



WORTHINGTON BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Monday, July 27, 2020 Meeting

Note – This meeting was conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Members Present: The members present were Michael Bates, Ann Horton, Emma Lindholm, 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 City Council Representative Rachael Dorothy.

Minutes from the June 22, 2020 meeting were approved by all in attendance, except for Emma Lindholm who abstained.

Visitor Comments: Rachael Dorothy shared that the ADA was 30 years old this month and she was just interested in listening to the meeting.

Olentangy Trail Etiquette – General and COVID-19 Safety Measures: Mr. Whalen introduced the discussion by stating that the point of this agenda item was to discuss ways to improve trail use etiquette and increase safety for all users of Worthington's section of the Olentangy Trail. He also wanted to discuss whether there were COVID-19 specific safety measures that should be considered with increased use on the Olentangy Trail. Mr. Hurley shared that this same topic has been discussed by the Parks & Recreation Commission and they are glad that this board is following up and are happy to support any efforts pursued. Ms. Thornton began her presentation by sharing trail etiquette from Central Ohio Greenways and the City of Columbus. She noted that Columbus did reference speed at 15 mph, which she thinks would be the maximum speed we'd want to post. She did encourage that since Columbus is north and south of us Worthington should try and stay as consistent as possible with their verbiage. She also reminded the board that Worthington already has some etiquette posted at the West Wilson Bridge Road Olentangy Trailhead. Mr. Schweller asked if these rules have any teeth for enforcement purposes or whether they are more of a request. Mr. Hurley said that he does have the ability to set park usage guidelines as Director, but for them to be considered law they would need to be codified ordinances and approved by Council. Ms. Thornton pointed out that even if these were enforceable, there would still need to be police or MetroPark rangers monitoring the trail on a regular basis. The board agreed that really this is more about education and encouraging behavior

change than being punitive. Ms. Thornton then shared pictures of trail tattoos that have been used by the City of Columbus north and south of Worthington. Some of these examples are more long-term investments but some she thinks would be very useful if applied right now. In particular, she noted a series of three etiquette tattoos that Columbus puts at most of their major entry points to the trail that repeats every mile or two. The verbiage is: BE COURTEOUS / SHARE THE TRAIL / SIGNAL WHEN PASSING. They are put directly onto the trail using thermoplastic. She also noted other tattoos such as mile markers (which are already marked on Worthington's sections), directional signals, and other reminders, such as SLOW – People at Play. They also still employed a few traditional yellow warning and other signs. Using a map Ms. Thornton then showed seven locations where she thought the three etiquette tattoos and directional signage could be painted to assist trail users. She also shared where she thought COVID-19 signs would be most effective. The board inquired about the cost and ability to do some of this without a budget. Mr. Hurley said that if we can get templates/stencils from a company and if we use paint initially that could potentially be done in-house then at least the etiquette tattoos could be a possibility for this fall or next summer. Ms. Thornton also shared that COVID signage can easily be done in-house very cost effectively. Mr. Hurley, based on discussions with other entities, is not a big fan of lots of upright traditional signage along the trail for safety and maintenance reasons. However, temporary signage due to the pandemic he thinks is reasonable. There was some discussion, especially about referencing the dangers of headphone use and signaling, and the consensus was that the board would like some COVID signage and for staff to keep pursuing information on the trail tattoos.

Bike & Pedestrian User Counts and Trail Ambassadors: Ms. Thornton provided the group with information from Westerville on their Trail Count program. Ms. Thornton had spoken with Laura Ball, Westerville's Parks & Recreation Development Manager, and she shared information and insight on the program. In the trail count information, she forwarded she noted that they had refined and changed some of the count locations for better accuracy- so you'll notice that there are some areas where counts are missing. Ms. Thornton pointed out that in every single place that Westerville counted their numbers were exponentially higher than in previous years, so as Ms. Dorothy has repeatedly said, this is a great time to be advocating for biking and walking. If the board decided to pursue Worthington trail counts they should carefully consider locations, perhaps using the Master Plan as a guide, and make sure that we have volunteers lined up so that we can be consistent in gathering data from year to year. Ms. Thornton then shared information from both Westerville and Dublin on their Trail Ambassador programs. Ms. Thornton had spoken with Laura Ball (Westerville) and Christine Nardecchia (Dublin) about each of their programs. She did point out that Dublin has over 130 miles of trails and Westerville has 50 plus miles, compared to Worthington's two to three miles, so if the board pursued a similar program it might not need to be as robust. A common theme from both women was that their ambassadors are their eyes and ears on the trail and their job mostly consists of reporting behaviors, incidences or maintenance issues. They don't interact with trail users often and mostly it's in the capacity of giving directions or encouraging positive behaviors (giving Dairy Queen "free dilly bar" coupons to children wearing helmets, etc.). Both were firm that this is not enforcement. But it is a pretty hefty program that includes interviewing volunteers (not everyone gets to be a volunteer who applies) and they provide a lot of training to their volunteers, including First Aid, CPR, bike repairs, helmet fitting, police training, etc. For Worthington it may make more sense for this to be a more recreational program, or one that occurs a few times a year in larger numbers, than a fully developed year-round program as exists in locations with many more miles of trail. Mr. Hurley shared that at the dog park the W.O.O.F. group was run in a similar vein and it worked well to have members of the

public help model and mediate rules with other users, as well as suggest improvements based on observations, rather than everything just coming from staff. Mr. Whalen said he would like to see staff pursue the trail tattoos. He liked the idea and proposal for locations. He also liked the idea of the temporary signs along the side of the trail and thinks staff can proceed with this at trail entryways. For the next meeting he requested information on tattoo pricing. With the difference in trail mileage he's not sure if the board pursues the trail ambassador program, or trail counts. Ms. Horton said the trail counts wouldn't necessarily be on the trail, but in key locations around the city. The group discussed and thought that MORPC's Olentangy Trail count is useful to us and may not need to be repeated, but that using the Master Plan as a reference for locations based on planned routes could be helpful. Ms. Horton also suggested that we put directional signage along the trail to amenities such as restrooms and drinking fountains. Staff will proceed with COVID signage and will bring back price quotes and timing on trail tattoos.

Updates:

- 1. Safety Committee Follow Up Items** – Mr. Hurley shared the findings thus far from the temporary stop sign installed in Colonial Hills at the intersection of Loveman and Foster Ave. The stealth stat shows that the stop sign actually increased speeds by one mile per hour. The next trial on that section of road comes directly from the Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan- the Service Department is going to try a temporary chicane on the street. Typically, a trial lasts at least two weeks because the first week people slow down due to a new feature, and the second week they acclimate and return to normal behavior. There was some concern in the neighborhood about why residents of Colonial Hills weren't informed of the study. The reason is that this could skew the results. Ms. Lindholm inquired as to why the study was done at a different location than requested in the petition. Mr. Hurley wasn't sure but could try and find out the reason for the change. Ms. Lindholm also requested that at the end of the study the reason for it and the results be shared by the City with the residents of Colonial Hills.
- 2. Budget Update / Projects** – There has been no change since the last meeting, and everything is still on hold. The budget process for 2021 is starting. This should eventually inform if/when the Pingree Crossing Project can proceed and if other funding for bike and pedestrian projects is released.
- 3. Northeast Gateway** –This project is proceeding and currently there is quite a bit of large-scale utility work being done. The railroad safety improvement crossing project is also beginning. ODOT put out a contract to bid for the construction work and that may begin later this fall. The land acquisition process is complete.
- 4. Wilson Bridge road over S.R. 315 (bridge and fencing)** – This project is another casualty of COVID-19 budget constraints. It has been on hold but is expected to be picked up again in 2021.
- 5. Educational Topics (Bike Boulevards)** – Mr. Hurley shared that there are pros and cons to pursuing this in a virtual world. A pro is that if we can find the resources to develop topics, we can potentially reach greater audiences- at least it can be shared virtually with City Council and other City boards. Ms. Horton said if Worthington only has two miles of trails, then that means that much of the riding will need to be done on City streets so it's even more important that we seek to fully understand these treatments and their applications and share them with the wider community. Mr. Whalen was most interested in

education topics related to bike boulevards and pilot projects (and how other communities are doing them). Mr. Bates wondered if the temporary chicanes in Colonial Hills creates a path for us to try pilot projects on other roads and suggested making a side street (such as New England or Oxford) one way for a short time and use one lane for vehicular traffic and the other for bikes and/or pedestrians. Mr. Hurley said that if the board identifies a street staff can advocate for a trial.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.