



WORTHINGTON BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Monday, October 28, 2019 Meeting

Members Present: The members present were Mike Bates, Katie Burkley, Emma Lindholm, Jeannie Martin, Jordan Schweller, and Kelly Whalen.

City Support staff Darren Hurley (Director of Parks & Recreation) and Celia Thornton were also present. Also in attendance were residents Amy Lloyd (6693 Markwood) and Kerry McCarthy (5778 Hartford).

Minutes from the September 23, 2019 meeting were approved by all in attendance, with Ms. Burkley and Ms. Martin abstaining.

Northwest Worthington Issue Overview – Board Member Jordan Schweller: Mr. Whalen and Mr. Hurley introduced Mr. Schweller who joined the advisory board earlier this year. Mr. Schweller had indicated he had an interest in sharing some bike and pedestrian issues in his area of town, the Northwest region, with the board when there was time. He has been put on the agenda this month to share some of the feedback he has heard from neighbors and some of his thoughts regarding needs on the west side. Mr. Schweller shared the following:

- He feels there is good access to Perry Park but that getting to the Olentangy Trail can be challenging- weaving through Olentangy Highlands neighborhoods and crossing S.R. 315.
- There is a focus on redeveloping the Linworth corridor (shopping, restaurants, etc.) and even in the Columbus portion there is a lot of development and the construction of new apartments, which raises again ODOT's concerns regarding widening S.R. 161.
- He was pleased to see how well west Worthington was represented in the Master Plan. He referenced page 44 of the plan and noted that it was even well represented throughout the tier categories.
- The challenges he sees is the fragmentation of the west side. How does that get addressed? Potter's Creek is also a challenge because it is multi-jurisdictional. The high cost of projects on this side of town is also an issue.
- There are two parks in this area- Perry and Linworth. Perry is fairly walkable, but Linworth is definitely a "drive to" park. The overarching feel is that this area does not have the same amenities offered to the rest of Worthington and it has an entirely different set of challenges.

One of the larger projects is a path along Linworth Road. He would like to talk to engineers about how viable this project is and recognizes that it is basically putting a trail in people's front yards, which often means push back. One option he thinks should be considered, but is not sure of the cost factor, is going south out of Potters Creek to Hutchinson Alley and to connect the two neighborhoods that way. He had shared this idea with Sheila Fox, the Potters Creek Civic Association President, and she had expressed support. He also noted that City Council President Bonnie Michael is thinking about putting together a committee to look at concerns specifically related to this area.

Ms. Lindholm asked if the kids in this neighborhood were bused to Evening Street Elementary, Kilbourne Middle School and Thomas Worthington High School. Mr. Schweller confirmed that many were but also said some go to Bluffsvew (eventually ending up at Kilbourne High School). Ms. Lindholm wondered what the parental support would be for projects that centered around Safe Routes To School (SRTS). Mr. Schweller replied that it's not just a school issue, as residents want access to Old Worthington (Graeter's, etc.) and feels that the board needs to address the main challenge of connecting the west side of the city to Old Worthington. Mr. Hurley said the board will be hearing more about the bridge over 315 as ODOT repaves it and agrees we need to look at what we can do to chip away at barriers in this area. Ms. Martin said that in Salt Lake City, Utah, multiuse paths were being built along rail corridors because of the large right of way that exists. Mr. Schweller confirmed that this could get people into the heart of Linworth if it used the railroad track that borders Perry Park. Ms. Martin said any trail here would need barriers as a physical deterrent- but has seen these done with plants in some cases. She promised to email pictures to Ms. Thornton to share with the board. She also noted that most of these trains are passenger light rail trains and that constructing trails along railroad tracks will also put them in some people's backyards which will be objectionable to some. Mr. Hurley said he can speak with Mr. Whited (the City Engineer) and discuss these possibilities but also warned that dealing with railroads can be challenging and that in this type of scenario they often cite liability and aren't even open to discussion. Mr. Schweller said that just south of Castlecrest there is a sewer/water line and wondered if it would be possible to put a path on top of that since, again, right of way may already exist. Mr. Hurley said that he would speak with the City Engineer and get a 30,000 foot view of the feasibility of these ideas.

Safe Routes To School:

Mr. Whalen stated that SRTS is a big initiative for the board and has been raising in importance for the last few years. He and other members wanted to give updates on the following:

- a. **City Council / School Board Meeting** – Mr. Bates, Ms. Lindholm and Mr. Whalen attended this meeting. Mr. Whalen noted that this was the first time in 18 years that a joint School Board / City Council meeting had been held. Mr. Hurley gave a brief presentation based off the presentation he had made at the meeting that gave an overview of feeder patterns, Swim Inc. (which was the main agenda item discussed at the joint meeting) and Mr. Hurley's brief SRTS presentation. One of the larger concerns of the feeder pattern discussion were concerns about children crossing High Street. A committee has been formed to investigate this and is supposed to give feedback in December. The board will weigh in but don't have to vote. The point was made that as the schools create construction plans, they should consider how to make their locations walkable and bikeable for students. The School Board pushed back that those are City responsibilities. However, the School Board would consider putting a person on the advisory board's SRTS sub-committee. Overall there was no real action or consensus. Ms. Lindholm said she left the meeting upset because the School Board didn't seem interested in engaging around SRTS, but that since then there has been more

communication with the School Board and they seem more open to SRTS ideas and partnership opportunities. She is not sure that the district administration has any interest, but the School Board seems to have some and board members and City Council members are going to meet to further discuss SRTS. Mr. Hurley also asked that whoever comes from the administration or School Board needs to be open and engaged, rather than just attending to say they went. Mr. Hurley took it as a positive sign that there was as much discussion as there was around SRTS. Ms. Lindholm also said that City Council President Bonnie Michael had asked if the schools would allow the City's Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Board to give some feedback on new school designs before they were finalized and got pushback. Mr. Bates was frustrated that the School Board and City seemed to be on completely different pages. Mr. Hurley assured the board that staff will reach out to engage school representatives in SRTS and will continue to try and find ways to engage in facility plans.

- b. Sub-Committee Ideas for 2020** – Ms. Thornton began by reviewing that Wilson Hill has started the SRTS process and identified a representative. Evening Street Elementary also expressed interest after the presentation but we'd need to find the right advocate there for it to move forward. The sub-committee met again and would like to focus heavily on the education and encouragement portion of SRTS and work with schools to help them figure out engagement strategies, either districtwide or at individual schools. This might include regular walk to school days, handbook revision, education to parents and children on the benefits of walking and biking to school, AAA Safety Patrol reinstatement, etc. This is a low budget way to build excitement in the community and keep pushing forward. Ms. Lindholm suggested that a pilot project on Crandall, providing barrier separated temporary sidewalks, might help to see how many more children could/would walk to school. Mr. Hurley said that was something for the board to consider, but to also keep in mind that we know this is a contentious issue there. Therefore, the board might want to consider whether that's the first pilot project they'd like to try, or whether it would be better to first choose one we know can be more unilaterally received by the whole neighborhood.
- c. Crossing Guard Background** – Mr. Hurley shared that in the past the Police hired and the City payed for crossing guards, but that a few years ago the schools were told they had to pay for crossing guards, though the City still hires them. Ms. Lindholm wondered who decides where crossing guards are placed and stated that she thinks there should be one at the five-point intersection on Park Boulevard in Colonial Hills. Mr. Whalen's concern after the school board meeting was that he thought it would be obvious that if the feeder pattern changed forcing children to cross High Street, then a crossing guard would be stationed there. After the meeting he was not sure this would be the case. He would like the board to push for this from the City's side.

Project Planning for 2020 – Master Plan Review: Mr. Whalen gave some background on how project prioritization has worked in the past and the reasons for moving it forward from January to the prior fall. Mr. Hurley said the idea is that the board spends some time looking at the highest ranking projects in the master plan and projects listed in Tier 1, and start to narrow down options for projects in 2020 so staff can begin framing options. He then asked board members to review the Master Plan and email Ms. Thornton their top idea(s). The goal is to leave the November meeting with a pretty clear idea about where the board wants to head with projects for 2020. Mr. Bates stated he would like all prioritization to stay focused on the Master Plan. There was some

further board discussion around projects which ended with Mr. Whalen proposing that project prioritization be the only item on the agenda for the November meeting. There was a question from the public (Kerry McCarthy). She is interested in the Master Plan and wonders how the board decides what project to pick each year? Mr. Whalen said that the board chooses projects already prioritized with public input from the Master Plan. From there the board goes through a decision process. Ms. Martin said that the board tries to balance the city as a whole and bring equity to where projects occur (for example east side versus west side). The board also considers bundling packages for added value- such as a connection in conjunction with a crossing might have a bigger impact than either alone. Access to schools, parks and high value targets (such as banks, post offices, community centers, shops, etc.) are also part of the decision making matrix, as are continued resident requests. It's easier to complete projects in areas where there is resident support. Mr. Bates also referred to page 40 of the Master Plan. Ms. McCarthy thanked the board.

Update:

1. **Crossing Project (S.R. 161 and Pingree)** – Mr. Hurley shared that DLZ is very close to having a final design. Ms. Thornton has done a good job of making sure that all of the board's concerns raised at the July meeting were addressed in the final plan. The board will see the final plan. Council Member Robinson has also asked for DLZ to give a presentation to City Council on this crossing (background about why this project was chosen, explain how an RRF was decided upon, etc.) when staff come to request permission to bid. Mr. Hurley believes this is likely in response to neighbor's concerns.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.