Minutes and Actions from June 14, 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Meeting.

Motion by Trevor Roark to approve minutes; second by Bill Fehrenbach. Motion carries 3-0-0.

4. Persons who wish to address committee for up to three (3) minutes on a non-agenda items.*
Consideration and Possible Action on the Following:

None.

5. Update on decision made by Portage County Highway Committee on McDill Avenue 4-to-3 lane reconfiguration, and discussion on Complete Streets/Paving Project Coordination Plan (see attached and below 4-to-3 lane conversion videos).

Jeff Schuler provided background on why Portage County Highway Committee made the decision to maintain McDill Avenue as an undivided four-lane road. He added that efforts by Tori Jennings have introduced a conversation about a Road Diet, 4-to-3 lane conversion, which might be considered at some point in the future.

Tori Jennings encouraged the development of a Portage County bicycle and pedestrian committee as well as a paving project coordination plan. She added that had these been in place, a different decision about McDill might have been made.

Heidi Oberstadt stated that many people do not know what a 4-to-3 conversion is and thanked Tori Jennings for helping educate the public. Alder Oberstadt added that as an elected official, she is frustrated at watching these types of things happen. She went on to state that Stevens Point has dedicated itself to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, so it is frustrating to see the County-Wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan pushed to the side. She concluded that there needs to be a much larger education component.

Jeff Schuler is pleased that Stevens Point is taking the lead on the plan. He explained that Portage County is in a position now to be much more active and more of a participant in moving things forward.

Andrea Olson asked if a Green Circle Trail traffic crossing has been addressed. She also pointed out that the Highway HH overpass has a partial bicycle facility that ends at Whiting. She concluded that McDill Road is a speed trap

Tori Jennings replied that the Village of Whiting Board submitted a request for the Green Circle Trail to have a pedestrian signal, however this request was denied because the Green Circle Trail cannot set a precedence of installing signals for all communities.

Trevor Roark read a letter to the Editor in the Portage County Gazette (by Paula Okray) in support of a lane reconfiguration on McDill Road.

6. Discussion of video of Sherman Avenue – four to three lane conversion, Madison, Wisconsin
<https://youtu.be/oqesvhPxIDg>.

Tom Zenner asked if before and after traffic studies have been completed on North Sherman Avenue in Madison.

Tori Jennings said she would get that information to him.

7. Discussion of video of State Highway 13 – road diet lane conversion, Park Falls, Wisconsin (WisDOT video) <https://youtu.be/xUR6VHy4IY>.

Mayor Wiza asked if traffic counts are available for Park Falls, WI.

Tori Jennings said she would get that information.

Bill Fehrenbach asked if accident data is available for the two-way left turn lane on Hwy 10.

Tori Jennings asked Jeff Schuler to describe his experience with North Sherman Avenue following the 4-to-3 conversion. After living in Madison for many years and routinely driving North Sherman Avenue, Jeff Schuler remarked that it is surprising how much change can be made to a paved surface by just changing the striping and not the pavement itself. He could see no reason why a lane reconfiguration would not work on Highway HH.

Andrea Olson commented that she could bike from Fitchburg to downtown Madison faster on bike than by car because of the 3-lane roadway configuration.

Tori Jennings added that 4-to-3 lane conversions are not just being implemented in large cities. Rural communities such as Tomahawk, Park Falls, and Eagle River, WI either have or will implement 3-lane facilities primarily to control speeding.

****Mayor Wiza requested that Agenda item #11 be moved up due to a schedule conflict:**

11. Discussion and possible action on winter path plowing proposal along Riverfront.

Tori Jennings stated that plowing the Riverfront path should be considered by the City, however no salt should be used.

Trevor Roark added that the path is a valuable asset and plowing would benefit Downtown.

Andrea Olson stated that she lives across from Pfiffner Park and has been observing City crews, the public using the path, and snow drift patterns over the years. She has taken photos that show that the City is already driving trucks on the path. She believes the path should be plowed, as it brings value to the community, and is a treasure that we are not taking advantage of.

Mayor Wiza explained that when the path is cleared by the City, the City then becomes responsible for keeping it clear and the path becomes a liability. He added that the sparse traffic on the path currently is not anywhere near what it would be if the path was plowed during the winter. Short of hiring additional staff, there is not enough staffing to clear the path during the winter. If people choose to use the path during the winter, State Statutes give the City immunity from lawsuit, however if the City clears the path it then becomes a liability issue.

Tom Schrader stated that this subject has been addressed a number of times in the past. He said the path was never built to receive traffic in the winter and that freezing and thawing will break up the asphalt. The path has only been resurfaced once since 1982 because it does not get plowed. The Parks Department plows 7 miles of sidewalks. If this 1 mile of trail gets plowed, then Mead Park and Iverson Park would also need to be plowed. Lastly, he noted that sidewalks in the area are plowed, which creates an avenue for pedestrians and bicycles.

Andrea Olson asked how much it would cost to plow it, and if it could be changed so it could be plowed?

Tom Schrader responded by identifying that changing the path so it could be plowed would cost \$200,000 to \$300,000 and that if it is not plowed, it will last 10 or 15 more years.

Mayor Wiza said if someone wants to propose a winter event, which requires the plowing of the trail a formal request should be made. If someone is willing to come to the City and make a proposal, then the City can see what resources can be put towards that effort.

Heidi Oberstadt suggested that if people are interested in the path, it is probably best to discuss it with the Park Board. In addition, the financing of this is a concern, especially in her district.

Mayor Wiza asked if the Parks Director would estimate the cost of replacement and maintenance.

Trevor Roark asked if there is a brush truck, to which Tom Schrader confirmed, but that only works up to 4" of snow.

8. UWSP GIS/Geography student, Elizabeth Corbin, discussion of bicycle map project for Stevens Point.

Ellie Corbin presented an early draft of the Stevens Point bicycle maps she is working on as an Independent Study project. The map ranks streets in Stevens Point based on comfort level. She asked for feedback on folding options and layouts.

Heidi Oberstadt asked if a website could offer the maps. (Ellie confirmed it could.)

Kyle said the map could go on the Stevens Point bike page and suggested that everything should be easily accessible, and easy to upload.

Tom Zenner encouraged collaboration with UWSP Campus Security.

Andrea Olson recommended that Ellie consult with UWSP faculty (Tim Krause) on creating an application for mobile devices.

9. Update on 2016 League of American Bicyclists, Bicycle Friendly Community award application.

UWSP student intern, Justin Seis, gave an update on data being collected for the Bicycle Friendly Community application due August 8. The City of Stevens Point is currently a Bronze level and is applying for Silver status.

10. Discussion on Stevens Point Bike Count – September 2016.

Bill Fehrenbach stated that he is willing to lead this project. A plan will be made during the August meeting.

Jeff Schuler suggested that BPAC explain to the Plan Commission why this data is being collected and how it might be useful.

*** Item 11 was discussed above.

12. Schedule next meeting.

Next meeting will be held on August 12 at 10:00.

13. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 11:12.