

## Town of Bethlehem Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

### Summary of May 25, 2021 meeting

#### Attendance.

Henry Peyrebrune, Nate Owens, Dana Scalere ,Connie Kontogiannis, Oliver Holmes ,Erin Svare, Erin Rightmyer, Mindy Scott, David Van Luven, Marc Dorsey, Anne Benware

Public Comment- There was no public comment

Approval of April meeting summary- Summary was not available and will be reviewed at the next meeting.

#### Department Updates

- **Police** Officer Whiteley sent an email that there were no new issues or accidents. He also sent an email on the results of the Walk n Role festival saying that it was a success, thanking Connie for managing the bike skills portion and thanking the other committee members for their help and support. Members will submit a list of needed improvements for next year.
- **Planning** There is still no decision on how to fill the vacancy on the committee

Planning staff is working on the Comprehensive plan update and specifically on the Community profile.

Projects under review which have bike and pedestrian implications include: Stewarts at Delaware and Cherry, Stewarts at 33 Frontage Rd, 9W, Learning Center on Krumkill Rd, and a Restaurant at 4 Corners Pharmacy. Nate will send out details.

Anne Benware gave an update on her involvement on the Comprehensive Plan as the representative of the Committee on that effort. The working group is focused on vision statements and values and is reaching out to the community. Bethlehem Tomorrow has produced 2 reports on Sustainability and Climate Change which she forwarded to the committee. She asked if the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee should also prepare a report on bicycle and pedestrian issues for the Comprehensive Plan process. The Committee will discuss this at the next meeting.

**Highway Department.** Marc reported that the department is on target to pave 20 miles of road this year. They are doing extensive sweeping of road shoulders. The Fernbank priority sidewalk project is complete. Next sidewalk project is in South Bethlehem in conjunction with a highway upgrade. The Sidewalk on Delaware from the library to Cherry Ave would be the next priority.

### **Complete Streets Discussion- Delaware Ave**

The rest of the meeting was spent on discussing the role of the Committee in providing accurate public information on the benefits of the project which was previously endorsed by the committee.

There will be a referendum on the Town issuing bonds to fund the project. The vote will either be in August as a special vote administered by the Town or in November as an item in the regular elections administered by the County. No decision yet.

David said that the Town does not have the communications capability nor the staff to mount a communications campaign. He is hoping that local organizations such as our committee can help get accurate information to the public. Among the items discussed were:

- The need to change the narrative from “bad for business” to “safe for children, pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers”.
- What are the consequences of a no vote: loss of \$ 2.9m in competitive federal aid, no new sidewalks, no street amenities, etc. The Town will provide a specific list of these items.
- Looking at other locations such as Menands and Madison Ave for actual experience with road diets.
- How can the committee reach out to the Community, including the business community? Hold a public meeting? Hold listening sessions? Work with grassroots organizations? What are the areas of agreement and the areas of disagreement? Connie will submit what he thinks are areas of agreement.
- Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

### **Work Plan Discussion Next 5 Priority Topics**

Because of the late hour and the fact that several members had to leave the meeting, this discussion was postponed until the next meeting. Henry requested that the members send in their ideas on the next 5 priority ideas before the next meeting. He will compile them and the committee can select the items at the June 22 meeting.

### **Other Items discussed.**

- Add discussion of Comprehensive Plan status to future Committee agenda's. Anne will lead the discussion.
- Anne and Skip will conduct follow-up crosswalk compliance surveys at several crosswalks. Connie will help.

### **Summary- Follow up items**

- Walk n Roll Festival ideas on improvements for next year. Committee members to Officer Whiteley
- Projects currently under review with bike/ped implications- Nate to provide to Committee
- Should committee prepare a report on Bike/Ped issues for Comprehensive plan process. Comments to Anne for next meeting
- Consequences of a no vote on Complete Streets Project. Rob/Nate to Committee
- Areas of agreement on Complete Streets. Connie to Committee
- Next 5 Priority Topics. Ideas to Henry before next meeting
- Next meeting format. Nate to do survey

**Next Meeting** There was a discussion on whether we should hold in-person meeting, continue to use Zoom or do a hybrid for the next meeting on June 22. Nate will survey the committee to see what the preference is.