



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BIKE WALK ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
FINAL – APPROVED AUGUST 19, 2024**

*Online & 2 Lincoln St.  
Essex Junction, VT 0545  
Monday, July 15<sup>th</sup> 2024,  
7:00 PM*

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1. **ATTENDEES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John O'Brien (Chairperson), Eric Bowker, David Achee, Lauren Philbrook  
OTHERS PRESENT: Michael Giguere (Staff Representative), Susan Grasso (Local Motion)

2. **CALL TO ORDER**

Committee chair was still vacant, so Michael started the meeting at 7:08 PM.

3. **DETERMINE WHO WILL TAKE MINUTES**

Michael volunteered to take minutes and encouraged committee members to bring an electronic device to record minutes with for future meetings.

4. **CHAIR APPOINTMENT**

Brief personal introductions were given for new committee members. John asked Eric if he was interested in sitting as chair, being the member with the most seniority. Eric discussed the historical context of chairs appointed for the committee being the longest standing member. Michael gave an overview of chair responsibilities and expectations. Eric mentioned he hoped to stay on the committee until attendance and participation increased. Susan spoke to Montpelier's committee model, which rotates chair responsibilities every three months. John mentioned that he would be interested in being the chairperson as he plans on continuing to participate with the committee.

**Lauren made a motion to appoint John as chair, seconded by David. Voting approved the appointment unanimously (4-0).**

5. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

No agenda changes were made.

6. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

**Minutes from May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 were approved unanimously (4-0).**

7. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

No public comments were made.

8. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Bike rack inventory and new locations

Michael introduced the ongoing project of taking inventory of the city's current bike racks and determining ideal locations for the newly purchased ten (10) racks being stored with Public Works. Eric discussed the possibility of dividing the city up into quadrants, based on the arterial roads of Five Corners and having committee members take ownership of their quadrant. Susan recommended a community

survey based on work that Local Motion has done in St. Albans recently to engage with the public and get the BWAC name out. She recommended it as a tool to view overall needs for bike parking. Eric asked how long the survey was open, Susan said it was open for two weeks and then extended for a week or two longer with seventeen (17) responses and showed the map generated by the survey with detailed responses. St. Albans promoted the survey on social media and through the local newspaper.

John mentioned some immediate needs for bike racks, with Boxcar's popularity driving lots of demand for bike parking. David mentioned the parking ramp behind Boxcar would be an ideal location if there is not already a bike rack located there. The committee discussed the idea of doing a two-part survey to first evaluate current conditions before identifying locations for new bike parking. Michael mentioned that 17 Park Street has approved site plans to redevelop with bike parking included, though it is not an ideal location for Boxcar patrons. He mentioned it could be a good idea to ask ownership if they'd be interested in installing the bike racks that BWAC has purchased. David mentioned he's spoken to ownership personally in the past about bike parking and volunteered to reach out to them on behalf of the committee.

The committee asked Susan if she could provide the survey resources used in St. Albans. She agreed and said she'd be in touch soon.

David asked if there would be costs associated with installing bike parking. Michael mentioned that installation may need to be covered by the business, but he would investigate the possibility of using the BWAC budget for this. Susan asked Michael for public engagement through the city's communications team to drive awareness once bike parking data is collected. She mentioned that a web page with a bike parking map is a great resource with UVM having a great example to work off. Michael mentioned this could be integrated into a printable bike friendly map that he is developing.

**b. Collaboration with Brownell Library for summer programming**

John mentioned that the committee needed to finalize plans for a collaborative event with Brownell Library on bike safety education catered for children and parents. Michael mentioned that Brownell is expecting one (1) hour for the event and mentioned that families will most likely rotate in and out, giving the group flexibility to present shorter segments as people come and go. Michael introduced the event for new committee members and encouraged them to join if possible. John, Michael, David, and Lauren committed to attending and Michael mentioned that committee member Philip Bieber mentioned attending as well. John asked if printed resources were available, and Michael committed to bringing flyers on how to perform a pre-ride check. Eric mentioned that Local Motion has printed resources on bike safety for parents and asked Susan if those would be available for the event, which she confirmed. Susan also offered lawn sign-sized resources that could elevate the event. The committee asked for thirty (30) pamphlets and four (4) of the yard signs, and Eric committed to picking them up. John asked the group to arrive fifteen (15) minutes early to prepare.

**c. 2014 Bike Walk Action Plan**

John shared the 2014 Bike Walk Action Plan for new members to review. He encouraged the committee to review incomplete projects and determine if they would be worth revisiting and asked for new project ideas. Eric mentioned that there were many short-, medium-, and long-term projects that were added as a list, and meeting agenda items were based on discussing each project. Coming up with a new action plan was highly desired by committee members. Renewing Essex Junction's designation as a Bike Friendly Community was brought up as an example of these types of projects.

Susan mentioned that Safe Streets for All has federal grants available. There are two opportunities: a planning and demonstration grant, and an installation grant (which requires a safety action plan). The deadline for applications is August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024. She mentioned that starting with an updated action plan could be a good place to start before applying for grants to help fund demonstration projects and quick builds for committee members' projects. Michael mentioned that there may already be applications from the city for this grant to fund demonstration projects and would report back.

Michael mentioned the UVM resource on traffic calming measures that was included in a previous

meeting packet. He recommended using this while reviewing the 2014 Bike Walk Action Plan to ensure that the plan can be updated to meet modern urban planning standards. David asked if those resources are available online, and Michael mentioned where to find them on the city's website.

9. **MEMBERS UPDATES**

No members updates were added to the agenda.

10. **STAFF UPDATES**

a. Maple Street Park bike repair station damage

John and Michael discussed the poor condition of the bike repair station at Maple Street Park, noting that some of the bolts holding the base are missing, making it impossible to use the rack as intended. Michael mentioned that this is on Public Works' radar for July, but no definitive repair timeline has been given.

b. RRFB usage tracking

Michael followed up on a question from a previous meeting on whether rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) can record usage data, and noted that the technology exists, but the RRFBs in Essex Junction are not currently equipped with this capability. He encouraged committee members to form specific project ideas to know what type of data would need to be collected before moving forward with doing more formal traffic counting studies.

c. Updated shared use paths on Google

Michael mentioned that shared use paths around Essex Junction are displayed incorrectly as on-road bike lanes on Google Maps. He uploaded updated GIS data to Google and is waiting to hear back from them.

d. Bicycle Friendly Community renewal

Michael mentioned that Essex Junction's status as a Bicycle Friendly Community has lapsed, and we have a three (3) year grace period to reapply for membership. He asked Eric for more information on how the reapplication process works as well as the existence of application materials. Eric mentioned that a former committee member used to take ownership of this process and that the form takes quite a bit of time and effort to complete. Eric said he would investigate to see if he could find reapplication resources. Eric and Michael mentioned that this would be a great way to garner feedback on how Essex Junction could improve with regards to bike infrastructure. Michael mentioned that Essex Junction is one of four Vermont municipalities with this designation along with Burlington, South Burlington, and Montpelier.

e. Moving meetings to Brownell Library Kolvoord Room in October

Michael mentioned that meetings will be moving to either the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month and will take place in the Brownell Library's Kolvoord Room starting in October while the 2 Lincoln offices go through renovations. He mentioned that the exact meeting date is still to be determined by city staff and that the October meeting will need to be rescheduled to avoid meeting on a day of religious or cultural significance. Discussion was held with regard to the recent change to Act 133 allowing for advisory bodies such as BWAC to meet virtually if meetings need to be rescheduled.

f. Discussion on meeting length

Michael opened a discussion on meeting length, noting that Eric had noted in a prior meeting that BWAC meetings used to be an hour and encouraged the committee to determine what the appropriate meeting length would be. John noted that one (1) hour would be a worthy goal to work towards. Michael encouraged the committee to think about whether an hour would limit the meeting's ability to get through all agenda items, and David and Lauren raised concerns about stifling conversations with a shorter meeting length. Michael asked if putting timestamps on the agenda would help, and Eric mentioned that this could limit important conversations. The committee decided to leave the meeting at its current length of two (2) hours and continue to monitor the effectiveness of this.

11. **READING FILE**

No items were added to the reading file this month.

12. **ADJOURN**

**Lauren made a motion to adjourn at 8:29 PM, seconded by David and approved unanimously (4-0).**

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