



**Town of Bethlehem  
Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee**

## **Meeting Notes**

September 27, 2022

6:30 PM

Zoom/in person

Staff in attendance: Nate Owens, David VanLuven

Committee members in attendance: Skip Holmes, Kristen Ackerman, Erin Svare, Steve Redler, Jennifer Livingston,

Public in attendance: Mario Chiarello, Robert Ellis, Mora Brusek, Cory Brusek, Michelle Young, Barb Blumberg, Gary Blumberg, Debbie Aloise, Jim Aloise, Myrna Gonzalez, Javier Gonzalez, Joan Sharlow

### Public Comment

*Mario Chiarello*

- Work to understand Blessing Road pedestrian improvements as a priority
- 2 inch shoulder inadequate
- Want to understand next steps
- Held meeting with neighbors
- Can help look for grants

*Javier Gonzales*

- Echo Mario's comments, walks dog on roadway to the park
- Asks Town/Committee to consider phased approach to improvements

*Mora Brusek*

- Concerned about safety
- Large number of single car accidents, likely most unreported, involve trees
- Near 56 Blessing – distracted driving/speeding
- Vehicle with infant in carseat, dad visibly shaken afterward

*Joan Sharlow*

- Where does Blessing Rd. stand in priority?
- Different lists
- Who decides?

General Discussion followed the initial public comments

- Nate described the different priority lists, focus on addressing deferred maintenance
- Skip and David added context to maintenance discussion
- Kristen liked the idea of isolating different sections as phases

- Group discussed the different sections of Blessing road and destinations – Krumkill access from neighborhoods, apartments and bus stop, New Scotland Rd.
- Group discussed speeding, crosswalks, school bus stopping on Krumkill, and attitude of drivers
- Jennifer commented on the reasons why there is a focus on sidewalk maintenance instead of new sidewalks – Town has obligation to repair/remediate. Committee doesn't decide which sidewalks are constructed – the lists are not followed exactly in order for various reasons
- Skip provided a brief history of sidewalk construction/maintenance in Town
- Highway superintendent chooses sidewalk projects with input from Committee and other Town staff
- Increase from \$50k to \$150k per year. Requested \$225k per year to get all sidewalks back into good shape within 8 or 9 years
- Risk to Town and residents with sidewalks in disrepair
- Comment about trucks driving on Blessing – David said he will follow up with Vista Development contractor about that
- Question about how long it will take for something to happen on Blessing Road. > Committee doesn't make decision.
- David summarized shifting resident expectations about safety and Town services. Provided example of Kenwood and recent pedestrian accident shifting expectations. Bethlehem is a luxury community – plow sidewalks, vacuum leaves. Focus on creative solutions
- Phases of improvements an option to look at
- Question from attendee about Town looking into easements and ROW, also wetlands and drainage issues. Town has looked into these a bit, but more research needed.
- North Bethlehem group is well organized, but not only neighborhood the Town is currently working with to address concerns. Brockely/Thatcher.
- Javier Gonzales - creative solutions could include deterrence for non-local vehicles on Blessing Road – divert them to 85.
- Question from Mario – why Feura Bush Road and Murray Avenue prioritized over Blessing Road?
- David and Committee didn't want to get into non-productive discussion as each neighborhood is passionate about its own project and has the same exact concern about priority. Why not this neighborhood first.
- Jennifer pointed out again that rank doesn't even really matter very much as a variety of factors play into why a project is selected in any one year – what other paving work is being done in area, crew availability, cost of projects and available funding amount need to match
- Skip discussed the Pedestrian Safety Campaign coming
- Ideas for Blessing: restriping to narrow lanes and slow traffic, lower speed limit, targeted enforcement on recurring basis to stay green
- Question what else could group do to further desired project – stay in communication and in touch about next steps

Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes – Approved, motion by Kristen, second by Skip. (Jennifer Livingston abstained)

#### Department Updates

- Town Safety Committee – no updates, did talk about Blessing Road.
- Police Department – No Dept. liaison
- Highway Department – Marc couldn't make it. – sidewalks in progress include Hawthorne and Winne
- Planning Department – Nate sent email update.

#### BCSD fall class start

- Walking distances – School district postponed these
- Walking routes- Hammagrael School – No update

- Middle School access at tennis courts – Town can't do anything if school district doesn't want to open the gate.
- Bike to School Day – Kristen asked about role model brochures, possible option. Skip said nothing much else committee could meaningfully provide at this time

#### Subcommittee Updates

- Sidewalk Maintenance – Discussed earlier
- Public Safety Campaign – Programs used successfully in major cities are trickling down to smaller communities like ours. Important to educate drivers about stopping at crosswalks, consequences of speeding, distracted driving, etc. Important to educate pedestrians too – headphones, dark clothing & time of day, etc. Consultant kick-off the next step – no details to report yet.
- Speed Humps – Skip provided some backstory on speed humps for attendees. David met with Brockley neighborhood residents. Fact sheet about speed humps finalized and being used to educate. Committee would like more clarity on the process for speed humps and whether or not we'll be using temporary ones first before permanent go in. Would be good to establish criteria or expectations and put on website. Other neighborhoods could start requesting and this will be important to have. – Nate will follow up on questions.
- Alt text needed for images on speed hump flyer.
- Tarrytown example of process for speed humps is good.
- New Sidewalks installed 2022 – discussed earlier. Elm Ave Park path in terrible shape. Can that be addressed? Nate said he would bring up with Jason Gallo.

Items for Fall agenda – Policy on speed humps, recorder position

-Note taking sign up could be attached to next agenda

Adjourn – approx. 8:20pm