

City of Essex Junction
Bike/Walk Advisory Committee
June 24, 2024
Staff Notes

Members Present: Philip Bieber; Eric Bowker, John O'Brien
Staff Representative: Michael Giguere - City Planner
Guests Present: Bruce DeBree - Community Member

A Quorum of members was not present for this meeting. The staff notes here summarize the topics of informal discussion among present members; however, they do not represent the position of the Bike Walk Advisory Committee as a whole.

The Open Meeting Law defines a meeting as "a gathering of a quorum of the members of a public body for the purpose of discussing the business of the public body or for the purpose of taking action." 1 V.S.A. § 310(3)(A). Accordingly, in the absence of a quorum, the gathering does not constitute a "meeting" and the Open Meeting Law does not apply.

1. Call to order – could not be held due to lack of quorum
2. John O'Brien to take notes for the informal discussions.
3. Minutes from the May 20, 2024 meeting- It was noted that Eric Bowker's name was misspelled. Minutes unable to be approved at this time due to lack of quorum, will be approved at the next meeting.
4. Comments from Bruce DeBree:

Bruce DeBree commented on the need for bike racks to be accessible and available. DeBree also commented on a need for bike connectivity to neighboring communities via bike paths rather than along major vehicle routes. DeBree also commented on noise levels across the city and wonders if there are means for the city to address that. Phil Bieber recommended adding this and another point for business items.

5. Business Items:
 - a. Chair appointment

Will not be possible due to lack of quorum but Michael Giguere recommended current members consider stepping up to chair role, also mentioned that the council is considering reducing the total number of members to aid with having quorum. Phil Bieber recommended John O'Brien as chair, spoke to reasons why. Appointment will be considered at the next meeting.

- b. Current bike rack inventory

Update from PB on current bike rack inventory project: Google form has been created for this project, EB gave additional details as to how the project was to be allocated between members, recommended that when new membership is established, committee members can split up the city into zones based on total number. Will revisit during the next meeting as a priority project with new members.

c. Location ideas for new bike racks

MG is looking for ideas as to where racks that are in storage to be placed in new areas: possibly Mac's Market, JO recommends expanding exposition bike parking as the city already owns that land. Public guest to meeting suggested a spot near Boxcar Bakery, MG gave insight into new development next to Boxcar that currently has bike racks in the plan. PB also recommended Maple Street Park as location for additional racks, possibly for seasonal installation and usage. MG also gave insight as a resident of neighboring city commuting to Essex Junction. EB suggested that this matter be considered during inventory of current racks, which JO seconded.

A brief conversation followed after guest Bruce DeBree asked about "traffic taming" in certain neighborhoods as another project for the committee, EB explained our recent UVM capstone project regarding the Grove Street Intersection. MG also brought up attachments to the meeting packet, specifically the Traffic Safety Toolbox.

PB brought conversation back to new bike rack placement, which will be considered during next meeting, possibly as a part of the ongoing inventory.

d. Brownell Library Bike Repair Station Update

Big thanks to Erna from Brownell for coordinating with MG and the committee for the successful and fast installation. JO suggested that the committee check in with the library about usage over time, possibly at our event. PB brought up that there is a density of repair locations in the Five Corners area, so that in the future the possibility of moving stations to spread a wider net might be beneficial. EB reminded the committee that local business also owns a stake in the station located on Rt 15 so that will need to be considered if moves are to be proposed.

e. Collaboration with Brownell Library for summer programming

PB brought up the Monday, July 29th event at the library. MG mentioned including the ABC Quick Check sheet (attached in meeting packet). General details of the event were discussed as well as what kind of info to cover. PB and

JO spoke to capacity as presenters at the event, but neither are authorities in bike maintenance so the event may be more tailored towards safety rather than bike repair. EB suggested obtaining the local motion packets for safety as a guiding point and handout. PB recommended that a formalized plan be created to ensure that the event is ready to go.

f. Connectivity to neighboring towns

Bruce DeBree spoke further on the need for a bikeable connection to other towns, especially for commerce. Mentioned how essential paths avoiding main roads are ideal for most riders. EB gave background into other projects that had been researched and planned but not implemented. MG spoke to the possibility of a countywide meeting of BWAC committees meeting for planning collaborative projects such as these. Lots of consensus between members of the committee and guest as to goals of the future, but timelines on many of these are long term.

g. Noise Level in community for walkers and bikers

Bruce DeBree asks are there any ways to bring the noise down? JO asked MG if new construction considers sound mitigation, but it is generally not considered when planning or designing new construction. Noise mitigation measures of the new downtown park were noted as possible guidance for other future features. Trees, vehicle count, other factors in noise discussed. Laws and lack of enforcement for car volume in certain neighborhoods were also discussed.

h. Library Event Planning

PB considered planning for 40 min to an hour of content, JO suggested a shorter block of time that can be run through a few times across the hour, possibly limited to 15 minutes so that guests can come and go across the session.

Points to include:

- Introduction to repair station
- ABCs rundown (possibly with handout included with meeting packet)
- Hand signal demonstration
- Helmet check
- Questions from the public

PB wants to have items on hand for giveaways for this kind of event in the future, the committee will consider purchasing supplies to have on hand.

EB brought up the potential for other collaborative events with the library (movie night) to both bring attention to the committee, mutually benefit organizations.

6. MEMBERS UPDATES - nothing to discuss

7. STAFF UPDATES

a. VT Walk/Bike Summit Recap

MG gave rundown of the statewide summit attended last weekend; Highlights included:

- Planning and designing capacities, which are generally not done for biking paths utilized for bike trails. Essex Junction can possibly benefit by analyzing areas that are underutilized for biking and walking.
- A demo project in Rutland for slowing traffic at a specific point that could be used for slowing Pearl Street traffic.
- Utilizing traffic measurement tools for vehicle and bike counts to see where the need already exists for projects.

8. READING FILE

VTrans Speed Countermeasure Toolbox

10. ADJOURN – could not be held due to lack of quorum. Discussion ended at 8:38pm