



Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Regular meeting of the Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

June 17, 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, Laura Bozzi

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

Eric Weis called the meeting to order at 4:46 pm.

New Commission member Laura Bozzi introduced herself to the Commission and gave a brief overview of her interests and experiences as they relate to the Commission.

Eric Weis asked for motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Commission's April meeting. Jef Nickerson made a motion to approve. Matt Moritz seconded. All voted in favor.

Alex Krogh-Grabbe introduced himself to the Commission as a new staff member to RI Bicycle Coalition and gave a brief overview of the Coalition's goals as they relate to Providence and the Commission.

Martina Haggerty informed the Commission that the City and the Diocese have been working together to fund the construction of ADA ramps, a crosswalk, and signage across Dave Gavitt Way at Westminster Street. The Diocese will pay for the construction of the ramps and the City will pay for the striping and signage. Construction is expected to begin this summer. Jef Nickerson asked if City would consider eliminating a travel on Dave Gavitt Way to create a metered parking lane. Martina Haggerty and Bill Bombard agreed to continue conversations about that idea.

Eric Weis asked Dan Baudouin, the Executive Director of the Providence Foundation, to discuss the next agenda item, improved bicycle connections between Providence Place Mall and the East Bay Bike Path. Mr. Baudouin stated that RIDOT had reached out to him to discuss the lack of connectivity between the Mall and the EBBP. Jef Nickerson stated that he thought that a usable bicycle connection already exists there, aside from a gap between Park Row and Washington Place. Eric Weis mentioned that as part of Bike Plan, VHB explored the possibility of Canal street being reduced to accommodate a separated bike lane along the left side of the street between Smith and Steeple. Mr. Weis suggested that this may be a good time to explore making that connection a reality since RIDOT leadership seems to have an interest in making improvements there. Mr. Weis also reminded Bill Bombard that he had mentioned the possibility of the number of travel lanes on Point Street being reduced to accommodate a bike lane at a previous Commission meeting. Martina Haggerty asked Mr. Bombard if he had looked at traffic counts on Point Street to see if this would be possible and suggested that discussion of this be added to the agenda for the next Commission meeting. Eric Weis suggested that the Commission speak with RIDOT further about how they could help advance implementation of the Canal Street improvements previously mentioned. Martina Haggerty suggested that the Commission invite RIDOT to a future Commission meeting to discuss this and other improvements such as bike lanes on Elmwood Avenue and bike infrastructure improvements to the Dean Street overpass between Pleasant Valley Parkway and Atwells Avenue.

Jef Nickerson mentioned that the connection to Promenade from the rear of the Mall is also poor. Eric Weis suggested that we set up a meeting between the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, the City, and RIDOT to discuss work that WRWC has done to date to study possible improvements to this connection and how the City and RIDOT could move these improvements forward.

Laura Bozzi suggested that it would be beneficial to consider reframing this issue to focus on how to improve connections between the two bike paths rather than connections to the Mall. Ellen Cynar pointed out that the Mall is a large job center in the City so connections to the Mall are important. Michelle Cortes-Harkins asked if bike parking existed at the Mall for employees. Commission members agreed that bike parking should be increased at the Mall, especially if bike access improvements are being made to the surrounding area.

Eric Weis asked if there were any planned pedestrian improvements to the Memorial-Francis intersection. Bill Bombard replied that pavement marking, crosswalk, and signal improvements are being planned for this intersection.

Martina Haggerty introduced Leah Bamberger, the City's new Director of Sustainability as another Ex-Officio member of the Commission.

Eric Weis introduced the last agenda item, the Health Equity Zone (HEZ) grant currently being administered by the City's Office of Healthy Communities. Ellen Cynar from the Office of Healthy Communities discussed the City's efforts to improve participation in the recreation centers, focusing on a half mile catchment area around each. The City will look at opportunity for programming and physical and social barriers to participation at the recreation centers. There is potential for mapping of those barriers. The first year of the HEZ grant will focus on assessment. A Recreation Action Plan will be completed by end of April in coordination with many partner organizations. Conversation then shifted to the age groups that are typically involved in recreation center programs and ways that the City could increase the involvement of female youth. Ms. Cynar discussed the City's Working on communication strategies to increase awareness of activities and events available at rec. centers to surrounding community members. Eric Wes discussed the need for heavier enforcement of sidewalk shoveling around rec. centers and the possibility of piloting automatic pedestrian crossing signals in these areas. Mr. Weis also asked Ms. Cynar if the City would be looking at programming at the recreation centers. Ms. Cynar replied that programming would be assessed and suggested that the Commission weigh in on programming efforts as HEZ grant work continues. Leah Bamberger urged city to consider other bike-related programming at the rec. centers such as mountain biking. Jef Nickerson suggested that city also consider cross-fit type programming for the rec. centers to engage youth. Ms. Bamberger and Mr. Weis discussed opportunities that might exist to improve programming, outreach, engagement specifically for female youth around biking activities.

The meeting adjourned at 5:49pm.

Respectfully submitted by Martina Haggerty.