

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Regular Meeting, August 15, 2012

Minutes

Members in attendance: Eric Weis, Jenna Yu, Jef Nickerson [Jenn Steinfeld and Matt Moritz gave advance notice that they would not be able to attend]

Staff: David Everett (Dept. of Planning and Development), Sheila Dormody (Sustainability Director)

Guests: Katuska Perez from the Mayor's Office; Cliff Wood of Downtown Parks Conservancy aka Greater Kennedy Plaza (arrived at 4:45)

- 1. Preliminary administrative meeting notes (7/23/12) were accepted by the commission.**
- 2. The meeting place for the scheduled Sept. 24, 2012 meeting at 4:00 pm was set as the Aldermen's Chambers on the third floor of City Hall.**
- 3. Eric Weis reported that Cliff Wood would be late and that the agenda would be reordered accordingly.**
- 4. Jenna Wu gave a report on Valet Bicycle Parking. She said that federal (CMAQ) funding had paid for valet parking racks for 80 bikes and that it had debuted at FooFest the previous weekend, staffed by Recycle-A-Bike. She said that future events needed to be identified to introduce and use the service. The Lippitt Park Farmer's Market was identified as a recurring event that posed an opportunity and one with a special need due to the popularity and congestion at the market. Eric raised the idea of generating publicity through a media event.**

Opportunities were identified: the October 5 NE Builders Ball (handmade bike show) and Providence Cyclo-cross Festival at Roger Williams Park Oct. 6 and 7.

5. On the topic of “How to build a strong BPAC” Jenna reported on a teleconference about bicycle and pedestrian commissions and reviewed her notes (see notes at the end of these minutes).

Jenna raised the possibility of using Basecamp to share information, possibly using Recycle-A-Bike’s account. Discussion followed regarding concerns about conflicts of open meeting laws and the necessity of such a resource at this time. The decision was ultimately made to table the matter until a future date.

6. Katuska Perez introduced herself to the board and represented an idea put forth by Gonzalo Cuervo, the Mayor’s Deputy Chief of Staff: a bike day on the South Side of the city in September. The proposed idea would involve closing off Broad Street to automobile traffic from Thurbers Avenue to Prairie Avenue. Katuska said that the idea was largely based on events in Bogota, Colombia (Ciclovía) that emphasize bike use and street activities. The idea was further expounded on: bike shops and bicycle-related businesses, including Recycle-A-Bike, and vendors would be included and publicity would need to be generated. Additional ideas put forth by the commission included cycling safety instruction and explanation of laws, possibly through a representative of the RI Bike Coalition. Translation would be necessary for this and other aspects of the event (Recycle-A-Bike has Spanish language capacity). The eventual goal would be to expand the effort to other parts of the city. A discussion of the

challenges followed and it was determined that a list of vendors and participant organizations would be generated before Katuska reaches out to them. She said she will connect back to Sheila Dormody on this.

7. Sheila introduced discussion of how to best involve interested persons who might one day serve on the commission or otherwise offer a hand. It was decided that the commission should generate a contact list, starting with the names of those already submitted to Sheila.

8. Cliff Wood discussed the overall goals of the Downtown Providence Parks Conservancy or GKP – Greater Kennedy Plaza (it was noted that BPAC commissioner Jef Nickerson serves on the board), and a specific protected bicycle parking concept for “Biltmore Park.” The group is concerned with improving the image and safety of the park and generating more activity. Issues include cars parked in the park, including leases for up to four cars for NBC 10 and Subway. Cliff discussed a dog run concept and the need for multiple constituencies to get behind efforts to improve the park and make it more pedestrian friendly. The bike parking concept would provide 24 to 36 rented spaces for bike commuters to lock their bikes in a secure, covered, enclosed facility. Funding is available (up to \$50,000) through the Providence Foundation and a structure has been priced out. If implemented, the facility would be accessible via a swipe card system; exact rental amounts are not yet determined but the price would be very reasonable monthly. The amount of interest has yet to be gauged. This concept fits the “lighter, quicker, cheaper”

espoused by Mr. Wood and the facility would be easily moveable if the location was determined to be less than ideal. Local business support would be helpful in determining the feasibility of the bike parking proposal. Support will also be sought from local bike groups. Discussion focused on reaching out to major employers (such as RIPTA) and housing providers (such as the Arcade).

9. Under the “events” agenda item Eric Weis proposed (via “NE Distance”) an event celebrating elite local long-distance runners (some of whom are Rhode Islanders who participated in this year’s Olympic Games) that might be tied to issues of safe streets and complete streets. Eric will write a memo outlining the proposal.

10. Miscellaneous Discussion:

- Sheila: Whether or not City regulations about registering bicycles should be reviewed, revisited or enforced (currently it is an unenforced requirement).
- Jef: The Commission should address gaps in the City’s zoning ordinance regarding public access through construction zones (such as are in place in other cities such as Boston, ensuring safe and uninterrupted pedestrian access and mobility. It may be too late to make recommendations for the latest zoning revisions but the opportunity is there for the next revisions.
- Eric: proposed suspension of election of officers and determination of commission rules until the next meeting with a full commission present. The board agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50.

Minutes submitted by David Everett.

Note: Jenna Yu's notes (per 5. above) follow:

Dealing with Bike/Ped Commissions

Notes on Phone Conference 8/8/12

1st Speaker: Matt Wempe the State and Local Advocacy Coordinator for Biking and Walking for the League of American Bicyclists

Mentioned MAPS 21 "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century"

\$800 million per year nationally. Info at

http://www.americabikes.org/analysis_of_the_new_transportation_bill_map_21

To list a few things included in MAP 21...

Safe routes for non-drivers projects and systems

Historic preservation, rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures and facilities

Preservation of abandoned railway corridors including for pedestrian and bicycle trails

Wempe suggests giving proactive advice on bridge and road plans and not getting caught up in bicycle maps.

No political activities. No advocacy.

Analyze how decisions are made. BPAC groups should watch the way business is done in the city and provide innovative ideas.

Part of success is timing. Monthly meetings are good. Groups that meet less don't get much accomplished.

Speakers at meetings are effective and a good way for BPAC to get informed and inform others. Local biking and pedestrian historians are great.

Use staff time efficiently. Make work items that are short term and long term.

Involve everyone in BPAC meetings especially the people who are affected most by alternative transportation ie persons in wheelchairs, mothers with strollers, minorities, people who use bike trailers.

2nd Speaker: Molly O'Reiley of a Colorado BPAC Group

Molly's Quote "Traffic moves fast, transportation moves slow"

Molly suggests writing an ordinance to define the limits of the group and who will be the appropriate city contacts.

As an examples of the role of BPAC...

-All projects go to BPAC for comment before going to planning commission and the developer must be present at the meeting. This has been very effective in her experiences in the BPAC

-Address pedestrian access in construction zones.

Suggestions for BPAC members

- Understand sidewalk standards

- Separate biking from pedestrian, if possible, when dealing with projects because they are very different. Pedestrians make up 3 times more persons on the street (kids on bikes, wheelchairs, deaf, blind)

- A good chair can establish relationships with planning board and staff members and has time for meetings to bring info back to the group.

**-Processes that work include check lists, work plans, written reports
(recommends saving these for the end of the meetings)**

Next Conference Call...

Combatting the Myth that Complete Streets are Costly

**Conference Call | Date & Time: Wed, August 29, 2012, 2:00 PM to 3:00
PM (Eastern)**

• Registrations will close at Tue, August 28, 2012, 3:00 PM (Eastern)

<http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/EventRegistration-NoPay-Overview/4183/>

Notes submitted by Jenna Wu