



## **WORTHINGTON BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Minutes of the Monday, June 22, 2020 Meeting**

**Members Present:** The members present were Michael Bates, Katie Burkley, Rebecca Green, Ann Horton, Jeannie Martin, Brian Meilton, Jordan Schweller, and Kelly Whalen.

City Support staff Darren Hurley (Parks & Recreation Director) and Celia Thornton were present. Also virtually attending was bike enthusiast David Roseman and City Council Representative Rachael Dorothy.

Minutes from the February 24, 2020 meeting were approved by all in attendance.

**Visitor Comments:** David Roseman called into the meeting and introduced himself as an advocate interested in hearing what developments are happening in Worthington. Council Member Rachael Dorothy also called in to the meeting. She shared that she was disappointed that the board had lost funding due to Covid-19 financial concerns. However, since so many more people are walking and biking, she hopes that the board can still do good work to continue to encourage this trend.

**Swearing In of New Members – Rebecca Green & Brian Meilton:** Mr. Hurley introduced two recently appointed members to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board. Since this was their first meeting, he administered the Oath of Office to each of them.

**City Financial Challenges – Project Status:** COVID-19 has brought some financial challenges to the city in at least the short term if not the long term. Mr. Hurley provided an update on these issues and impacts to our bike and pedestrian projects and funding. The City's largest source of revenue is income tax. Pandemic business closures have seriously impacted City revenue streams. Therefore, all City Capital Improvement Projects not already in progress or mandated have been put on hold. This includes the McCord Park renovation and the \$100,000 for bike and pedestrian projects in 2020 and the unspent portion of 2019 that was to fund the Pingree and 161 crossing. Ms. Dorothy said that as Council tried to prioritize spending, she advocated for improved walking and biking opportunities, as they align with social distancing guidelines and safe recreation opportunities, but she didn't have enough council support. She would appreciate any help the board can give her in building support in this area.

**COVID-19 Related Increased Walking & Biking:** Mr. Bates began by saying that anecdotally he has noticed large increases in walking and biking during the pandemic. Mr. Whalen, who was unable to speak due to technical difficulties, had wanted to speak to this trend. Ms. Dorothy also spoke to what other cities are doing with this opportunity- closing streets to vehicular traffic, etc. Ms. Thornton added that MORPC and Westerville do counts, and the board could use that data to support the case of increased biking and pedestrian traffic. Westerville had reported triple the number of bikers than in past years in their count. Mr. Hurley opened the topic to board discussion. Many board members spoke to increased children outside in neighborhoods, on sidewalks and in the streets. The board liked the idea of starting their own annual bike and pedestrian counts. Ms. Thornton was asked to gather data from MORPC and Westerville and to investigate how those counts are conducted. Mr. Roseman promised to send her some information he had from Westerville's program. Mr. Hurley also believed there were some rudimentary counts done by DLZ prior to starting the Pingree Crossing project, so he will see if he can find that information, which could be used for comparison to current or future counts.

**Speed/Conflicts on Olentangy Trail:** Mr. Hurley shared that the department has received various concerns, historically, but even more so during the recent spike in usage about speeds and conflicts on our section of the Olentangy Trail. He wanted to share those concerns with the board and begin discussions about actions the board could recommend along the trail. The Parks and Recreation Commission also had these concerns. Mr. Bates shared that he had also received an email from a resident on this matter. The board discussed this topic and several ideas emerged. The main issues identified were not signaling when passing and speed, both of which become larger issues when the trail is more crowded. Ms. Thornton is going to research etiquette and safety signage options along the trail (including the use of tattooing versus traditional signage). Mr. Hurley was going to see if the use of stealth stat was possible along the trail. Increased social media was suggested as another method to spread the word about proper trail etiquette and safety. Also suggested was the creation of a Trail Ambassador program like one in Dublin. Mr. Hurley stated that whatever we choose to do, we want to make sure that our section of trail stays consistent with what is being done north and south of Worthington.

## **Updates:**

1. **City Street Improvement Program Overview** - Mr. Hurley reviewed the maps and information provided by the Service Department (included in packet) with the board as to what roads are included in this year's Street Improvement Program. The Olentangy Trail will receive some attention with potholes and bumpy pavement being repaired. He also noted Council Member Dorothy had done a nice job advocating for on-going analysis of these projects alongside the new Complete Streets Policy.
2. **Recent Safety Committee Agenda Items** – Mr. Hurley has been attending quarterly Safety Committee meetings with the City Manager and other city departments and is providing updates on what is on their agendas as it relates to bike and pedestrian usage.
  - a. **Petition for Safer Crossings at Kenbrook and Foster** – Residents submitted a petition to City Council requesting some actions be taken to make the area at the intersection of Kenbrook and Foster safer for pedestrians and children playing. The concerns center around high speeds of vehicles. In their meeting last Monday, City Council acknowledged receipt and referred it to the Safety Committee for follow up. Mr. Hurley

wanted to share the petition and make the board aware of the concerns, and to be prepared to give input if City Council requests board review. This is an example of suggestions coming forward with strong community support but that wasn't reflected in the recent Master Plan. It is a good example for the board to discuss how it might react if asked to move forward with a recommendation in relationship to other priorities identified in the plan.

- b. **Kilbourne Middle School Access During Construction** – Mr. Hurley shared that he participated in an Engineering meeting that overviewed accommodations being made for pedestrians during the upcoming Kilbourne Middle School construction. He was pleased that plans were in place to provide safe pedestrian access along the school property and surrounding construction throughout the project.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.