



**Town of Bethlehem
Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee**

Meeting Notes

February 25, 2025

6:30 PM

In person and Zoom

Attendees:

Jeff Baker
Richard Thomas
Skip (Oliver) Holmes (Chair)
Nicole Cheplowitz
Sarah
Peter Thomas
Steve Redler
Jennifer Livingston
Elizabeth Vasquez (Zoom)
Dee Fisher (Zoom)
Nate Owes (Town Rep)

- **Public Comment** – Several members of the Community were present.
 - Question: Any plans to do sidewalk on Murray Ave between bypass and Elm Avenue? Committee responded that the Town is prioritizing sidewalk maintenance verses new construction. Not ruling out additional sidewalks in the future. Murray Ave does have a traffic calming project with a speed humps to help slow down traffic.
 - Comment: Question about sidewalk on Murray Ave to Elm Park to permit pedestrian traffic to the Town Park?
 - Members of the Albany Bicycle Coalition were also present
- **Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes:** December 2024 and January 2025 – Approved by Committee
- **Department Updates**

Police Department – No updates

Highway Department -No updates

Committee suggested asking for written updates from Police and Highway before next meeting.

Planning Department – Update

State Road Sidewalk Replacements Project

- Last week, staff interviewed four transportation engineering firms for design and construction inspection services for the State Sidewalks Replacements project and selected a firm. We haven't publicly announced the firm yet, but they are aware they were chosen.
- Unfortunately, based on our interviews of all firms, a common takeaway/thread was that construction start is likely to be Spring 2027. We will be trying to expedite the contract and ROW acquisition processes with NYSDOT as much as possible to avoid delay and these are slow moving steps. Even then the timeline is tight.
- Kickoff meeting with selected firm, Town staff, and NYSDOT scheduled for the first week of March.

Speed Limit Reduction Project

- Multiple departments met on February 10 to discuss implementation details. The GIS Coordinator inventoried all the speed limit signs in town so we expect to need to replace about 500 existing 30mph signs, but based on standards/best practices, we will need additional 25mph signs as well – more than double is the current guesstimate.
- We'll need assistance from a transportation engineering consultant to assist with locations for the additional signs. Requesting scope and fee from one of our TDEs.
- Staff is underway on a draft RFP for consultant services for a community education effort – somewhat similar to the Safe Streets Campaign but a different scope. We'll need several months of "this is coming" messaging, interviews with local TV/radio, and messaging through all our typical outlets.
- We'll also be contacting other municipalities who have made the change to learn what their experience has been and lessons learned. We'll incorporate relevant information or deliverables into the RFP before it's finalized.
- Police Dept. weighed-in with expectations on enforcement. Enforcement would begin following the complete installation of signs, then would begin based on complaints and traffic details and include warnings prior to writing tickets.

Path Updates

- Cherry Ave. Ext. – Current renderings/plans reviewed by Committee with discussion.
 - 5ft ft wide grass strip with curb to be barrier between path and Cherry Ave Ext.
 - DOT has approved the Town's designed traffic modifications/crossing at Kenwood and Cherry.
 - Trail entrance from Kenwood is slightly steep but still meets ADA.
 - Committee suggestion to add signage or sharrows on neighborhood streets to facilitate path for riders making their way to trail.
 - Committee suggestion for potential future connection to rail trail from Union Ave. or from other neighborhood connectors.
- Elm Ave Park Path – The Town Engineer has a set of design drawings on his desk for review so Town will be resubmitting drawings to National Grid soon and hope to receive their approval.

Committee Appointments

- You may have seen on the Town website or in your email that there is one vacancy to fill. We've received two applications so far.
- If you know a resident who would be a good addition to the committee, please share the [vacancy announcement](#) with them.

- Reappointments/new appointment likely to be made at either the 3/12 or 3/26 Town Board meeting.

Misc.

- Red Cross [blood drive at Town Hall tomorrow](#) - \$15 gift card for donors, spread the word.
- NYSDEC came to the [Planning Board's February 18 meeting](#) to give a presentation on the agency's new wetland regulations and permitting processes for wetland and buffer impacts. Click on the video link near the top of the above-linked page - presentation starts at 40min, 50sec.
 - From a transportation project perspective, this will be another step and potential cost we need to factor-in going forward.
 - If you have a wetland or what you think could be a wetland, I recommend watching the presentation or [visit the NYSDEC website to learn more](#) about the regulations and permits as much of the town falls within the Census 'urban area' boundary, which is a NYSDEC trigger that will require people to obtain permits for impacts to wetlands or certain activities within 100 feet of them.
- Sidewalk/path project map in progress -to show estimated timelines for projects, as discussed at the January meeting. Review with committee at March meeting.
- **Walk and Roll Fest Planning:**
Date: Saturday, May 17, 2025
Time: 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Location: Rear parking lot of Community Care (250 Delaware Ave, Delmar, NY 12054)

There is no grant funding for this year's fest. Grant money was used to purchase helmets for the kids. The grant was \$500 in prior year. The Committee discussed reaching out to bike shops to provide donations. Committee suggested Mountain Bike Program for Kids. Committee will reach out to this group. As soon as the flyer is ready the Committee will advertise it. Committee also suggested posting it on Parent Square the school district's platform. We also discussed posting through Schools Out.

- **Albany Bike Coalition Presentation:**

PowerPoint presentation was given to the Committee to discuss the Coalition's Bike Path Project:

- Target Audience: non-expert cyclists:
- Objective: encourage more riding by more people including those who resume cycling as adults -looking for low stressful paths
- Coverage Area: Border of Columbia County to Ballston Spa; Nassau (Rensselaer) to Pattersonville (Schenectady County).
- Based on Google Maps -so you can zoom in and move around to view the navigation.
- Problem Identified by Coalition: Heavy Traffic with Blessing Road multi-use Path. Concerned about crossing -markings are buried and jumbled.
- Proposed Solutions: Signage/Warning Lights, continue road westbound to Maher Road so that there is not a road to nowhere; Coalition is drafting a letter identifying concerns and proposed solutions; until these concerns are addressed the Coalition would only show the multi-use path terminating before this point.
- Proposed Solution: bike-ped bridge (ex. Albany Shaker Road near airport). The Coalition acknowledges the expense of this proposal.

Committee Responded to Some of Above: Town will be following up on signage. The Committee identified the challenges of getting warning lights -even when in the RFP they warning lights were not installed. As we build the network, project by project, it is hard not to build the path to nowhere (due to scope of project and grants). Committee encouraged the Coalition to include specific suggestions and specific signage to the Town.

Committee had questions for Highway about the project on this plan.

Committee member asked about things that can be done to change behavior to calm traffic.

Committee also asked for more information on how far up the hill the road goes before it becomes state jurisdiction. Planning will look at where the demarcation is. The Town would need a highway work permit to even put in signage at the roundabout.

Any major infrastructure would be a State highway project not a Town project. So it is unlikely that the Town would be successful in getting the State to build a bridge. Shaker bridge was a part of the Airport construction.

The Committee discussed the origins of the multi-use path and that the path was driven by the Committee in that area to be able to move around that neighborhood. Even though the connectivity was not great for bicyclists the project prioritizes the movement of people through neighborhoods.

Committee asked for a copy of the Coalitions' letter when completed. Coalition agreed to share draft letter.

- **Updates**
 - Sidewalk grant projects Cherry Ave update

Update was provided by the Planning Rep to the Committee. Map of the plan was reviewed by the Committee

- Safe Streets Campaign – may promote speed limit change
- Traffic Safety Committee – Community requests
- Sidewalk maintenance projects completed in 2024 -list
- Items for discussion
 - Sidewalks plan and schedule
 - Network planning map
 - Traffic calming
 - New business
- Upcoming Meetings
 - March – Zoning and Sidewalks maintenance 2025
 - Leading up to May – Walk and Roll Fest
- Adjourn
- Next Meeting March 25, 2025