



**Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission**

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**Regular meeting of the Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission**

**April 15, 2015, 4:45 PM**

444 Westminster Street

Providence, RI 02903

401-680-8400

**Overseeing Body:** City of Providence Department of Planning and Development

---

Members present: Eric Weis, Jef Nickerson, Matt Moritz, Michelle Cortes-Harkins, Jenn Steinfeld

Non-voting Ex-Officio members present: Martina Haggerty, William Bombard

Eric Weis called meeting to order at 4:51pm.

Eric Weis asked for a vote to approve minutes from March Commission meeting. All voted in favor of approving meeting minutes.

Eric Weis introduced the next agenda item: discussion of the possible Roger Williams Park loop road closure. Martina Haggerty informed the Commission members that the City is exploring the possibility of closing a portion of the loop road around some of Roger Williams Park to vehicular traffic on weekends. The portion closed to vehicular traffic would remain open for use by pedestrians and bicyclists. The exact portion of the road that may be closed has not yet been determined, but DPD and Parks are attempting to ensure that any road closure would allow vehicular access to parking areas.

Eric Weis introduced the next agenda item: ideas for improving pedestrian and bicycle conditions generated from the February Commission meeting. The Dean Street viaduct area, between Atwells and Promenade, was mentioned as being an important elements that emerged from the February meeting/public forum. Martina Haggerty agreed to find out the status of this portion of roadway from RIDOT.

Bill Bombard discussed DPW plans for the reconstruction of the Pleasant Valley Parkway bridge over the Woonasquatucket River. Commission members discussed the importance of pedestrian and bicycle improvements to the entire Pleasant Valley Parkway-Dean-Oakland corridor. Jef Nickerson suggested that all elements that have RIDOT components be flagged and that a letter be sent to RIDOT and the Mayor asking them to work together to resolve these issues. The Dean Street viaduct, Elmwood Avenue, and the connection to the Washington Secondary trail were mentioned in particular. The Elmwood Avenue connection to Roger Williams Park would complement the city's efforts to close a portion of the park's loop road on weekends and would improve access to the park from the Elmwood and South Providence neighborhoods.

Martina Haggerty asked that four additional points be included in the Commissions list of suggestions: automatic pedestrian signals in Downtown and at key intersections citywide, a work zone sidewalk access ordinance, a new bike plan as part of a larger multi-modal mobility plan, and a business guide plus possible incentives for local businesses to install bike parking. Matt Moritz suggested that a business guide, if developed, include a recommended style of bike rack. Michelle Cortes-Harkins suggested that the merchants associations be engaged in the creation of a business guide. Ellen Cynar suggested that the guide include best practices for bike racks to ensure durability and proper placement.

The conversation also included a discussion of the bike corral located in Downcity. Issues regarding the visibility of the corral were mentioned by several commission members. Bill Bombard suggested that DPW could install signs to direct people to the corral. Eric Weis mentioned that artists have expressed interest in installation to draw attention to the corral. Jef Nickerson suggested that the location of the corral might be reconsidered.

Michelle Cortes-Harkins suggested that the Commission think about better bike connections to the East Side from Downtown using Canal, North Main, Randall, and Olney, or Doyle. An improved connection to the Cranston Bikeway was also discussed as being a priority.

Eric Weis summarized the four priority areas for improved bike connections that had been discussed during the meeting up to this time. Those include: Cranston Bikeway, North Main-Canal-Olney-Doyle, Elmwood Avenue to Roger Williams Park, and Pleasant Valley Parkway-Dean-Oakland.

Bill Bombard suggested that the number of lanes on Pont Street might not be needed and that the City could potentially revisit the vehicular counts on Point Street to determine if that many lanes are really needed with the new highway ramp.

Eric Weis asked Ellen Cynar to discuss the Health Equity Zone grant and how it relates to encouraging youth to bike. Ellen stated that Year 1 of the grant will focus on an assessment of the opportunities and

gaps available relating to safe routes to the City's nine recreation centers. Ellen Cynar also mentioned that the City will hire a recreation opportunities coordinator to improve coordination with the City's recreation centers. Ellen also mentioned that she would like to discuss the HEZ grant and how the Commission could be involved in it at a future BPAC meeting.

Matt Moritz mentioned two existing programs for youth: the Woonasquatucket Rivershed bike camp program and the PASA program. The Commission discussed how those two programs might be expanded. The Commission also discussed efforts by other cities to work bike programming and educations into school programs rather than relying on volunteer programs like PASA. Ellen Cynar suggested that the City's new wellness coordinator could help establish these connections to our schools. Matt Moritz asked for an update don Safe Routes to schools in RI. Ellen Cynar discussed ongoing safety assessments around several Providence Schools that will be taking place as part of the Safe Route to Schools program.

Jef Nickerson mentioned that he would like to see the City work with the schools to move vehicular drop off locations a block away from schools to improve safety for pedestrians, especially children walking to school.

Jef also discussed snow removal and the need to talk to RIPTA about bus stop placement in the City. Eric Weis asked Bill Bombard how many violations were issued this year for snow removal issues. Bill Bombard replied that he believed there may have been about 100 violations issued and that they focused around school zones. Jef Nickerson asked if the City would focus on outreach to businesses in regards to shoveling sidewalks and not just plowing parking lots. Eric Weis asked if the City could direct more of its snow removal capacity to school zones and also asked who is responsible for shoveling school properties. Eric asked that the BPAC be given more information about the policies and resources related to this subject. Jef Nickerson reiterated that the commission needs a comprehensive analysis of the snow removal resources, policies, and plans for City and State roads and properties, including schools to help the commission better understand the priorities and decisions made around this issue. Jen Steinfeld suggested that an analysis of this type might lead to clarity regarding responsibilities for timely snow removal by the City and State.

Eric Weis changed the topic of conversation to automatic crosswalk signals and requested that the City explore ways to phase in automatic signals citywide. Bill Bombard cautioned that automatic pedestrian signals could lead to frustration from drivers. Matt Moritz suggested that the level of service for pedestrians be recognized by the City as being equally important as the level of service for cars. Several members of the Commission suggested that there was a lot of frustration form pedestrians that do not trust the pedestrian signals to work or are frustrated with the timing of the signals. Martina Haggerty asked Bill Bombard if the City could try to pilot automatic pedestrian signals in a few areas of the City to

see how it works. Eric Weis mentioned that Nate Urso from DPW had mentioned the possibility of this for Broadway and asked Bill Bombard to check on the status of this. Martina Haggerty mentioned that automatic pedestrian signals would better align efforts with the Complete Streets resolution and help the City better balance all modes of transportation safely. Jef Nickerson asked that the City also assess the need for traffic lights at all intersections and suggested that some traffic lights could be replaced with stop signs to improve safety and behavior by vehicles.

Eric Weis suggested that, due to time constraints, if in depth discussion of the final agenda item (review of DPW plans) was needed, that those discussions be held until the next Commission meeting. The Commission then discussed the list of DPW re-pavement and restriping plans for the coming year.

The meeting adjourned at 6:17 pm.

---

Respectfully submitted by Martina Haggerty.