

**PaTHs 4 Bethlehem
Meeting Summary
July 28, 2009
Town Hall Room 101**

Present: Scott Lewendon, Henry Peyrebrune, Caleb Wistar, Stephen Downs, John Schonberg, Mark Lewis, Sue Kambrich
Town of Bethlehem Staff: Rob Leslie
Guest: Jennifer Viggiani, Dan Harnett (Town of Clifton Park, Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Committee)

Comments on June Meeting Summary

Rob asked the members if they had any comments or corrections on the draft June 23 meeting summary that was circulated. No comments were provided and Rob indicated he would post the summary to the Town's web site.

Guest Visit by Clifton Park Trails Subcommittee, Jen Viggiani and Dan Harnett

Jen Viggiani and Dan Harnett, representatives from the Town of Clifton Park Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Committee presented Clifton Park's efforts to develop a trail system throughout the Town. Jen discussed the history of the trail planning efforts in Clifton Park, indicating that it has been a twenty year process. Clifton Park implements trail projects through the subdivision/site plan review process, requiring applicants to reserve land for trails or construct trails and connections to neighboring subdivisions. They are also implementing through cooperatively working with the State and County on their roadways as reconstruction projects arise. Clifton Park's efforts are centered around working with willing landowners and providing pedestrian and bicycle connections to the various destinations (schools, parks, commercial centers, neighborhoods, etc.) in the Town. Their efforts are not centered on bisecting open fields or open space lands that do not connect to destinations. Additionally, as new sewer lines are constructed trails are located within the sewer right-of-way.

There was discussion on developing trails within existing sewer easements. Jen stated Clifton Park's experience is that sewer easements are specifically for construction and maintenance of the sewer, public access is not allowed. To provide for public access the municipality would have to cooperatively work with landowners to revise the easement to allow for public access.

There was discussion on Clifton Park's use of Park Districts to assist in developing and maintaining their trails. Rob stated that Clifton is able to utilize Park Districts,

which are special assessment districts, since the Town does not have a general Town tax. Bethlehem has a general Town tax which is utilized for its parks and recreation, police department services, etc.

Committee members suggested researching crime data, property values, and police activities of homes adjacent to trails, on a national level. Jen indicated that studies have shown that property values increase, crime decreases, and police activities are not affected by trails that are developed adjacent to homes. Rob referenced a Capital District Transportation Committee study that was conducted along the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Hike Trail that studied the trail's impact on adjoining residential properties.

Review Revised Draft Complete Streets Resolution

Rob stated that following the June Committee meeting comments on the draft Complete Streets resolution were provided from Committee members, and the Highway, Planning, and Engineering Departments. The comments were incorporated into the resolution. Rob stated that the revised resolution reflects the following changes:

- Text to describe the resolution's intent was added:
 - Bicyclist and pedestrians are equally important as motorists
 - Local low volume/speed roads accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel, high volume/speed roadways need bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Engineering section revisions:
 - Disproportionate language removed
 - Reference Town planning documents, PaTHs 4 Bethlehem priority network
 - Bicycle/pedestrian facilities (different than standard improvements)
 - If determined no facilities can be accommodated, written justification to Town Board
- Education and Encourage section revisions:
 - Town to encourage NYSDOT and Albany County to include facilities, where appropriate
- Enforcement section revisions:
 - Consider traffic calming applications as an alternative to bicycle/pedestrian facilities. Physically of psychologically calm travel behaviors.

The Committee unanimously voted to approve the draft resolution as presented and submit to the Town Board for their consideration. Rob indicated he would prepare a memo introducing the resolution to the Town Board for the August 12 Town Board meeting. It is anticipated the Town Board would take action on the resolution at that time. Committee members were encouraged to attend the Town Board meeting

Update on Existing Sidewalk Inventory and Current Sidewalk Projects

Rob provided an updated on the existing sidewalk inventory. Currently, the Town intern has completed the GPS mapping on sidewalks in the Town. The next step is to post process the data to correct location or alignment errors. Time permitting; the Town intern may have an opportunity to begin the sidewalk conditions assessment.

Orchard Street sidewalk and Feura Bush Road/Elsmere Avenue sidewalk are anticipated to begin construction in Fall 2009. Currently, both projects are awaiting approval by the FHWA.

The Committee discussed the Planning Board's role in requiring sidewalks during the site plan and subdivision review process. Rob stated the Board is familiar with and a proponent of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Town and requires facilities, when applicable. It was suggested that Rob keep an eye out for subdivision projects that may pose a need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Rob could inform the Committee of these projects and members could attend the Planning Board meetings in support of requiring bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The Committee also encouraged the Town to stay informed of projects listed on the State Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Rob indicated a representative from the Town Planning Department attends the CDTC Planning Committee monthly meetings as a member of the Committee. Rob can keep the Committee informed of projects on the TIP that are located in Bethlehem.

Public Comment

- No comments to report.

Adjourn – 8:30PM