



**Town of Bethlehem
Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
Meeting Notes**

**February 22, 2022
6:30 pm**

In Attendance - Jen Livingston, Dana Scalere, Erin Rightmyer, Erin Svare, Oliver Holmes, Kristen Ackerman, Laura DiBetta, Mindy Scott, Anne Benware, Henry Peyreburn, Connie Kontogiannis
Maureen Cunningham was also in attendance. Nate Owens was absent due to illness.

Public Comment – Morgan Ruthman inquired about the school district proposal to change the bussing/walk zones and does the Committee have input on this. He raised his concerns around Juniper drive and walkers struggling to get to the high school. He suggested the Town should make improvements to sidewalks around Juniper and that the Committee and the Town could communicate issues and recommendations to the School District.

Approval of Meeting Notes – The January 25 meeting notes were approved as drafted.

2022 Meeting Schedule - Kristen suggested a chair for the entire year to better serve the Committee and had asked the Town Supervisor for his consideration. With the loss of three members, having a dedicated chair will provide continuity by having a single point person to drive the deliverables of the Committee. It was also recommended that the Committee's Town representative/staff person be the chair back up to the member chair. Maureen acknowledged the outreach by Committee members about the chair role. The Supervisor will make the chair official at the next meeting. Skip has been nominated by several people. He is already our liaison to the Town Safety Committee.

The Committee will discuss the recorder role at the next (March) meeting. Approval of the Chair/Recorder schedule was tabled until next meeting.

Department Updates

- Town Updates - Having consulted with the Supervisor, Maureen reported on several topics.
 - There are ARPA Funds available and \$50,000 is being recommended for Town Board approval for Committee-identified traffic safety needs. Approval could be as soon as March 2022.
 - Traffic engineers will be examining Kenwood from the Four Corners to the Bypass to recommend changes. Obtaining necessary rights-of-way to expand the roadway can take years and years – there need to be shorter term solutions while we consider/pursue the ROW.
 - The Town is also doing a technical analysis of Kenaware to calm the cut through traffic between Kenwood and Delaware. Speed bumps have been used successfully in Voorheesville, for example.
 - Police and the School District are discussing adding two crossing guards which could include training volunteer/parents to step in when guards call in sick, rather than police officers stepping in.
 - There was some discussion about individual Town Board members each attending a Committee meeting, recognizing Police and Highway representatives attend every meeting (editor note: they were not in attendance at the February meeting). It is preferred to have consistency rather than changing departmental representatives which has varied over the past few years. Maureen will talk to Highway and Police to identify a representative from each department.
 - The Town has \$170,000 left over for sidewalks. The Committee should prioritize with the Highway Superintendent.
 - The Complete Streets discussion needs to continue. DOT supports the Town's efforts to continue to pursue the funding for the reconfiguration of Delaware Avenue. By law, DOT must consider the 1:1:1 configuration. The future of Delaware Ave needs to be analyzed in the context of the recent proposals for expanded school walking zones. Community input is necessary and the traffic study will help. There is a March 14 meeting scheduled with State DOT (per Nate's email). There was a great deal of discussion regarding the input of the Committee in the prioritization of Town Highway's efforts with sidewalk improvements. Last year sidewalk improvements were not aligned with the Committee's. These priorities should be shared with Town Board in order to be supportive and influential with the Highway Department. Would be good to establish more transparency around decision making for sidewalk improvements. The Committee requests that the Town Board and/or Highway Department share the annual paving schedule with the Committee. In addition, at the March or April Town Board meeting, there will be a presentation of the 2021 projects and what is planned for 2022 projects.

- Town Safety Committee – meeting was rescheduled to first week of March. However, Skip reported they have lengthy list of agenda items related to complaints, most for speeding. Also, there is legislation under review allowing municipalities to reduce speed limit to 20 mph. Enforcement is the next issue.

- Highway Department – There was no representative in attendance to report out.

- Police Department – There was no representative in attendance to report out.
- Planning Department – Nate shared a few items via email.

Subcommittee Updates

- Safety/Public Awareness – Kingston is willing to share their entire traffic safety campaign program with us, including the RFP, to use that for our program. Committee is in support of moving forward. Speed reductions and crosswalk compliance could be used as measurable goals at key locations. Need to get this launched – real opportunity for the Town. We have the funding to do it. Provide Skip with comments/input by Monday.
- Schools – Committee members have concerns over the expanded walking distance. The School District is asking for comment by March 16. It is good to hear about the expansion of crossing guards and that the Town and School District are communicating on this. Recommend us tabling our input on this topic. There will be an official district-wide vote on this.
- Rail Trail Plowing – The letter was sent to the County. We have no response yet. Jen will follow up with a phone call to County Executive and report back at next meeting.
- Walk and Roll Fest – Connie will reach out to Officer Whiteley about the date.

Top 5 Priority Items for 2022 – Consensus is the Safety Awareness Campaign is a top priority. Everyone should brainstorm up 3 other priorities and we will discuss at the next meeting.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm.

This Meeting: Chair (Kristin Ackerman) and Recorder (Mindy Scott)

Next Meeting: March 22, 2022

Chair & Recorder: TBD