

Weston Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission Special Meeting

(in lieu of cancelled February 2nd meeting due to snow)

Wednesday February 16th, 2011 Weston Town Hall Commission Room

Members Present: Louise Hastings, Ray Rauth (Chairman), Julie Sidhu (Recording) Absent: Jon Howell

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Ray Rauth at 12:20p.m

Chairman's Remarks: Ray Rauth began the meeting by reviewing the Vulnerable Users Law proposed by Sen. Beth Bye (5th Dist.) The law would seek to provide and/or increase penalties for causing harm to, or death of, a vulnerable user of a public way. These persons include, pedestrians, highway worker, a person riding an animal, cyclist or a person using a skateboard, roller skates or inline skates., a person using a wheelchair, including motorized, and a person riding or driving farm tractor or implement.

Ray also noted that we should be aware that a new position of Non-Motorized Transportation (Bikes / Pedestrians) Coordinator was announced by the DOT. The position will be filled by Kate Rattan, a transportation planner at Conn DOT. David Balzer, who held the position of Bike/Pedestrian Coordinator for ten years, will assume enlarged duties in the commuter program.

Ray noted that Sound Cyclists suggested using Public Service Announcements to raise public awareness of bike/pedestrian issues and that The South West Region Planning Agency (SWRPA) were interested in our commission and its goals and progress with a view to encouraging other towns to form the same.

Loss of Commission Members: Ray expressed concern regarding the resignation of Allison Robbins, Ruth Glazier and Eric Tyson from the commission and asked what he could do to be more supportive of commission members. Louise and Julie both expressed the opinion that perhaps the scope of the commission was not fully understood by volunteers and the amount of background information needed for commission members to acquire in the early stages before embarking on projects was overwhelming for people who perhaps just want an assignment to do and then move on to the next task. All three commission members present acknowledged that they viewed the mission of the group as a long term commitment to the town and that some projects and progress may be attained in a relatively short time span, whilst most may take many months, even years.

Approval of Agenda: N/A - Special Meeting

Approval of Minutes of January Meeting-: Approved by Louise Hastings, Seconded by Ray Rauth

Chairman Rauth asked what our forthcoming agenda is and do we want to continue with the strategic plan put forth earlier? Louise and Julie suggested that the earlier blueprint be shelved pending new commission members and a more clearly evolving mission as we gain knowledge of the town's needs, local and state laws, federal programs etc. A discussion ensued regarding what constitutes a community when the nature of the town is somewhat transient and school driven, especially if that town has no public

transportation and is difficult to get around if you are not a driver. Julie noted that a community embraces all and that town events such as the Memorial Day Weekend Activities show cased this. As a past director of the Memorial Weekend 5K road race and children's Fun Run, Julie expressed her wish that a health walk could be added to that program. Louise and Ray both thought this would be an ideal opportunity to involve community members of all ages. As Julie has already connected with the new directors and other committee members, she will pursue this idea with the WHS PTO Road Race Directors.

Reports:

Jon will share his report at the next meeting. (Signage) Ray noted that parts of Rt. 53 & 57 in Weston have been designated officially on the Connecticut Bike Map as Cross State Routes and that he has a map locating signs already on these roads. It is thought that perhaps the commission can help get "Share The Road" signs added to these existing posts (the state designates where and when new signposts can be added). Joe Lametta, Director of Public works was invited to speak to the commission; however the recent snow issues have prevented this. Joe has been invited to speak at the March meeting. (To be confirmed by Julie). Ray has a contact from the town of Glastonbury who has researched and bought signage. Chief of Police, John Troxell, is also involved with the Traffic Control Authority and might be a resource. John F. Carey, Manager of Traffic Engineering for the State of CT. would also be willing to meet with us re signage.

Safe Routes to School and Sidewalk project: Louise Hastings

Louise reported that a grant application is in progress and that the first part of the application process regarding the needs and nature of the school and town is being worked on by Nadine Kearns PTO Chair of WIS. The application is expected to be completed by mid march. Louise noted that the fact that the Senior Center is on the school campus and that Weston Middle School has been designated as an emergency shelter can only help the application. Louise will keep the commission abreast of progress.

Laws: Julie Sidhu: Julie continues to learn more about local and state laws and suggested that we try to see if we could make more people aware of some of the laws regarding pedestrian and cyclist safety by reaching out to the town of Weston's Public School Health Education program. As a certified Ct. Teacher, Julie said she would be happy to co-ordinate a program with health teachers. Ray noted that there is a Bike Walk Connecticut education program with an educator trainer, Beth Emory. Ray will make the introduction and Julie will follow up with Beth re education programs before approaching school officials. Louise expressed interest in this program too.

Valley Forge/School Road Summer Closings: Tabled

New Commission Members: Ray will talk to First Selectman Gayle Weinstein re appointments and follow up regarding recent resignations.

Next Meeting: Wednesday March 2nd 12:30p.m Commission Room, Weston, Town Hall.

Special Meeting adjourned 2 p.m.

