

Minutes of Weston Bicycle/Pedestrian Commission Meeting - December 2nd 2010

Weston Town Hall Commission Room

Members Present: Ruth Glazer, Louise Hastings, Jon Howell, Julie Sidhu (Recording), Ray Rauth (Chairman), Allison Robbins, Eric Tyson.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Ray Rauth at 12: 35p.m

Chairman Ray Rauth invited First Selectman Gayle Weinstein to address the meeting. Ms. Weinstein welcomed the members and expressed the town's interest in the commission's goals and her own concerns regarding walking and cycling in Weston. Ms. Weinstein also updated the group on current state and federal funding available to the town, albeit noting that some of these are long term projects (30 years) but worthy of a serious town application.

Introductions: The newly formed commission members were then invited to formally introduce themselves to each other.

Notes From the chairman:

It was suggested that all commission members pick up a copy of the brochure, " Know Your Town", a directory of town related contacts from the library.

Mr. Rauth updated the group on his recent meeting at the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Summit, held in New Britain. Posters and information gleaned from that meeting were shared with the group and members expressed an interest in acquiring some of the educational materials from www.Sharetheroad.org and distribute throughout the town. Allison Robbins and Louise Hastings volunteered to research methods of distribution and submit a report to the group ahead of the next committee meeting.

Resources: Mr. Rauth suggested the 2009 Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan as a resource for material and research. Suggested reading, Pedaling Revolution by Jeff Mapes.

Mr. Rauth noted two upcoming meetings that he plans to attend: Tri-State Transportation Meeting and the Freshman Representatives to Legislature meeting. Purpose of which is to suggest laws for the upcoming legislative session.

Regular Meetings: Chairman Ray Rauth solicited input from the group regarding a regular monthly meeting schedule. Jon Howell made a motion to meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30p.m. Motion was seconded by Alison Robbins and unanimously agreed upon. A schedule will be forwarded to each member and Mr. Rauth will notify the appropriate town officiates to enable a timely public notification as required.

Goals: Discussion regarding the focus of the commission included determining how to prioritize goals of Safety and Education. A public education plan was discussed including distribution of educational materials. Alison Robbins asked how do we measure the effectiveness of the campaign and where do we get our funding? Jon Howell suggested approaching Kiwanis club and Kim Donnelly of the Weston Forum (covering the meeting from the public gallery) suggested the paper would be happy to print a column of approximately 300 words. Alison Robbins suggested inviting high school student to write and report on commission's goals and activities. Jon Howell volunteered to speak with Tom Landry regarding funding and responsibility for road signage in Weston.

Ruth Glazier and Ken Zito suggested that the commission needed to further articulate specific goals and a possible timeline to avoid rushing out information piecemeal so as not to dilute the message. With this in mind Ruth Glazier volunteered to put together a master plan.

Bisceglie Park: Another goal suggested by Julie Sidhu includes the renovation of the Fitness Trail at Bisceglie Park. Signage is in good repair, but may need repositioning since the building of the baseball fields. Also, the trails behind the historic Post Office are no longer easily accessible. With ample parking and off road trails, Ray Rauth mentioned the Senior Center would be interested in seeing these trails renovated. A special meeting of the commission that will include walking and assessing the trails will take place on Wednesday December 15th at 12:30p.m.

Invited Guests: Members discussed inviting guests pivotal to the commission's goals to future meetings. Guests to be invited to the January meeting include Police Chief John Troxell and Stephan Grozinger (Planning & Zoning). Chairman Ray Rauth will invite the guests.

Guests suggested for future meetings include Joseph Lametta, Dept. of Public Works, Lou Dempsy of the Sustainability Committee and Dave Ungar, Parks and Recreation Dept.

Ray Rauth encouraged members to let people know we welcome public input and Louise Hastings suggested inviting people who might approach us with ideas to e-mail individual members. The recent formation of a Green Committee and the high school Key Club were suggested as likely partners who might be interested in working with the Bike/Pedi Commission on projects such as the renovation of the trails at Bisceglie Park.

Bike Racks: Bike racks are needed at the town center. Alison noted a strip of land at the town center that might be feasible for bike rack placement might also be made more welcoming with the addition of a picnic bench and table.

Bike/Pedi Lanes: Alison Robbins asked who is responsible for trimming of trees and bushes at the edge of roads pointing out that just by cutting back shrubs sight lines could be improved. Eric Tyson asked if we can utilize the 10ft law that some towns adhere to regarding the 10feet from the edge of the road onto a person's property is actually town land. These issues can be addressed at future meetings with our invited guests. Louise Hastings suggested identifying problem spots and notifying the appropriate town department. Ray suggested looking into the "Click and Fix" feature on the town web page whereby residents can type in problems such as potholes on specific roads. Jon Howell asked about the

guidelines for white lined lanes and recent changes to the law. Ray Rauth confirmed the new law that allows the state to reduce the former 12 ft. traffic lane to 11 ft. to make more room for bike and pedestrian traffic.

Chairman Ray Rauth opened up the meeting to other business:

Eric Tyson agreed to co-ordinate the writing of a column with students/s from Weston high School and asked about the feasibility of a public bike path. Ray Rauth suggested that as we walk and cycle around town we should look for areas to connect different parts of town. Julie Sidhu noted that the State plan mentioned by Selectman Gayle Weinstein to renovate the 57/53 intersection at the yellow flashing light (Cobbs Mill/Georgetown Road) ties in nicely to the commission's goal for a safe School Road/ Old Hyde Road/Norfield Road/ Weston Road (Town Center)loop extended to include Bisceglie Park Trails. Jon Howell mentioned the need for a safe, longer loop suitable for cycling.

Alison Robbins asked how does one reconcile the 3ft Law (vehicle to give 3ft breadth for cyclists) with traffic traveling in both directions and pedestrian traffic. John Howell mentioned the old adage, "Feet Forward/Wheels Against"

Julie Sidhu agreed to lead the December 15th Bisceglie walk (Special Meeting) and forward photos and a report by e-mail to all group members prior to the next meeting. Ray Rauth will make the required official notification of the special meeting.

Kim Donnelly of The Weston forum asked for permission to print e-mail addresses and Ray Rauth suggested the commission post a monthly newsletter with an e-mail distribution list.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ray Rauth. Seconded by Jon Howell.

Meeting adjourned.