



MINUTES

BIKE TASK FORCE

CITY HALL FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
505 BUTLER PLACE
PARK RIDGE, IL 60068

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2016 AT 7:00PM

I. Roll Call

On roll call, the following indicated their presence: Eric Coker, Melissa Hulting, Jim O'Donnell, Joe DeYoung, Claris Olsen, Scott Scheuber, Matthew Talbert. Also present were Alderman Roger Shubert, Dick Barton and Senior Administrative Assistant, Brigid Madden.

Brian Hughes and Lauren Pahnke were absent.

II. Approval of Minutes – September 14, 2016

On a motion by Scott Scheuber, seconded by Claris Olsen, the Task Force agreed to approve the minutes from the September 14th meeting.

The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

III. Committee Reports

A. Bike Racks – Joe DeYoung

Mr. DeYoung distributed a survey of bike rack locations, the number of racks at each site and how many bikes were parked at each rack. His survey, as predicted, indicates that students are the largest group of bike users. Mr. DeYoung explained that the high schools do not have enough bike racks. He addressed the lack of bike parking around the Metra stations and explained that the space could be used more efficiently. Although he did not log locations that did not have bike racks, he acknowledged Uptown, specifically the area on Northwest Highway between the Pickwick and Starbucks.

Alderman Shubert announced that the City has qualified for a new grant opportunity which would address the streetscape on Northwest Highway from Prospect Avenue to Washington Avenue. He explained that the grant is for \$1.3 million and will require a matching portion from the City. A meeting with IDOT took place earlier in the day to discuss the details.

Chairman O'Donnell asked how the desires of the Task Force will be incorporated into the redevelopment. Alderman Shubert explained that this would be a long term process but suggested that the Task Force present the needs they see in the area to City Council in order to be incorporated into the overall plan.

Mr. DeYoung continued his report on bike rack locations, indicating that no racks are located on Northwest Highway west of Touhy on the north side of the street. He explained that "bike hitches" are located on the other side of the street. He stated that the south side of Main Street is in need of bike racks as well.

Scott Scheuber indicated that there are no racks located near the Farmer's Market location.

Mr. DeYoung addressed bike racks on private properties, specifically Starbucks and Mariano's. Eric Coker explained that a "wave" bike rack was recently installed at the Mariano's.

The members discussed the bike racks at Jewel, Trader Joe's and the Walgreens on Touhy Avenue.

Mr. DeYoung ask that the members email him bike racks he may have missed. Mr. Scheuber suggested an outreach initiative that would allow residents to send in locations where they would like to see bike racks.

B. Active by Design – Scott Scheuber

Chairman O'Donnell explained that he took away the term "bike parking" from Active by Design and the walk audit, as opposed to "bike racks". The members felt that it was more appropriate in that it emphasizes an equivalency to cars.

Scott Scheuber explained that the Illinois Bone and Joint Institute was the Active by Design event sponsor and they presented on the "toxic environment" we are living in. Illinois Bone and Joint promoted walking, which provides a 30% benefit to overall health. Mark Fenton spoke at the event and provided a number of resources about the health and economic benefits of biking and walking. Mr. Scheuber explained that only 5 -10% of adults walk 30 minutes a day. In order to sustain change, Mr. Fenton explained that it is necessary to create an environment in which activity will happen by accident. Mr. Scheuber stated that the work of the Task Force will encourage this type of environment in Park Ridge. He discussed the economic benefit of such improvements.

Mr. Scheuber explained that many Active Trans plans follow a similar formula, looking at land use, safety and access; this model can guide the Task Force. He stated that the most important item he took away from the Active by Design event are short term, low cost solutions, such as temporary bike lanes and roundabouts.

C. Crossings – Claris Olsen

Claris Olsen discussed a "pop-up" lending library in St. Louis which included all the materials needed to create a temporary Complete Streets. She explained that the crossing on Talcott Road at Maine South would be a good location for a similar project. The one way streets in the area could be problematic because it funnels most traffic on to Talcott Road. Ms. Olsen explained that the project will require a number of volunteers and suggested that it not be the first task of the Task Force.

Mr. Scheuber explained that the 'pop-up' Complete Streets placed a temporary median to address unsafe, illegal turns in an area where students were crossing the street. The pedestrian crossing was made more visible to drivers. Melissa Hulting described another example given at the meeting, which created a bump out with planters to narrow the lanes and slow down traffic. She explained that the bump outs are meant to create a shorter crossing distance.

Ms. Olsen suggested the addition of a pedestrian crosswalk at Garden Street and Cumberland Avenue. Mr. Coker stated that a crosswalk was added on Devon Avenue south of the new Walgreens and suggested a similar crosswalk on the other side of the property on Talcott Road toward Roosevelt Elementary School.

Mr. Coker asked if the schools survey parents and/or students to determine how many students bike to school. The members indicated that they were not aware of that type of survey. Chairman O'Donnell explained that one of the Task Force Committees would address outreach at the schools.

Dick Barton asked if there was feedback from the flags at the crossing on Prospect Avenue, north of the train tracks. Alderman Shubert explained that, due to the railroad tracks, the City faced challenges with the crosswalks when developing the streetscape in that area. The Task Force members spoke about their experience at the crosswalk but did not have any official feedback from the City or Chief Kaminski.

D. Walk Audit - Melissa

Ms. Hulting provided an overview of the Walk Audit. She explained that there was a strong City staff presence, but no members of City Council were present. The walk started in front of City Hall and continued on Prospect Avenue between Holt's and the Pickwick. The group talked about the diagonal parking on Prospect Avenue and backing out into an active traffic lane. Mr. Fenton suggested the diagonals be reversed to have cars back into the spots. Mr. Fenton gave positive feedback regarding the streetscape in that area. Ms. Hulting explained that the benches do crowd the walking area on the sidewalk. Chairman O'Donnell outlined the three sidewalk segments- the space right off the business, the middle which should be unobstructed for pedestrian use and the buffer before the street. During the walk audit, Mr. Fenton indicated that there is enough space at the Touhy Avenue and Northwest Highway intersection for a roundabout, which will address the traffic back-up. The members discussed how a roundabout might impact pedestrians.

Ms. Hulting explained that the Walk Audit visited the area on Busse Highway by Hinkley Park. Mr. Fenton found that the street does not have enough traffic to require 4 lanes. He suggested a lane of traffic in each direction, a middle turn lane and a "multi-modal" biking and walking lane. Ms. Hulting reviewed Mr. Fenton's suggestions for the Busse Highway and Touhy Avenue intersection, which included consolidating to a single left turn lane and shortening the distance of the pedestrian crosswalk.

Lastly she addressed the stop signs at side streets. Mr. Fenton pointed out that there appeared to be too many stop signs and that the use of stop signs to slow traffic is inappropriate and promotes noncompliance. He suggested that small roundabouts replace stop signs when two side streets intersect. The roundabouts will force cars to slow down.

E. Education – Matt Talbert

Matt Talbert discussed outreach opportunities. He suggested a "Repair Your Own Flat" clinic and a helmet fitting event in partnership with Lutheran General Hospital. It was suggested that the Task Force partner with the Park District and a bike shop for these types of events.

Mr. DeYoung suggested educational sessions on where to bike, i.e. location on the street.

The members discussed planning the events in the Spring.

F. Plan – Jim O'Donnell

Chairman O'Donnell explained that since the last meeting he, Mr. DeYoung and Ms. Hulting have reviewed the 2005 Bike Plan. Chairman O'Donnell and Mr. DeYoung rode each of the routes and he and Ms. Hulting met with Ed Barsotti of Ride Illinois, who helped develop the 2005 plan and Nancy Wagner from the Active Transportation Alliance,. Mr. Barsotti suggested revamping the previous study. The next steps would include meeting with the implementing team and establishing the guiding principles for the plan.

Suggestions for the Bike Plan include signage which indicates where the bike route leads to and the distance. Chairman O'Donnell explained that as streets are resurfaced bike paths can be added. IDOT has adopted Complete Streets, which mandates equal treatment for pedestrians, bikes and vehicles. Once the City develops its plan, Chairman O'Donnell explained that it would be presented to IDOT for implementation and because of their Complete Streets policy, they are more likely to cooperate than in the past.

Alderman Shubert explained that the Public Works Department has an annual street resurfacing plan. If streets are identified for bike lanes that are also on the resurfacing schedule, the City and Public Works Department would be open to those additions. He stated that City Forester, Ben Reynoso, will serve as a point person for the Task Force moving forward. Alderman Shubert explained that he has spoken to the Public Works Department regarding the funding for these projects. If the cost is under \$10,000, the funds will likely come from the existing budget.

Ms. Hulting stated that the street resurfacing project usually occurs in short segments of a couple blocks, which does not lend itself to adding in bike lanes. Alderman Shubert explained that in that past, larger lengths of road have been resurfaced. While appreciative of the City staff appointed to assist the Task Force, Ms. Hulting explained that in most cases the City Engineers and City Planners are involved in bike plan development.

Ms. Olsen asked if the new Bike Plan will consider pedestrians as well. Ms. Hulting explained that Mr. Barsotti and Ms. Wagner suggested that \$10,000 as an appropriate amount to revamp the Bike Plan; \$2,500 would go to Active Transportation, \$2,500 to Ride Illinois and the remaining \$5,000 could be utilized for signage, bump outs and "pop-ups." Chairman O'Donnell explained that discussions indicated the plan would focus on bikes.

IV. New Business

A. Consider rename of Task Force and approve mission statement

Chairman O'Donnell explained that it was recommended during the Walk Audit, at the Active by Design event and by Mr. Barsotti and Ms. Wagner that the Task Force be renamed to include walking. He presented this to the Mayor who expressed concerns.

Ms. Hulting is in favor of changing the name. She referenced other organizations which address both bike-ability and walkability, as they are connected. Ms. Olsen concurred. She added that it would benefit the Task Force to start with smaller projects, as a full Bike Plan will take time to develop.

Mr. Coker agreed and explained that all bikers are also walkers.

Mr. Talbert explained that he moved from Lincoln Park in the City of Chicago and is looking for a similar active lifestyle here in Park Ridge. He pointed out that there is a demographic that is moving from the city but seek a similar active lifestyle.

Alderman Shubert explained that he felt that the Task Force should address biking and walking from the start. However, he said that the process of starting the Task Force was specifically based on people's interest in biking. Alderman Shubert suggested that the focus remain on biking. Once the Task Force achieves some successes, it could consider expanding to consider the pedestrian component. He explained that the change will likely have to go before City Council for discussion and approval.

Chairman O'Donnell is hopeful that the City would pass a Complete Streets Ordinance in the future. He explained that even if the name of the Task Force isn't changed, a Complete Streets Ordinance will incorporate pedestrians.

Mr. DeYoung referenced the 18 action items identified in the 2005 plan and asked how many additional action items would be added if walking was considered as well. He suggested that Mr. Barsotti provide an idea of the additional work. Alderman Shubert suggested that the Task Force ask Mr. Barsotti if they were starting from scratch would he recommend strictly a bike plan or a bike and pedestrian plan, and what would the cost for those two be.

There was a consensus to establish some credibility and then address the name change.

Alderman Shubert explained that all Boards, Commissions and Task Forces have a mission statement which are on the City website along with the list of members.

Chairman O'Donnell distributed a draft mission statement.

After discussion, the Task Force identified the following mission statement:

"The mission of the Bike Task Force is to identify and pursue improvements that will make biking accessible and safe for all citizens in Park Ridge."

B. Further discussion of ideas, prioritization and committee assignments

Chairman O'Donnell spoke about sewer covers spotted in town which can be dangerous when biking. He passed around a photo. Ms. Hulting stated that, per the Public Works Department, the covers would be replaced as needed.

Chairman O'Donnell explained that he invited Dick Barton to attend the meetings in order to assist with community awareness.

Chairman O'Donnell asked Alderman Shubert the steps the Task Force would need to take in order to secure the funds to develop a Bike Plan with Active Trans and Ride Illinois. Alderman Shubert stated that he would speak to the Acting City Manager and suggested that those developing the plan create a proposal.

Chairman O'Donnell discussed community outreach via a website, Facebook and a newsletter. He suggested a static page on the City website, as well as a link to "dynamic" webpage that the Task Force would maintain. Mr. Coker explained an external page would require a server to host the site and suggested "piggybacking" off the City website. Alderman Shubert commented on the City's current outsourced IT Department and how the Council is looking to strategically update the City's website.

Ms. Hulting discussed the Community Health Commission's webpage on the City website.

Mr. Scheuber suggested discussing the content the Task Force is interested in posting online, then determining the appropriate outlet. He also asked what other communities and organizations have done.

Mr. Barton suggested that communications come through the City.

Chairman O'Donnell suggested distributing a newsletter. The members discussed content and suggested quarterly distribution, as well as utilizing the Spokesman. Chairman O'Donnell looked for suggestions on how to harvest email contacts for the newsletter. Mr. Scheuber explained that individuals would have to opt-in for an email newsletter.

Alderman Shubert explained the process for presenting its recommendations to the City Council.

Chairman O'Donnell discussed the possibility of addressing bike parking in the City code for new developments. Alderman Shubert suggested looking into how other communities have incorporated bike parking requirements into redevelopment before presenting changes to City Council.

Mr. DeYoung stressed the importance of representation from District 64 and 207. Chairman O'Donnell suggested inviting a representative from each school district to the next meeting. Mr. Talbert and Ms. Olsen will reach out.

C. Other

Ms. Olsen suggested utilizing Google Docs or Dropbox for file sharing. Brigid Madden expressed concerns with how file sharing could violate the Illinois Open Meetings Act. She will consult with the City Attorney and provide an update at the next meeting.

Mr. Barton suggested that, from a public relations standpoint, only the Task Force Chair should make comments to the media pertaining official business of the group.

V. Set Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 16th at 7:00pm.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:33pm.

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