

Pedestrian and Cyclist Advocacy Committee Minutes of 12/29/17

Called to order at 8:37am by Melissa Gahr.

In attendance:

Andrea Benson (committee member-community), Melissa Gahr (committee member-community), Pamela Hollasch (committee member-community), Bettina Kersten (committee member-community), William Mccarthy (committee member-Conservation Commission), Michael Johnston (Stratham resident), Tavis Austin (Stratham Town Planner-arrived 9:30am).

Meeting began with a reading from Stratham's Master Plan of 1998 to demonstrate & reinforce the PCAC mission:

"It is the policy of the Town of Stratham to implement improvements on the Town's secondary road system needed to accommodate increased traffic volumes, as well as bicycle and pedestrian use, and to work with the NHDOT to implement like improvements on State owned secondary roads." (Policy 2).

"The Town should include in future construction, paved shoulders for use as bicycle/-pedestrian lanes, and appropriate signage and striping on the following secondary roads:

-Bunker Hill Ave

-Union Road

-Depot Road

-Sandy Point Rd

-Guinea Rd

On these roads, and on roads designated on the State bicycle network (NH 33, NH 108, Squamscott Road, and Winnicutt Road) the Planning Board should require any road improvements required as a consequence of development to include shoulder improvements (widening and paving) to facilitate the bicycle routes." (Policy 3).

"While not normally considered an alternative mode of transportation, pedestrian movement does, in fact, represent another means of travel and as such merits consideration. While the Town has no sidewalk system, about 25 Stratham residents walk to work (according to the 1990 Census) and many children walk to and from school. In terms of location, pedestrian travel occurs most frequently on sidewalks, paved and unpaved shoulders and road rights of way.

In general the Town does not encourage the construction of sidewalks in new residential subdivision construction. This is because the residential development in Stratham lacks sufficient population density to warrant their construction and maintenance expense. The Public Works Department does not have the available workforces to maintain sidewalks. However, in the future, the Town should consider adding sidewalks in areas with high

pedestrian and bicycle usage. Three examples are along the roads close to Memorial school, within and connecting the shopping centers along Portsmouth Avenue, and on Guinea Road serving Exeter Region Cooperative Middle School (scheduled to open 1998)." (Section 2.4)

Minutes from 11/06/17 & 11/14/17 were approved unanimously as submitted (PH motioned, BK seconded).

Update on Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project:

3 grant applications submitted by the Town of Stratham on behalf of the Stratham Memorial School (SMS) and the Cooperative Middle School (CMS): 1. Start-up (focus mostly on education of community, raising of awareness on walker/bicyclist specific issues, events to encourage biking and walking to school) 2. Travel plan (evaluation of traffic and road conditions in school zone, identifying problems and finding engineering solutions) 3. Supplemental Non infrastructure plan (Funds will help mostly Bike Rodeo and CMS Earth Day celebration) . If awarded, the grant operates as a reimbursement program. Expect to receive word on application in March but Town needs to look for a consulting engineer ahead of the grant notification. Bettina & Melissa will meet with both school SRTS sub-committee reps, Tavis Austin (Stratham Town Planner), Paul Deschaine (Stratham Town Administrator) and Scott Bogle (Rockingham Planning Commission) to map out a timeline for the grant work expected to be conducted over the course of 2018. Discussed possibility of options to temporarily allow drivers to experience alert devices and/or road changes which would increase pedestrian/cyclist safety (i.e., crosswalk decals, temporary crossing alerts). Confirmation of need for a posted, public hearing to allow Town of Stratham to accept a grant award of greater than \$10K.

Reviewed maps to identify conservation/public land around CMS to improve safe walking/biking:

-First suggestion would be paved shoulder possibly with a rumble strip separation along Guinea Rd & second would be multi-use paths (either through easements or via common-space of the Breslin Farms development). Conservation Commission and Town Planning Office to collect more information on parcels nearby Orange Circle farm, power line easement & Meadow's Mirth farm and bring to a future meeting date.

-SMS to be discussed at a later date.

PCAC publicity/outreach-defining opportunities:

-On a motion by WM, seconded by AMB a plan to support a social walking/biking group was unanimously approved by the PCAC. Seth/Bettina/Pamela & Michael Johnston to create mapped-out loops (of differing lengths) in consultation with the Stratham Heritage Commission/Historical Society to be publicized via facebook page. Intention to implement in Mar/Apr.

-Discussed using a GPS device along those walks to improve mapping

- Also suggested to create or publicize more similar activities across Stratham such as scavenger hunts, leave a stone/take a stone or geocaching programs
- Lastly, group agreed to continue to submit Stratham magazine articles to further publicize walking/biking resources in Stratham

Proposed Sullivan development as a case-in-point regarding the challenges of advocating for connectivity:

- Discussed how to advocate for connectivity when the master plan is so poorly perceived and/or implemented. Decided the PCAC needs to be more vocal with a letter to planning board on the Sullivan development & individual residents should attend meetings. Motion by BK and seconded by MG was unanimously approved to compose a letter on behalf of PCAC to the Planning Board advocating a through-road in the Sullivan Development as well as a right of way/pathway to access public and town own land in the back of Sullivan property to ensure walker/biker connection in the future to short cut onto Union road.

AMB left the meeting at 10:07am and returned at 10:13am.

All other topics were tabled by the Chair until a future meeting.

On a motion by AMB, seconded by WM and unanimously approved the meeting was adjourned as of 10:15am.

Minutes draft respectfully submitted by Andrea M Benson, Secretary.