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MINUTES BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN ADVISORY GROUP Remote Participation July 27, 2022 – 3:00 p.m.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Advisory Group meeting was held remotely on Wednesday, July 27, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. by Chairman Craig Niedermaier.

Members Present:

Chairman Craig Niedermaier
Ticia Doughty-Ashcroft
Brian Lee

Staff Present:

Nathan Bruemmer, Staff Liaison
Tom Powers, Village Engineer
George Alexopoulos, Police
Andrew Vitale, GIS Coordinator

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Group Member Brian Lee, seconded by Group Member Ticia Doughty-Ashcroft, moved to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2022, meeting; on voice vote all concurred.

New Business

I. Police Accidents Report

Commander George Alexopoulos of the Niles Police Department presented on any pedestrian and bicyclist involved traffic accidents that have occurred since the previous meeting: 3:26

- On July 21st, on the 8200 block of Western Ave, a bicyclist was traveling north in the street and was struck from behind by a vehicle, which did not remain on scene. They did speak with the rider and were luckily okay.

II. Monroe and Milwaukee Update

Village Engineer Tom Powers gave an update on the project to get a signal at Monroe and Milwaukee. Engineering met with IDOT, who weren't willing to accept the assumptions made by the Village's consultant about how traffic would divert after the installation of a signal. If we put in a physical barrier on Kedzie limiting access, then

they would assume that traffic would re-route to Monroe. Powers wanted to put that to the Committee before we spend any more time studying the problem. Chairman Niedermaier asked what the option below signaling would be, Powers said it would be similar to what we're proposing at Waukegan and Cleveland. IDOT would request turn restrictions and more. This signal was listed as the number one signal priority in the Bike Plan. Group Member Lee said this is a very common bike route. Powers said for there to be any chance for a signal at Milwaukee and Monroe, Kedzie would need to be restricted. Chairman Niedermaier said there are a lot of options for people in that subdivision to get out of there. He thinks restricting access wouldn't be the worst idea, although he would want to hear from those residents first. Powers said they could conduct another mailed survey, and pointed out the people who would be most affected. Group Members Lee and Doughty-Ashcroft agreed.

III. Waukegan and Cleveland Update

At the last meeting Mr. Powers had shared that IDOT said no road diet, but now, with tempered expectations, they are looking at what the impact would be if they removed Waukegan's Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) designation. They're looking at where truck traffic would go, which Mr. Powers believes would be Harlem or Caldwell. Mr. Powers underscored we will not get a road diet with the SRA designation, and expects to hear back from IDOT in August or September. Chairman Niedermaier asked about Harlem and Caldwell's ability to absorb the traffic. Mr. Powers thinks Caldwell can absorb it no problem, but Harlem might be more concerning.

Mr. Powers shared a very preliminary drawing turning Shermer Rd into a "T" intersection. There would be a stop sign, but there might be enough volume with the changes to get a signal. There would be a dedicated left turn lane on Waukegan. There was extended discussion about the proposed changes, all in attendance were excited about the proposal.

IV. Safe Streets for All Program

Mr. Powers shared a presentation about the Federal government's Safe Streets for All program (SS4A). This program provides \$5 billion in funding over the next four years. 60% of that funding goes to action plans, and being that we have an action plan, we can be first in line asking for implementation money. The awards will range from \$5-30 million. They want to see spread out improvements improving networks. If it's on a state route, they want some documentation that the State agrees with the project, which should be taken into consideration. The criteria are: 1. Safety impact, 2. Equity, engagement and collaboration, 3. Effective practices and strategies, and 4. Climate and sustainability and economic competitiveness. As long as we stick to things that are in the Bike and Ped Plan, we will be in good shape.

Chairman Niedermaier asked which projects would be the best candidates? Mr. Powers responded that the proposed Cumberland shared use path would be a good candidate because it's our own street. The bike path on Washington for similar reasons. There was discussion about the Village's plans along Touhy near Caldwell. Group Member Lee asked about the Oakton side path, as that would be a good opportunity to extend what is already being proposed east of Caldwell. It also connects to the proposed side path on Cumberland. The cost of both Cumberland and Oakton side paths would be about \$6.7 million. Chairman Niedermaier brought up improving Lehigh. Mr. Powers said that if we wanted to go for that one we should

study it more, feel out the railroad/IDOT, and if it looks viable then go for it in a later year of the program.

Mr. Powers said he will reach out to Epstein and ask their opinion on what would be some good projects to apply for. Chairman Niedermaier said he likes the idea of Cumberland and Oakton.

Other Discussion

Nathan Bruemmer, Planner, gave some information about an upcoming bike ride being organized by Group Member Steve Sanders. The first will be a night ride on August 6th, and the second will be the morning of Sunday August 27th.

Group Member Ticia Doughty-Ashcroft commented that she has noticed many people in Niles and the surrounding area going up and down medians and standing in the street panhandling. She is concerned about safety and wants to know what we can do to make sure they don't get hurt. Commander Alexopoulos said the Police Department recently had a post on their Facebook page giving information on this issue. In some instances they are part of an organized group. When they get calls, they go out and offer help and resources, and it's always refused. The Village has a panhandling ordinance, but a few years ago a DuPage community was sued over enforcing soliciting as it violates first amendment rights. As such, Niles PD is no longer issuing citations for that. However, if they are impeding the flow of traffic, then they can be issued a citation. Chairman Niedermaier suggested that there are better ways to be charitable than directly giving solicitors money at busy intersections. Group Member Doughty-Ashcroft reiterated her concern for their safety.

Mr. Bruemmer reminded everyone that the Village's Walk and Roll Event will be on August 4th.

Comments from the Public

None.

Next Meeting

August 22nd, 2022

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Group Member Doughty-Ashcroft, seconded by Group Member Niedermaier; all concurred and the meeting adjourned at 4:26 PM.

Nathan Bruemmer
Staff Liaison