

Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee Meeting Minutes
Mon Nov 23, 2020

PRESENT

Neil Bettez, Lou Klepner, Dan Lipson, Judy Mage, Janelle Peotter, Michael Reade, Tim Rogers

Meeting called to order at 7:01pm.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Minutes were approved from February 10 meeting.

2. [Kingston bicyclist dies after being struck by school bus](#)

3. **The Department of Transportation traffic light by the new Stewart's at N. Chestnut Street (Route 32N) and Henry W. Dubois Drive**

An easement will go across Radi Serdah's property (formerly Napa Auto Parts; will become an apartment complex) to connect the Empire State Trail between the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail and Henry W. Dubois Drive by the new Stewart's.

A Greenway grant may be a way to fund this extension. Neil has been in conversation with Andy Willingham about applying for a Greenway grant.

Stewart's will build the 10-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian path from Route 32 North (N. Chestnut Street) up to their entrance on Henry W. Dubois Drive. Then town will build from there east/uphill.

4. **Henry W. Dubois Drive shared path for Empire State Trail:**

Neil is convinced that this project would never have been completed if we didn't line up Alta Planning. Neil expressed that Alta Planning is the best company in the country for this line of work. The next stage for this shared path is that the New York State Department of Transportation needs to approve it.

Alta Planning will organize another round of public comment later.

Construction will probably begin one year from this spring (SP22) and should be done by FA22.

The \$500,000 green infrastructure grant will be necessary in order to complete this project. Securing the grant funding is taking longer than expected.

Neil: despite the vocal opposition by some residents of Henry W. Dubois Drive, many other residents of this street – dog walkers, cyclists, a realtor, etc. – are ecstatic about what's to come.

5. **Proposed school zone by Middle School and request to lower the speed limit on Main Street:**

The village has requested that Department of Transportation lower the speed limit on Main Street regularly. Each time, Department of Transportation sends a form letter declining this request. A contact Neil knows says that the Department of Transportation refuses to show the data. Maybe it's because the Department of Transportation doesn't have the data.

The Department of Transportation's message was for us to educate our children about crossing correctly in crosswalks.

Judy suggested that it might be effective to organize a rally at the Department of Transportation in Poughkeepsie. Tim emphasized the importance of informing local newspapers as well as Spectrum in order to maximize coverage of this kind of event.

Neil highlighted that walking and riding numbers during COVID have gone through the roof. COVID is succeeding in slowly nudging the Department of Transportation to agree to close streets and assist with outdoor dining. If we can pitch an idea that would be safer for bicyclists and pedestrians during this second wave, we might find that the Department of Transportation approves our request.

6. TransHudson (CVS) proposed project update:

The latest plans call for a shared path behind the storefronts. According to Neil, the proposed bicycle/pedestrian trail should turn and go along the back edge of the property and come out only 100 yards short of N. Putt Corners Road. Perhaps the landowner there could allow an off-road protected bike path. If so, riders could be off-road for the entire New Paltz section of the Empire State Trail.

Trans Hudson will meet all of the zoning requirements (design standards, parking lots in back, etc.) The developers just don't want to build a second story. And they want a drive-through for food. If given these two waivers, they'll do everything else (bathroom, 20 parking spaces for Empire State Trail users, and this protected bicycle path).

[Update since our meeting: the town board rejected both waivers.]

Some residents wish to block the proposed entrance to Trans-Hudson from Main Street. According to Neil and Tim, this is a done deal. The Department of Transportation approved it, so there's nothing town officials can do at this point to block this planned entrance from Main Street.

7. The Department of Transportation's rejection of a proposal to paint diagonal crosswalks at Main Street / Chestnut Street intersection

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance is a holdup. Without funding for ADA ramps, then DOT won't permit the diagonal crosswalks.

Michael Reade is on the Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTS) Board. Michael suggests holding up Transportation Implementation Project (TIP) funding unless bike/ped concerns are addressed. Neil says every super/mayor shares the same frustrations. But the Department of Transportation doesn't respond.

8. Janelle proposal for Bike/Ped committee to sign on in support of the New York for Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI).

The committee unanimously supported signing on.

9. Missing in-street crosswalk signs:

The missing signs are (a) River to Ridge Trail crosswalk at Springtown Road and (b) the college crosswalk at Plattekill Ave near S. Oakwood Terrace. It appears both signs were stolen. Ariana Basco communicated with Peter Karis at the Open Space Institute (OSI). OSI plans to purchase and install a new one in Spring 2021. Dan contacted the Chief of the University Police Department (UPD) at SUNY New Paltz but hasn't heard back.

Judy: perhaps we could put out a note to the newspaper that in-street signs are missing. This is a safety issue. They are very expensive. If you know where they are, bring them back.

10. The positive impacts of the passage of the open-space preservation real-estate transfer tax:

Members of the Town of New Paltz Environmental Conservation Board (ECB) used Geographic Information System (GIS) Software. Looked at all parcels and categorized them (wetland, trails, farmland, etc.). Every parcel has a score. For the money to be spent on acquisition, that parcel needs to have some historic preservation or open space value. Some of it is about *willing sellers* - about

what comes up when. The Town Board waits for the board to recommend it. Probably this new fund will generate at least \$100,000 per year. This is about what the town has spent over the past seven or eight years. Neil has already been approached by three different organizations that want to partner with us. Red Hook has had this fund for 10 years now. And the Town has never paid the whole fee – there has always been a match.

The Open Space Institute (OSI) has shared with Neil the idea of extending the River to Ridge Trail to connect to the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail at Springtown Road. It's not clear if this is likely to happen in the short term. The Open Space Institute was blown away at the high level of usage of the River to Ridge trail. And the numbers have doubled during the pandemic. This is one of OSI's flagship success stories.

11. Possible bike/ped path connecting Harvest Hills development (Cross Creek Road) with college athletic fields (connected to Mike Moriello's proposed student housing development):

It's a different parcel from Park Point. This is a new parcel. It would pay all its taxes.

Neil/Bill: let's wait if this progresses. If it is built, push for connections to the neighborhood. Ask neighborhood again once it's further along.

12. Route 299: status of timeline for constructing shoulders from Butterville Road to Route 44/55:

Neil: the number of easements in this section is insane. That's the holdup. It takes forever. The Department of Transportation is required to have the properties assessed. Then the lawyers are involved. It's the bureaucratic delays. Neil's understanding is that this project won't be completed until 2013.

Judy favors a polite reminder to county officials (Dennis Doyle et al) that we're concerned. Neil will relay that message tomorrow at the Ulster County Transportation Council (UCTC) meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37.