



WORTHINGTON BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Monday, March 22, 2021 Meeting

Note – This meeting was conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams.

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

City Support staff Darren Hurley (Parks & Recreation Director), Robyn Stewart (Assistant City Manager) and Celia Thornton were present. Also present were Austin Mitchell (Vision Committee Vice Chair) and concerned community member Nick Noggle.

Minutes from the February 22, 2021 meeting were approved by all.

Vision Committee Presentation:

Mr. Whalen welcomed and introduced Ms. Stewart and Mr. Mitchell (Vice Chair of the Visioning Committee). They began the meeting by presenting the work of the Visioning Committee from the past year. Mr. Mitchell said that the committee consisted of seven members chosen by City Council, and six members at large. He said they were in the unique position of trying to envision what the future of Worthington looks like by reaching out to the community, finding common ground, and condensing what they learned into a viable plan. Community awareness consisted of advertising via signs, post cards, Facebook, city and school newsletters, This Week newspaper articles and in-person representation at the Farmer's Market. The committee then conducted data gathering via workshops, surveys, focus groups and a website. Mr. Mitchell said Ms. Stewart provided staff support and resources and acted as a liaison. He said she helped make sure that the vision represented the views of the community and not the committee. He then presented the data in an overview video, which can be found on the City's website at www.worthington.org/visioning. Mr. Bates asked Ms. Stewart if an implementation committee would be formed. Ms. Stewart said the next step is forming a steering committee to move these ideas from visions to actions. They will bring a formal structure to the process and create a list of actions to be evaluated, discussed, and implemented, and will work with City boards, partners, and businesses. One of the themes that kept emerging throughout the process was a desire for walkability, bikeability and multimodal transportation. Ms. Horton asked Mr. Mitchell to expand on High Street as a thoroughfare. Mr. Mitchell spoke about a thriving High Street and called it the

"Worthington Mile." The idea is to take the downtown core and replicate that feel and experience north and south of the historic district. Ms. Green asked them to elaborate on the comments around multimodal feedback. Mr. Mitchell said it referred to safer, friendlier modes of transportation on High Street, along with the ability to accommodate more walking and biking. Ms. Stewart said that at this time there is consensus around the big picture at a high level and that the task of the next committee is to come up with specific recommendations. Mr. Mitchell concluded by saying he felt that the Visioning Committee reached a good cross section of Worthington and has faith in the final documents. With the future projected growth of Columbus and increased interest in people moving to the area, he thinks this is a great opportunity for growth. The board thanked both Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Stewart for their time.

State Route 161 Corridor Improvements Update: Mr. Hurley said that due to some board turnover and recent questions regarding the S.R. 161 corridor study, he had asked Ms. Stewart to give the board an update. Ms. Stewart prefaced that this is a multi-jurisdictional study that includes multiple cities, MORPC, ODOT, and Franklin County Engineers among others. She first spoke on the S.R. 161/Linworth intersection and said that better bike and pedestrian facilities are planned for this area. This project is most likely to occur if the City can get federal funding through a MORPC grant. She is optimistic that the City will receive this funding, though construction wouldn't likely occur until 2026/2027. Right of way (ROW) acquisition could begin as early as 2024. She shared some specific design elements and said that a feasibility study for this project is on the City's website. Ms. Martin expressed that she had served on the original committee and was very happy to finally see some action in this location. Mr. Whalen asked why the Linworth/161 intersection was prioritized over the Olentangy River Road/161 intersection. Ms. Stewart said that Linworth/161 has worse vehicular traffic flow and that the Olentangy River Road intersection is just outside of the boundaries of this project. However, the City is looking at both intersections and due to Olentangy's proximity to S.R. 315 that project would have to be coordinated with ODOT to not impact highway traffic. Ms. Horton asked if Complete Streets was being applied to which Ms. Stewart replied yes and that to qualify for federal funding the City must agree to follow the Complete Streets approach.

Wilson Hill / Worthington Estates Walkability: Mr. Hurley referred to a letter that was included in board member's packets from Wilson Hill and Crandall residents regarding walkability and safety concerns. He wanted the board to know that the Request for Proposal (RFP) going out to engineering firms does address the letter's concerns and that a consultant will be able to help the board and City better access and address these safety concerns. He also reminded the board that this same issue has been referred to the City's Safety Committee and that he'll continue to share updates from them.

West Worthington Working Group: Mr. Schweller agreed to put together a group to address issues specific to the west Worthington community. He was unfortunately unable to attend this evening's meeting at the last minute but has started talking to neighbors in that area and may have an update at the next meeting. Mr. Noggle lives in the Olentangy Highlands neighborhood and was concerned about the crossing at Loch Ness and Collins Drive. Mr. Hurley updated him on the partnership with Columbus to improve this crossing and Ms. Thornton shared her hope that sharrows will be painted for bikers leading from Linworth Road through the neighborhood to the Olentangy Trail. Mr. Noggle thanked the board for their efforts.

Summer Event Commitments: Mr. Whalen shared that most events at this time are still "To Be Determined" based on the Covid pandemic, but he wanted to the board to share which they felt were the biggest priorities to attend. He said that the board's outreach is obviously constrained by

member's ability to volunteer. He asked members to spend some time thinking about this and that we will discuss it at a future meeting and ask for volunteer commitments.

Updates:

1. **Olentangy River Road Crosswalk** – Mr. Hurley reminded the board of the original email and participant at the last meeting (Mr. Falcoski), both of whom were concerned about this crossing. Since then, the light on the beacon has stopped working. The parts have been ordered but it will take some time to get them and repair the issue. This neighborhood concern has also been forwarded to the City's Safety Committee, as well as concerns north of that crossing. Mr. Hurley wanted to keep these issues on the board's radar and let them know that they will likely end up as an agenda item at a future meeting.
2. **161 / Pingree and Linworth Road Crossing Projects** – The 161/Pingree project is under contract and Service is waiting for a mast arm to arrive, but the project is still on target for early summer implementation. Both projects continue to move behind the scenes.
3. **Bike Rodeo** – The board has expressed a preference to try and make this event happen in spring/early summer, depending on Covid conditions. Staff will continue to work on this in partnership with the Police Department.
4. **Wilson Hill SRTS and Bike & Walk to School** – The sub-committee set a meeting to connect with Wilson Hill's SRTS group to see how they are doing, if there is support that our board can offer, and to discuss the possibility of a May Bike to School Day event. Ms. Horton also said the school is interested in installing more bike racks on school property and was looking for a Worthington contact. Mr. Hurley said they didn't need permission on school property but he's happy to be a resource for them on types and design.
5. **City Council Update Letter** – Mr. Whalen drafted a letter to City Council to give them an update on the status of the board, which includes its accomplishments and goals and priorities for the new year, both projects and education. Mr. Hurley will send this to them soon and will copy the City Manager and the board. Mr. Hurley wanted to give the board a pat on the back for how strongly bike and pedestrian priorities showed up in the recent Visioning process. While he thinks that has always been important to residents, he doesn't think it would have come through so strongly without the board's past work.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.