

**PaTHs 4 Bethlehem
Meeting Summary
April 26, 2011**

Present: Dan Lewis, Henry Peyrebrune, Alan Via, Ann Mullaly, Kathy McCarthy, Kristin Legere
Town of Bethlehem Staff: Rob Leslie, Jason Gallo

Comments on March Meeting Summary

No comments on March Meeting Summary.

RPI Roundabout Lighting Study – Presentation

A presentation was given to the committee by Dr. John Bullough, from the RPI Lighting Research Center, on A Study of Options for Roundabout Lighting. This project is a joint effort of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). The focus of this study/project is roadway lighting and vegetation for safety and improved energy efficiency.

Dr. Bullough explained the current “blanket” standards of illumination from pole mounted systems which use yellowish lighting and compared them to the “ecoluminance” approach that would provide lower-level white lighting with passively reflecting elements like vegetation, landscape lighting, signage and pedestrian level lighting. This alternative approach would provide lower scaled lighting, use less energy and more efficiently target the areas of need, like pedestrian crossways.

Two one-night demonstrations are planned (sometime in June) for the roundabout at New Scotland Rd. in Slingerlands, route 85/140, to test the alternative lighting approaches. One of the night’s demonstrations will be dedicated to the study of “white-light” with emitting diode (LED) street lights. The other demonstration will study “ecoluminance” with landscape and pedestrian level lighting. Based on feedback, a final demonstration will be scheduled for the fall. A sign-up sheet for participation in this study was distributed the committee. Additional information or participation can be directed to Dr. John Bullough, 687-7100 or bulloj@rpi.edu.

Update on Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Initiatives for April

Jason thanked all for their input on the creation of the Safety Tips Palm Card and also thanked Henry specifically for networking and connecting Bethlehem Citizens for Pedestrian Safety with PaTHs, as they paid for the reproduction of the cards (\$574.92). The Town Board will acknowledge the donation by BCPS at the April 27 meeting.

A recent Spotlight article was also published bringing some more awareness to pedestrian and bicyclist safety as well as our created safety tips palm cards.

Rob – The Spotlight said they may be able to put images of the palm cards on their website

Jason – The Palm Cards will also be in the May edition of the Our Towne

Rob – The Palm card images will run on TV Channel 18 during April and May. The Capital Co-exist palm cards will also be aired on TV 18 in the month of May, as a jpeg image.

Henry – Will we be able to get the images of the cards in the Bethlehem Report or the Park Playbook?

Jason - We missed the summer edition deadline but will target the fall.

Rob – We can also target the Chamber Newsletter.

Anne – How about dissemination in schools?

Kathy – Do you want us to help distribute to the schools?

Jason asked if we each could pick a school to distribute:

Anne-Elsmere, YMCA, Perfect Blend

Kathi- Hamagrael, Cub Scouts group that meets at Legion

Jason-Slingerlands, FORT, Colonial Acres, Town Park

Alan-Middle School

Henry-St. Thomas

Dan-Eagle

Rob-Becker

We still need to reach Glenmont, High School (Anne Possibly), Bethlehem Children's Sch., Steiner Sports and Mad Dog

Alan-Farmers Market is another good venue for distribution.

Kristin – Will they be distributed at Town Park?

Jason- Yes, and at the Pool complex over the summer

A copy of the memo requesting assistance from the Police Department for distribution of the safety tip palm cards was sent via email to the committee. Also outlined in this memo were locations for crosswalk enforcement. We will check in with Deputy Police Chief, Tim Beebe, at some point over the summer to find out if they need more safety tips palm cards and the progress of their enforcement efforts.

Ann and Jason tabled the YMCA Healthy Kids Day (April 16, 2011). Anne was able to secure two bike helmet donations, one from Steiner Sports and one from Mad Dog. Those who came to our table and took information were entered into a raffle to win one of the helmets. At the event various bicycle and pedestrian information was disseminated on behalf of Capital Co-Exist, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy and the Paths 4 Bethlehem, Safety Tips Palm Cards. The event was well attended.

Discussion on Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club Mini Grant Opportunity

A grant opportunity from the Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club in the amount \$200, was sent to Rob & Jason via email from Oliver Homes, president of MHCC. A letter outlining what the money would be specifically used for needs to be submitted by Friday, April 29.

Ideas for the potential use of grant money included:

-Reproduction of more cards?

-Rent a Variable Message Sign (VMS) to display pedestrian and bicycle safety messages (duration: day, week, month depending on rental cost)

-Create a banner that could be moved around Town to be used during the Committee's participation at community events

-Place outdoor card holders on bike racks, which could store our safety tips palm cards or any other information.

-Purchase a "Yield to Pedestrian" bollard sign to be placed at a 5th location in the Town

- Revisit the idea of creating/reproduction the Bike Bethlehem Map.

Dan – We should develop a priority wish list for the future, this way when grant opportunities come about we are not scrambling so much for ideas.

The committee ultimately decided that the outdoor card holders, to be attached to bike racks, were the best option. For the amount of money being offered by the MHCC grant, the outdoor card holders would have the most impact with the ability to reach a number people at various bike rack locations. Rob and Jason will get some more information on the types/costs of outdoor card holders and prepare/submit a letter to the MHCC by Friday, April 29.

Albany County Rail Trail Update

Dan – Two Saturday's ago a work day was permitted by the county for the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy to do some preliminary work on clearing up the rail trail. Approximately 50 people volunteered for these efforts. The next important step is happening this evening at the County Legislatures Public Works Committee meeting, who is reviewing the proposed agreement between the County, Town of Bethlehem and MHLC. The Albany County Public Works Committees agreement of the Rail Trail proposal is required to proceed forward. It is anticipated that at tomorrow night's Town Board meeting, the Town will also decide whether or not to take action on the proposed agreement. MHLC has already approved the agreement. Dan asked others from the Paths committee to come to the next Town Board meeting, April 27, to support and speak during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Kathy said she would be able to go to the Town Board meeting and speak on behalf of the Paths Committee in support of the proposed agreement between the Town, County and MHLC.

Dan also announced that National Trials Day, Saturday, June 4, is targeted as the official opening for the rail trail.

Henry reemphasized his concern of Congress and their current approach to cutting back and rescinding on grant monies. It is dangerous to be sitting on the money without spending any of it.

Dan – My understanding is that the grant money cannot be spent on only a portion of the trail, rather it has to be spent on the completion in its entirety.

Alan – The 2.8 million that is currently allocated could probably open up the whole 9 miles of the trail for at least pedestrians. We should ask Scott if this grant money is a lose it or use it.

Rob – The money is on the TIP and at the next CDTC Planning committee meeting they will discuss opening up all bike and ped. projects for amendments/additional monies. Currently bike & ped projects are capped and you cannot ask for additional money for any unforeseen expenses. However, you can ask for more money for amendments to roadway projects, just not bike& ped projects. There is a current push to allow bike/ped projects amendments, just as they allow amendments to treat roadway projects. The rail trail would be an example of this, permission never was granted by CSX to conduct a full review of the rail trail property. Thus when they asked for the 3 million to open up the rail trail, that was all they thought it would take to complete the project. If they do lift the cap it could become a great opportunity for the County to reapply for an amendment and get the additional money needed to complete the trail.

Discussion on Education/Engineering Initiatives for May

For the next committee meeting, all committee members are asked to do some research on how other communities fund sidewalks and bicycle projects. Is it done through a dedicated town fund, paid for by developers, dedicated town budget line item, etc. When doing this research try to keep it to places located within the state.

Henry – We should check with the Association of Towns for best practices of other municipalities regarding this type of funding.

New Business

Alan – There is discussion about the Rt. 85 Bridge where trucks get stuck under, to bring the road up to grade and close the bridge. This would pose a ped/bike safety issue if at grade crossing is created.

Public Comment

The Town is considering changes to the Zoning Code. A proposed change related to the PaTHs Committee's work includes the referencing of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network, Complete Streets Resolution, and Evaluation Process for New Pathway Investment. The Code states the Planning Board shall consider the recommendations of these documents during their review of land use projects.

With the Rail Trail opening soon this committee should examine how people will access the trail and identify the improvements needed. Each end of the trail is awkward for access. A crosswalk at Oakwood Place (east end), a crosswalk at Grove Street (middle), and a crosswalk at Union Ave (west end) are examples of potential improvements.

Dan - Adams St. is another access spot that should be critically examined.

Ann – I see Adams being a very popular spot for trail access. There is a parking lot and being close to the 4 corners it has the potential for heavy use thus creating more safety issues.

Rob – The question that ultimately would need to be asked is who would fund these improvements / treatments.

Dan – If highway Dept. has any improvements scheduled for some of these areas, these treatments should be done as per the Complete Streets Resolution.

Dan – Also with the expansion of Veteran's Park, maybe as part of that expansion the inclusion of access to the trail could be included.

Adjourn

8:30