



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BIKE WALK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
FINAL – APPROVED SEP 24TH, 2024**

*Online & 2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 0545
Monday, August 19th 2024,
7:00 PM*

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1. MEMBERS PRESENT

John O'Brien (chair), Eric Bowker, Lauren Philbrook, Russ Miller-Johnson (attended remotely)

2. OTHERS PRESENT

Michael Giguere (City Staff), Susan Grasso (Local Motion), Jack Evans (Local Motion)

3. CALL TO ORDER

John called the meeting to order at 7:14 pm.

4. DETERMINE WHO WILL TAKE MINUTES

Russ volunteered to take minutes.

5. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Michael added two agenda items:

- Discussing Local Motion's drafted bike parking survey
- Connect the Junction focus group invitation

John added discussing projects from the 2015 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, if time allows

6. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

a. July 15th, 2024

Lauren made a motion to approve July's minutes with no changes or additions, seconded by Eric. Vote was unanimous (4-0) in favor.

7. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

No public comments were made.

8. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Vice Chair appointment

Michael encouraged the group to appoint a Vice Chair and provided an explanation of responsibilities. Russ volunteered. Lauren made a motion to appoint Russ as Vice Chair, seconded by Eric. Vote was unanimous (4-0) in favor.

b. UVM Capstone Study – Fall 2024

Russ mentioned that Dr. Lens was interested in working with Essex Junction BWAC on capstone projects for an engineering class at UVM based on the Spring 2024 student group's excellent work. Eric asked what the timeline would be, Russ said they would need to start work by mid-September. Michael asked if the project ideas would need to be finalized for the students by mid-September, which Russ confirmed. Michael mentioned that revisiting the list of project ideas from the Spring 2024 semester would be a good way to meet this deadline. Susan asked about the possibility of extending last semester's project to do a quick build demonstration project. Michael mentioned that this might be possible, but the engineering capstone course is more conceptual in nature but mentioned that the City is exploring the possibility of taking on fall interns to do a traffic calming quick build study independent of this engineering capstone course. Michael asked the group if they'd prefer having Russ and Michael work independently on this project and report back to the group, or if a special meeting should be held to involve the group while still meeting the mid-September deadline. The group decided to wait to hear back from Russ and Michael on the timeline needed.

c. Bike rack locations

Susan presented a survey and map developed by Local Motion for St. Albans inviting community members to

share locations and conditions of existing bike parking. This was supplemented by a second survey that asked community members where they'd like to see additional bike parking. She then previewed a drafted survey for Essex Junction. She mentioned that combining both surveys into one survey provides difficulties, as it only generates one GIS map. John mentioned how useful this resource would be for the community. Lauren was concerned about the difficulties of data collection if both surveys were combined into one, as someone would need to independently map the second survey based on text data collected, which Susan agreed with. Jack mentioned that CCRPC had a system used for a recent survey that may work. Lauren asked why we had decided to combine both surveys, and Eric and Susan mentioned this was an effort to minimize survey fatigue in the community. Michael asked how this survey was distributed in St. Albans, and Susan mentioned that Local Motion and the town & city's communication teams posted a QR code on social media, advertised in the local paper, Front Porch Forum, and through word of mouth. Susan said she'd work on getting both surveys linked. Michael asked about next steps, and Susan asked if there was a timeline to work with. John mentioned the desire to launch the survey before it gets too cold, and the group decided to have John and Michael work with Local Motion to get a survey drafted for the September meeting.

Michael previewed site plans for a new development at 17 Park St that includes four (4) bike racks in an alley between 17 Park and 11 Park. Susan mentioned that there are national standards for bike parking placement, and Michael confirmed that the City's Land Development Code requirements for bike parking are based on those standards. Russ asked if this would use BWAC's bike rack inventory and Michael said these were separate bike racks provided by the developer.

Michael transitioned to discuss potential locations for the ten (10) bike racks in storage with public works. He mentioned a list of design review criteria that the City's Community Development team used to evaluate potential bike rack locations, including evidence of existing demand, proximity to multiple destinations, proximity to likely destination, visibility, distance from existing racks, available space to install the rack, and proximity to a likely bike route. He shared a list of locations that scored highly using these criteria, including the corner of Park & Park Terrace, the front of 11 Park, Essex Junction Market/Planet Fitness, and the commercial spaces on Park & Iroquois. Lauren asked about the size of the bike racks and Dero's website was consulted to confirm. Eric asked about the mixed-use building on 3 Maple St, and Michael showed the location of two hoop racks on the side of the building. Eric raised concerns about the constrained space of that location and asked about the dirt parking lot behind Firebird as a potential spot for additional parking or redevelopment. Lauren mentioned that most people would not want to cross the street if it could be avoided. She asked if property managers would be willing to discuss converting a car parking spot into bike parking, which Michael said would need to be a larger conversation with the property manager. John volunteered to start the conversation with the Essex Junction Market/Planet Fitness spot, and Michael volunteered to work on the Park & Park Terrace location before using Local Motion's survey data to inform future decisions for parking locations. Susan asked if the survey would just be designed for Essex Junction, which Michael confirmed.

d. Call for RRFB potential locations

Michael mentioned that the City is encouraging the purchase of another rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) as a part of BWAC's budget to improve the walkability of the City. Michael showed locations of current RRFBs on Google Earth and mentioned that the committee should be looking at existing crosswalks to install beacons at. He then showed a preliminary list of crosswalks that could be good candidates subject to review and approval by the City Engineer. Eric provided context for how the procurement process has gone for these beacons in the past, indicating that a running list was created with a goal of purchasing one beacon per year. He mentioned that Main & Athens was identified as a potential location in the past which Michael added to the potential list. Lauren and John mentioned personal experience and conversations with others about this crossing. Lauren added Lincoln & Central and Eric mentioned that this was explored as an option in the past, Michael mentioned concerns over drivers making a right-turn movement from Central onto Lincoln not being able to see the beacon depending on its positioning. Other locations explored included Maple & Elm, North & Grove, South & West, Hiawatha & Owassa, and Cascade Park. Eric mentioned that BWAC used to have a goal of doing one walking meeting per year and that doing a site walk to visit a potential beacon location. Lauren asked if speed limits dictate where these beacons can be placed, and Michael referenced the Manual on

Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) as the national standard to use.

e. Wayfinding project

Michael mentioned a desire to install wayfinding signs around the City to draw more attention to bike routes and destinations, referencing a new wayfinding sign near the Champlain Parkway in Burlington's South End as a good example. He asked for committee members to think of examples in the area to draw inspiration from and think about what could be included on signs for Essex Junction. Lauren asked if wayfinding signs would list specific businesses and how this would need to be changed if businesses leave, and Michael mentioned that signs could be designed with flexibility in mind, either with small removable directional signs or by avoiding referencing specific businesses. Russ asked if there would be different requirements if located on a state highway, which would need to be investigated further.

f. Reschedule October meeting

Michael mentioned that 2 Lincoln is undergoing renovation and will not be available as a meeting location starting in October. BWAC will be meeting in the Kolvoord Room at Brownell Library during this time period. He mentioned that Vermont Open Meeting Law allows advisory bodies to meet remotely, which the committee declined. Michael mentioned that they needed to reschedule their October meeting date to avoid conflicting with a cultural/religious day of significance. BWAC decided to move their October meeting to Tuesday, 10/22.

9. **MEMBERS UPDATES**

a. Connect the Junction – preview and focus group invitation

John mentioned that he and David were able to attend the Planning Commission meeting that included a preview of Connect the Junction, a transit-oriented development project that the City is coordinating with an outside planning firm. He mentioned that the Planning Commission seemed to be very much aligned with the goals of BWAC when it comes to input on this project. He mentioned that a public design charette is being held the first weekend of October.

Michael extended a formal invitation to BWAC to participate in a focus group for this project on Monday, 8/26 and provided more context for the project.

b. Bicycle Friendly Community

Eric did not have an update for renewing the City's Bicycle Friendly Community designation but plans on working on it.

10. **STAFF UPDATES**

No staff updates were provided.

11. **ADJOURN**

Lauren made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 pm, seconded by Eric. Vote passed unanimously (4-0).