



WORTHINGTON BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Monday, March 26, 2018 Meeting

Members Present: The members present were Mike Bates, Ann Horton, Emma Lindholm, Jeannie Martin, John Rist, Gary Schmidt, John Stephan and Kelly Whalen.

City Support Staff Tom Lindsey (Law Director), Darren Hurley (Parks & Recreation Director) and Celia Thornton were present, along with Council Member Rachael Dorothy. Also in attendance were interested school district residents Michelle Umali (996 Rutland Way, Columbus) and Danielle Downie (983 Loch Ness Ave., Columbus) along with Boy Scout Sam Cherichello, his mother Cassie Cherichello and Kristin Studabaker of Carpenter Marty Transportation.

Minutes from the February 26, 2018 meeting were approved. Mr. Rist, who had been absent from the meeting, abstained.

Selection of Chairs: Mr. Hurley once again provided an overview of the process for chair selection, how the process works and the responsibilities of both chair and vice-chair. Mrs. Horton then nominated Mr. Schmidt for chair. This was seconded and all approved. Mr. Schmidt then nominated Ms. Martin for vice-chair. This nomination was also seconded and approved by all.

Sidewalk Policy & Project Overview: Mr. Hurley shared that as a result of the Boards planning process coming out of the January Planning Session and the resulting prioritization exercises, in both the capital project and non-capital project ranking sidewalks came out very high. As a result, it was requested at the February meeting that the board utilize the March meeting to give an overview of sidewalk policy and attempt to frame some potential sidewalk projects that the board could consider moving forward. As a result, staff has prepared some information in two categories for this evening. Mr. Lindsey, the Law Director, attended the meeting to help Mr. Hurley navigate some of the existing policy framework and to answer questions. Afterward, Mr. Hurley will review some of the information provided in the agenda regarding the upcoming Street Improvement Program (SIP) and some possible sidewalk connections identified by the Service & Engineering Department. He will also attempt to frame some options the board may have for structuring sidewalk connections moving forward if that is an agreed upon priority.

In terms of sidewalk requirements, the original steering committee recommended the city change its requirements for all new and replacement sidewalks from 4 feet to 5 feet. While this change has not been made yet in the city's policy documents, it has been changed in practice and has been required based on that recommendation. Mr. Hurley spoke with the Planning and Service & Engineering Directors and asked that they move forward soon with the written policy change.

Mr. Lindsey introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the City sidewalk policy (as outlined in Chapter 905 of the City's code) and the challenges associated with changing it. He also shared how other Central Ohio communities handle sidewalk issues and fielded some questions from board members regarding private money being spent on public property, sidewalk case law, funding, and if there are differences between commercial versus residential properties in regard to sidewalks.

Mr. Hurley then steered the conversation away from policy to sidewalk connections. Engineering provided this year's planned Street Improvement Program. The mapping included in board packets shows the currently proposed streets for this year's Street Improvement Program (SIP). In-depth estimates will be made for streets on this list and inclusion in the final program will depend on cost, condition, priority, location and final plans. There are other streets where crack-sealing and rejuvenation will occur but those would not be extensive enough to impact piggy-backing bike and pedestrian improvements. In addition to the street improvement map, packets provide mapping illustrating some possible sidewalk gaps that could be considered for filling along with some rough cost estimates for those gaps. This information will assist the discussion about possibly using some of the 2018 Bike and Pedestrian funding, along with informing discussion about recommending an on-going sidewalk connection program, in Worthington. As with any missing sidewalks in Worthington at this point, there may be challenges with residents or other logistics along any of these connections that would require some political decisions being made to push them through. Mr. Hurley recommended the board consider the policy information Mr. Lindsey provided and decide whether the board wants to engage in further dialogue about sidewalk policy items, as this will likely be a longer process including some dialogue back and forth with Council and staff. The sidewalk gap projects could be more straight forward in terms of choosing the highest priority connections and recommending some or all of the Bike & Ped funding for this year go to those, and also whether the board would like to recommend an on-going sidewalk connection program and the allocation of funding to it each year. Again, this would require identifying sidewalks to be connected, the easy part, and then negotiations with Council and affected residents. One suggestion made by staff was to consider ranking them all and then any connection with 100% residents on board could be moved up to the top of the list for fully funded gap connections. Ms. Horton then brought up concerns regarding the construction at the Holiday Inn site and requested that if sidewalks were blocked, alternate paths/walking areas be designated or protected by the City for pedestrians during construction. Ms. Martin followed with the suggestion that the board make a recommendation that anytime bike or pedestrian travel is impacted by renovation that the City has to put a detour in place. Mr. Hurley promised to let the City know of the board's concern and to share the response with the board. There was some further discussion around that, prioritizing sidewalk projects (especially around schools) and the fact that the board doesn't think the current policy works since no new sidewalks are being installed. At this point Ms. Umali, a guest, said she and Ms. Downie attended to voice their concerns regarding safe routes to schools and parks, in hopes the City would prioritize those. For example, there is no safe route connecting Godown Park to Linworth Park to Perry Park. Mr. Bates suggested that the board recommend to Council to earmark \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year towards getting sidewalk connections completed. To loosely quote Mr. Norstrom, former City Council member, if the City had put \$25,000 away per year 20 years ago, we'd be done. If we start now it will be done in the next 20 years. There was then some discussion about how to pay

for it, whether it would stay as a cost sharing program. Mr. Bates suggested staff come up with a cost methodology- such as this much money per year would build “x” amount of sidewalks in “x” amount of years. Ms. Martin then said since there was no clear consensus on sidewalks, she wanted to read through the other top projects prioritized. After the reading there was some discussion and consensus around adding an improved crossing at S.R. 161 and Seabury. Mr. Hurley said he would ask Service & Engineering to put together some cost estimates. Mr. Whalen tried to remind the group that the Linworth Park crossing had been prioritized above the Seabury project, but this wasn’t discussed.

Board Picture: The board took an updated picture that will be included in the Annual Report.

Updates:

1. Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan – The Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan RFP received proposals from five firms. Proposals are being scored by a team consisting of Ms. Martin (B&P Board), Ms. Dorothy (City Council), Mr. Whited (Engineering Director), Mr. Brown (Planning Director), Mr. Hurley (Parks & Recreation Director) and Ms. Thornton. Interviews for the three finalists are being planned for the first or second week of April. Staff is also ready to start putting together the Steering Committee. If board members are interested in serving on the Steering Committee, please let Ms. Thornton know by Friday.
2. LimeBike – At the March 19 City Council Meeting, Council members heard a presentation from LimeBike and moved to authorize the City Manager to enter into a trial agreement to provide services in Worthington for a period not to exceed six months. Staff are working on drafting an agreement with LimeBike for the trial period and expect the trial to start sometime in May. After the board recommendation in February, where the board’s motion indicated a three month trial period, it became apparent in talking with LimeBike that three months would be challenging in terms of getting mobilized, balancing bikes once some initial data became apparent, and really assessing usage. As a result, the City is going to look at a longer trial period. Regardless of trial period, the City will have the ability to terminate the trial at any point with 30 days’ notice if concerns arise.
3. Safe Routes to School – Ms. Thornton shared that she, Mrs. Horton and Mrs. Lindholm had met with Worthington’s representatives from Columbus Public Health (Katherine Swidarski) and Scott Ulrich. They had given us further good advice on how to best proceed at a grassroots level (particularly in finding allies and champions in the schools who will keep the project going until it becomes institutionalized). The sub-committee is going to proceed with trying to meet with PTA’s and look for those champions.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.