

**PaTHs 4 Bethlehem  
Meeting Summary  
March 23, 2010  
Town Hall Room 101**

Present: Ann Benware, Steve Downs, Mark Jordan, Scott Lewendon, Dan Lewis, Mark Lewis, Kathy McCarthy, Henry Peyrebrune, Julie Sasso, John Schonberg, Caleb Wistar  
Town of Bethlehem Staff: Rob Leslie, Erik Deyoe

**Comments on January Meeting Summary**

Rob stated that the Committee last met in January since the February meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. No comments/corrections were provided on the January meeting summary. The January meeting summary will be posted to the Committee webpage.

Rob informed the Committee that the Town applied to the CDTC/CDTA 2010 Bike Rack Program for bike racks at the following Town locations: Kenwood Avenue Municipal Parking Lot, Veterans Memorial Park, Firemans Memorial Park, and Henry Hudson Park. The program provides 100% funding to public entities for the purchase of bike racks, up to \$1000. The Town's commitment is to pickup the racks from CDTA and installation. The final application was posted to the Committee's message board, and an email was sent to Committee members. The Town intended on discussing the application during the Committee's February 23 meeting. However, the February meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. Committee members indicated the desired locations for bike racks were valid. The Bike Rack application forms were also distributed to the Chamber of Commerce, who was encouraged to distribute to its members since the program provides 50% funding for private entities.

**Bike Expo, Saturday May 8, 2010 – Assign Committee Responsibilities**

Rob stated Jason was unable to attend tonight's meeting due illnesses in his family. He informed the Committee that Jason attended a Parks and Recreation Conference in Saratoga on March 21 and 22 and participated in a Bicycle Rodeo session. The information he received should enhance Bethlehem's May 8 Bike Expo. Rob asked by a show of hands who would be able to commit to volunteer at the Bike Expo event. Approximately half of the Committee members in attendance will be able to attend. At the April meeting the Town desires to finalize volunteer responsibilities. The April meeting will occur at 6PM to allow time for Committee members to actively review the bicycle rodeo exercise stations. The meeting may occur at Elm Avenue Town Park, and members will be notified of the location (Town website will also cite the location) a week before the meeting date.

Scott has had experience organizing Bicycle Rodeos with the Cornell Local Roads program (Lois Chapin) and shared his knowledge with the Committee. Scott reviewed the history of Bicycle Rodeos, which began in the 1970s as part of the bicycle safety education movement. At that time, not many bicycle safety educational programs were available to municipalities, so local Police departments were asked to provide assistance. Police departments consulted the Vehicle & Traffic Law to identify what was required by the law. Police officers taught exercises, including use of hand signals and developed rodeo exercises such as figure-eight's, circles, slalom courses, etc. Unfortunately, children were only learning how to use a bicycle as a toy and the rodeo exercises did not relate to vehicular-bicycle accidents. As a result, AAA joined with bike advocates to improve rodeo exercises to address the types of accidents that were occurring (motor vehicle – bicycle accidents) on roadways. The group discovered that the greatest number of accidents that occur involve children riding onto the

street from their driveway (in residential neighborhoods). Another accident occurs when a child swerves into traffic without looking behind. Also, behavioral characteristics influence children, such as children following the leader. Accidents occur as children tend to follow other children through a Stop Sign and are hit by an oncoming vehicle.

Jason will implement four new skill exercises into the Town's existing bike rodeo. The idea is to conduct the handle signals, circles, and slalom courses towards the end of the rodeo exercises. Children will participate in 4 new safety exercises prior to the usual Bethlehem rodeo exercises. It is envisioned that parents will participate and reinforce the safety skills at home.

A Bike and Helmet Fit station will be included to insure that both the bicycle and helmet properly fit the rider. Scott presented the following exercise stations (with an exercise location map) and their associated objective:

Station 1: Starts and Stops – To teach cyclists how to start and stop their bicycles safely and efficiently.

Station 2: Demon Driveway – To teach children to stop at the end of their driveway and look both ways to determine if it is safe before turning onto the street.

Station 3: Scanning – To teach cyclist the correct position to ride in the roadway and to look behind for traffic without swerving or falling.

Station 4: Rock Dodge – To teach cyclists control and balance, and how to avoid hazards while riding.

A minimum of seven volunteers (12 desirable) are needed to conduct the rodeo exercises. The Bethlehem School District Healthy Kids Committee can provide volunteers as needed and will have a table at the event. Friends of the Rail Trail will also have a table at the event.

### **Criteria Development – Confirm (3) Revised Descriptions/Discuss Remaining Criteria**

Rob distributed a Bethlehem Criteria for Pathway Investment Process chart that illustrates the process the Town would assume in evaluating potential pathway investment projects. The process includes the following steps: Step 1 – Screening, Step 2 – Cost, Step 3 – Benefits, and Step 4 – Leverage Opportunities.

The Committee had the following comments and discussions:

- There is a step before Step 1: Screening, which is to develop a program of projects to be prioritized.
- Projects that don't pass the screening test may be set aside for consideration at a later time and evaluated through Town studies. The bicycle/pedestrian priority network map would be updated on a continuous basis to reflect changes/needs of the Town.
- There are two different approaches. One is to actively develop a bicycle/pedestrian program to undertake projects on a yearly basis regardless of outside funding sources (as part of a proactive program) and use the evaluation process to rank the projects. A second approach is to only respond to a grant opportunity (CDTC, NYSDOT, etc.) and use the evaluation to determine which project to apply. The Committee favors the first approach, with a combination of applying for grants as they arise.

- Town should be talking about a network, and not just responding to grants randomly. Otherwise, you will have gaps in the network and residents will not be able to safely and efficiently travel to their desired locations.
- Without a dedicated funding source from the Town the program goes nowhere and is not proactive. Every year funding for the program could be set aside and the Town addresses the projects on the list in a comprehensive format. Similar to the Highway Departments process for resurfacing highways.
- Complete Streets Resolution passed by the Town Board identified bicycles and pedestrians as equally important to highway activities.
- Town working towards developing a Town Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Committee's work on identifying new facilities and maintaining existing facilities could be incorporated in to the CIP.
- The attractiveness of the process is that as opportunities arise you can mix and match funding sources (Town or grant).
- Important to add to the process chart the sources for screening (Town studies/plans).
- Consider interweaving maintenance projects with new pathway investment projects.
- Could be beneficial to develop a brief document that explains the pathway investment process.
- May want to incorporate how subdivision roads (as new Town roads) work into the process.
- The Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network map is important in the Planning Board's consideration of projects under review for subdivision or site plan approval.
- Town should monitor/inventory the dedication of easements accepted by the Town Board as part of the development of the bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Constructability and cost effectiveness criteria that was part of the Committee's original criteria list are now accounted for within the process. Constructability is directly related to the project cost, while cost effectiveness is accounted for in the calculation of cost/benefit.
- A comprehensive strategy is important, and the Town needs to actively pursue development of the network. Ultimately, the Town will have to review the bicycle and pedestrian network map that we develop and segment (identify) into logical projects.
- The benefits would not be calculated based on a dollar amount unit, since the benefits are non-monetary. Benefits would be calculated based on a point system.
- Geographic distribution could be evaluated based on whether or not a project has been constructed within 5 years (given term to be decided). For example, greater points would be awarded to a project in an area of Town that has not received pathway investment in a given term of years (e.g. 5 years).
- Committee feels the process, model, and criteria are far enough along where it would be good to identify projects, apply criteria and cost/benefit as a practice exercise. Convert the high, medium, low rankings to a point value, for next meeting.
- Weighting exercise needs to be further developed. Consider conducting the pair-wise exercise as a smaller Committee sub-group or with Town staff (internally).
- Identify 4 - 6 projects and provide to Committee to score based on guidance that they have now. Town could work on applying the points and weighting system. Ultimately, compare Town results with Committee results.
- Synthesize the corridors map and bicycle roads map into a single map to develop a Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Network Map.
- Table at the Bike Expo may give residents the opportunity to list out projects that they see as important.
- Provide Committee members with a handful of projects that include a problem statement such as population density, road functional classification, etc.

- Overall the Committee favored the process and thought it was helpful in providing a clearer understanding and direction.
- Desirable to update the Town board with the Committee's status on tasks that were assigned by the Town Board. The update could include recommendations that have developed as a result of the Committees meetings (such as undertaking a broader view of developing a bicycle and pedestrian program). The Committee's original task was to develop a bicycle and pedestrian network map and develop evaluation criteria for new pathway investment; however, the Committee sees a benefit for the Town to develop a bicycle and pedestrian program. Discuss with Supervisor an available Town Board meeting date for Town Board update.

**Public Comment**

- Dan Lewis announced Trails Day is Saturday June 5, 2010 at 10AM-3PM. Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy will conduct several activities.
- Cindy Ferrari questioned the role of this Committee and Safe Routes to School activities, specifically pertaining to the funds the Town received for Orchard Street sidewalk construction. What role bicycle and pedestrian supporters can play in assisting with the Safe Routes to School funding? There is potential for assistance from BCS Healthy Kids Committee or other parents/supports regarding the evaluation questionnaire forms that are to be distributed to Slingerlands Elementary School students once the Orchard Street sidewalk has been completed. Evaluation survey most likely sent out to students/parents in Fall 2010.
- School District should take the lead on programmatic approach for Safe Routes to School, for example walking school bus. Town could assist and support the School District with mapping (GIS) routes, if desired. Beneficial for non-PaTHs Committee members to promote to the Town Board the concepts of prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian networks of the Town.

Adjourned at 8:30PM.