



MAYOR
George D. Alpigianis

VILLAGE MANAGER
Joseph S. La Margo

VILLAGE CLERK
Marlene J. Victorine

TRUSTEES
Morgan Dubiel
John C. Jekot
Danette O'Donovan Matyas
Craig Niedermaier
Dean Strzelecki
Marryann Warda

MINUTES BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN ADVISORY GROUP May 22, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Advisory Group meeting was held on Monday, May 22, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. by Group Member Peggy Reins.

Members Present:

Craig Niedermaier
Steve Sanders
Peggy Reins
Brian Lee
Ticia Doughty-Ashcroft

Staff Present:

Andrew Vitale, Senior GIS Coordinator
Nathan Bruemmer, Staff Liaison
Tim O'Brien, Village Engineer
George Alexopoulos, Commander, Police Department
Bob Rado, Civil Engineer II
Kathy Thake, Deputy Village Manager

Also Present:

Mike Kerr, Christopher Burke Engineering
Beth Norton, Epstein
Ramon Prieto, Resident
Mark Sproat, Resident
Eric Sallinger, Resident

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Group Member Reins requested two small corrections to the April 24 meeting minutes. Group Member Sanders made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2023 meeting as amended. Group Member Ticia Doughty-Ashcroft seconded the motion. On voice vote all concurred.

Group Member Reins moved to change the order of the items on the agenda due to the presence of public commenters. The meeting will start with Comments from the Public, followed by New Business. On voice vote all concurred.

Chairman Niedermaier was absent at roll call but arrived at 3:10 PM.

Comments from the Public

Residents Mark Sproat and Eric Sallinger wanted to share their concerns about plans for a potential bike lane on Shermer Road. They asked if there had been any public outreach, and when the residents of the street were going to be informed of the project. Village Engineer Tim O'Brien shared that the Village is in the very preliminary stages of planning improvements on the street, and are only just now working on phase 1 engineering. Mr. O'Brien explained the general process that Public Works goes through for projects like this, and affirmed that there will be a public open house for residents to review the plans and give input. For this project, the open house will likely be in July or August. Mr. Sproat and Mr. Sallinger restated their feelings that residents haven't been included early enough in this process. Mr. Sallinger specifically is concerned that he will lose his parking due to the bike lane. Beth Norton of Epstein stated that there are two preliminary alternatives for the project, one that includes the installation of a center median, and one that doesn't. The alternative without a median only results in the loss of three parking spots for the entire corridor. The diagonal parking for the townhomes will be kept in both scenarios. Chairman Niedermaier provided more background on the project. Mr. Sproat stated that he believes that speed bumps would be better than bike lanes, and that he's rarely seen bikes on the street, and suggested adding bike lanes on Waukegan Rd instead. Chairman Niedermaier shared more background for the reasons Shermer was selected for a potential bike lane, and how planned improvements could help mitigate speeding on the stretch. Mr. Sallinger brought up concerns about parking again. Ms. Norton clarified again that they're not removing parking from the town homes. Mr. Sallinger and Mr. Sproat questioned how the open house would be advertised. Mr. Sallinger stated that these raised bike lanes and medians cause nothing but problems. Ms. Norton clarified that the median would be in the center of the road. Mr. O'Brien shared more information about timelines and processes. Mr. Sproat said the issue is a matter of prioritization, that there are other areas that need bike lanes more and that speeding is a bigger issue on the street. Mr. Sallinger shared his concerns for how a median would affect snow plowing and fire trucks. Mr. Sproat asked again what the rationalization was for choosing Shermer. It was explained the hope is to connect to Shermer bike lanes in Glenview, and then connect to the Forest Preserve. Committee members also shared a bit about the Bike and Pedestrian Plan and how that has informed bike planning efforts in the Village. Mr. Sproat again underscored the importance of including the residents in the process. The conversation continued in this vein for a while.

New Business

I. Police Accidents Report

Commander George Alexopoulos of the Police Department shared a report of pedestrian involved crashes that have occurred since the last BPAG meeting. Luckily we only have one – on April 25, at 12:45 PM, a pedestrian coming from Fresh Farms on Golf Rd, was running northwesterly to catch a bus, crossed Golf Road outside of a crosswalk and was hit by a car. There were non-life threatening injuries and the pedestrian admitted it was his fault. Chairman Niedermaier shared his observations on pedestrians exiting buses. Mr. O'Brien said the Golf Rd lighting and sidewalk project slated for construction next year will hopefully help.

II. Engineering Updates

a. Milwaukee/Monroe Exhibit

Village Engineer Tim O'Brien introduced the next agenda item. For background, Milwaukee and Monroe was identified in the Bike/Ped Plan as a potential location for a traffic signal. Unfortunately, the location is never going to meet the IDOT warrants for a traffic signal. Engineering had a phone call with IDOT a few weeks ago, and they essentially said "do what you're doing at Cleveland and Waukegan at this intersection and we'll consider it." Beth Norton of Epstein ran through the

drawings. The last time she was here we did not have a left turn lane on the north leg of the intersection. IDOT wants a left turn lane there, and in order to add a left turn lane they had to add a median on the south side so there wouldn't be an offset. Another change they made was straightening out the crosswalk so it was perpendicular, so pedestrians had a shorter distance to cross.

Chairman Niedermaier asked how the plans would affect the businesses as the plans show some right of way expansion. Mr. O'Brien said yes they are taking basically the whole parkway on the Booby's side, taking out the landscaping that was installed a few years ago. Ms. Norton said they showed IDOT a shorter left turn and they would not approve it. Chairman Niedermaier noted this would mean the Booby's patio would be essentially right on the street. Chairman Niedermaier asked what are our other plans here? Ms. Norton said the other thing we had talked about last time, in terms of cyclists, is removing the sharrows there and routing cyclists up to Main St where there's a traffic signal. Unfortunately the plan shown is about as good as they can get it. Chairman Niedermaier said he wasn't thrilled about the impact on the small businesses along Milwaukee, and would like to consider how big of a priority this intersection is in the grand scheme of bike and pedestrian planning. Ms. Norton said this would really help pedestrians. Bob Rado, Civil Engineer II, stated he didn't understand why IDOT wouldn't allow a design exception for a 65' turn lane instead of 115', and also a Chicago-style taper. Ms. Norton said they showed them that and they said no.

Mr. O'Brien said we're seeking the BPAG's input to see if we should keep pursuing this design. Chairman Niedermaier said he'd like to know how many accidents happen at the intersection. Group Member Sanders was curious how cars would be backing out of the businesses and how that would affect pedestrians. Chairman Niedermaier pointed out that all sidewalks are along the businesses. There was discussion about the Chicago-style left turn lane and various left turn lane widths, and why IDOT was not willing to allow different treatments at the intersection. Group Member Reins asked if there was an opportunity to apply some political pressure on IDOT because of the businesses being affected. Chairman Niedermaier again reiterated how it would be good to make a list of our top asks to see where this one really ranks. He's not sure we want to go to that well just yet. Ms. Norton said a problem for this has been that there's not enough traffic on Monroe – both pedestrian and car, and recounted their earlier efforts to do traffic counts at the intersection. Mr. O'Brien said the project was first identified in the 2014 Bike Plan, and the rationale was just to have a safe crossing every quarter mile – it's not necessarily due to the traffic at the intersection.

Group Member Reins asked what it means in terms of timeline if we put this on the back burner. Chairman Niedermaier said we'd likely have to start everything over. Mr. O'Brien said we haven't even gotten to a phase 1 kick off yet. Chairman Niedermaier asked if we want to vote to table this or to pursue this. Group Member Reins said she'd like to better visualize the impact. Chairman Niedermaier said how about we come back to this next month, people can go visit the location in the time in-between, and then we'll revisit it.

b. Howard St Crossing

Mike Kerr of Christopher Burke Engineering shared several alternatives to improve the Howard St bike crossing. The first alternative is to put a little bend in the trail heading northbound that would slow the cyclists down. They also provided a 45 degree offset in the center refuge island. Most importantly, they're suggesting passive microwave detection that would be installed on the flashing beacons. This would pick up approaching cyclists at a distance of about 60' away and turn on the beacons. There would be a second sensor for walk up pedestrians, as well as the push buttons. The passive detection would cost an estimated \$20,000. It's a solar powered box installed. The enhancements to the trail, including the sensors, would cost about \$100,000. Group Member Reins said she's not sure the danger is that we need to slow down cyclists, but some of the changes seem almost dangerous to cyclists – specifically the 45 degree angle in the center refuge island. Chairman Niedermaier suggested an incremental approach – try the passive sensors first to see if that helps. There was also a suggestion to remove some of the vegetation to improve sight lines. Mr. Kerr reiterated that what the committee would like is a staged approach. There was more conversation about how sensitive the sensors are and what they pick up. Group Member Lee asked about the cost of the jog in the path south of the intersection, and said taking speed off from northbound cyclists will improve safety. Mr. Kerr said he didn't think it'd be a large cost, and it's something we can begin to discuss with the Forest Preserve. Chairman Niedermaier said he'd like to see what the sensors do first, and if speed continues to be an issue we can explore the jog in the path.

Group Member Reins asked when the bridge work on Touhy is expected to take place. Mr. O'Brien said IDOT is waiting for the Village to finish their Gross Point/Touhy improvements. Last time he talked to them they were looking to bid in spring 2024.

c. Other Updates

Mr. O'Brien ran through some other updates. For Cleveland/Caldwell, they're hoping to be able to bid that out soon. The construction is ongoing for the Bunker Hill trail. That project should be finished in August. Group Member Doughty-Ashcroft asked if there were any updates on Cleveland/Waukegan. Mr. O'Brien said it's in IDOT's hands and he will follow up with them. Chairman Niedermaier asked when we should expect to hear back about the grant we applied for the north side of the Maryhill Cemetery. Mr. O'Brien said that should be in July.

III. Cycling Without Age Recap

Group Member Sanders provided a recap of the Cycling Without Age program. The program ran for 9 days, we had a total of 53 slots available, and of those 53 slots we gave 46 rides. There were 73 total passengers, and we did about 165 total miles. People really enjoyed the program, and the audience was exclusively seniors (as most people signed up through the Senior Center). There were a few instances where there were things blocking the bike paths (police cars and a Niles Free Bus notably). Group Member Sanders said he would like to do it again in October.

Other Discussion

Ramon Prieto, Resident, had a question about the jog around the pumping station on Oakton where there's no sidewalk – is there a plan to install one? Mr. O'Brien said they're currently

designing a sidewalk at Caldwell and Oakton, the design is in with IDOT now. There was some discussion about the design, route, and connections for the sidewalk.

Next Meeting

July 31, 2023

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Niedermaier, seconded by Group Member Sanders; all concurred and the meeting adjourned at 4:59 PM.

Nathan Bruemmer
Staff Liaison