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MINUTES
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN ADVISORY GROUP
Remote Participation
August 22, 2022 – 5:00 p.m.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Advisory Group meeting was held remotely on Wednesday, August 22, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Chairman Craig Niedermaier.

Members Present:

Chairman Craig Niedermaier
Peggy Reins
Brian Lee
Steve Sanders

Staff Present:

Nathan Bruemmer, Staff Liaison
Tom Powers, Village Engineer
Fred Braun, Director of Public Work
Andrew Vitale, GIS Coordinator

Also Present:

Tim Gustafson, Epstein

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Niedermaier, seconded by Group Member Steve Sanders, moved to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2022, meeting; on voice vote all concurred.

New Business

I. Police Accidents Report

Commander George Alexopoulos of the Niles Police Department had difficulties joining the meeting so the July police accidents report was postponed to the next meeting.

II. Fargo and Jarvis Sidewalk Infill

Fred Braun, Director of Public Works, introduced the item. Mr. Braun gave a history of the project and the previous public meetings and engagement efforts. The Village held an internal meeting after the last public meeting to see if there was an opportunity for compromise. At previous meetings, some residents asked if there was an alternate solution that would affect less houses while still maintaining pedestrian connectivity. The Village studied it further and has come up with a solution that will

only require sidewalk installation in front of five houses, but will still connect the sidewalks. Village Engineer Tom Powers pulled up a mockup of the new plan to show on the screen.

Chairman Niedermaier expounded further on the Village's thought process behind the new plan. There will be infill on the south side of Fargo in front of 6907 through 6921 Fargo, with the sidewalk becoming a carriage walk that connects to the North Branch Trail. There also will be infill in front of 7421 School, as well as some connections at the intersection of School and Jarvis. Ultimately the Village wants to get to a Complete Streets set up, but can live with providing safe passage down both streets for the time being. However, at some point this entire neighborhood will have sidewalks installed. The homeowners who are passionately against the sidewalks can opt out of sidewalk installation; but when they go to sell their homes in the future, a sidewalk will be required to be installed. Sidewalks can be put in right now free of charge, however once we're past that window, the homeowner will be required to pay for half of the cost of sidewalk installation.

Group Member Sanders asked what the current cost of sidewalk installation is. Mr. Powers said based on the 2022 sidewalk program, the cost is \$10 a square foot, so most likely about \$2,500 per house. Mr. Braun said the price will surely go up in 10 years. Group Member Sanders asked what the method of enforcement would be for this. Mr. Braun said they're working with the Village Attorney right now to figure that out. Mr. Powers said it will be on the title transfer stamp, but further details still need to be worked out. Group Member Lee asked if someone doesn't sell their house for 50 years, that means we'll go 50 years without a sidewalk? The Bike Plan calls for a complete sidewalk network in 20 years. Mr. Lee said our job as a committee is not to make a decision on this, but to advise the Trustees on projects relating to the roadway. He said per the scope of this committee, it's pretty black and white, this needs to be a complete street. Mr. Lee asked if anyone beyond the five selected houses could opt in for a sidewalk. Chairman Niedermaier confirmed they could. Mr. Lee asked about the source of funding for this project, and Mr. Powers said he believes they're using ARPA money and general fund. Group Member Sanders asked about the timeline for residents to make a decision. Mr. Braun said probably in the next 2-3 weeks. Group Member Peggy Reins asked some questions about gaps in the network and how users will navigate the area. She said the compromise is contrary to the Complete Streets policy.

There was continued discussion on the background of the project, the reasoning for the proposed sidewalk placement, the pros and cons of sidewalks and the proposed compromise. Chairman Niedermaier opened the meeting to public comments.

Public Commenters:

Sally Creager, 7421 School St: Ms. Creager asked where the minutes are that were approved earlier, how do people get on the BPAG, where is the Village's complete streets policy, who walks around the neighborhood, wanted to know who's paying for the Forest Preserve portion, and claimed "you people don't know what you're talking about." She said the sidewalks on Waukegan are horrendous and suggested using money to fix those instead.

Nathan Bruemmer, Village Planner, said all approved minutes are in the Agenda and Minutes section of the Village Website. Chairman Niedermaier said all are welcome to apply to sit on the BPAG. In terms of Waukegan and other places, we're not redoing that road so that's why they aren't being repaired, as Director Braun said earlier. He also encouraged people to report damaged sidewalks.

Voula Vaux, 6941 Jarvis Ave: Ms. Vaux asked what's being proposed at the corner in front of 6941 School. Chairman Niedermaier explained it's a small sidewalk to correct the north side of Jarvis to the south side of Jarvis. Ms. Vaux pointed out that there's a tree there, and asked what the Village is planning for the tree. Mr. Braun said he doesn't know what specifically is proposed, but every effort is being made to save trees for this project. Ms. Vaux also asked about owners having to pay for sidewalks once the property sells – she says when her home was renovated by a previous owner they discovered that there's a natural spring under her property, and wanted to give a heads up that that could be a problem.

Cheryl Peterson, 6911 Fargo Ave: Ms. Peterson said she agreed with Group Member Reins statement about having incomplete sidewalks. She said this is an incomplete plan, and that while she appreciates everything that has been done with the compromise, in her opinion the proposal is not a complete one. She wanted to confirm that there is a sidewalk at an angle in front of her house on the proposed plan. She asked that the angled piece be in front of the 6921 Fargo house instead. Village Engineer Tom Powers said that could be possible. Chairman Niedermaier said the angled piece will need to be in front of someone's property. Mr. Powers said there are some ADA considerations that dictate design. Ms. Peterson thanked the Mayor, Trustees and members of the BPAG committee for coming up with a favorable compromise. She also suggested widening Fargo as it's too narrow for emergency vehicles.

Deena Gibson, 6912 Fargo Ave: Ms. Gibson said she wants to know what his happening with the sidewalk on the Forest Preserve land. She said she was always supportive of a carriage walk, and wanted to know what options the residents who opt in to have sidewalks installed have as far as configuration. Chairman Niedermaier said the carriage walks have to make sense in the context of the block. He said going forward, we'll have to sit down and have more discussion about when carriage walks are allowed, but it can't be zig-zagging all over the place.

Christine Buth, 6949 Jarvis Ave: Ms. Buth said she represents the residents on Jarvis Avenue who couldn't attend the meeting and do not want to have sidewalks installed. She applauded the Mayor and the gentleman she has met with in the Mayor's office for working on this compromise. She appreciates that the citizens were listened to and heard. She thanked the Committee and Village for listening and states she is very happy with the compromise.

Mike Siena, 6907 Jarvis: Mr. Siena spoke to the narrowness of Fargo and that neighbors always moved their cars when needed. While he has sidewalks in front of his house, he thinks this is a good compromise and commends the Mayor and staff for looking out for the community. He suggested with any money saved that sidewalk infill should be completed on Touhy near the Aldi.

Sally Creager, 7421 School St: Ms. Creager asked who can answer her questions, and where should she send her pictures of broken sidewalks on Waukegan Rd? Mr. Powers said sidewalk pictures can be sent to him. She asked a question about the broken alley behind her house. She also said she needs someone to tell her what's going to happen to her tree. She also had questions about work being one on Waukegan. Mr. Braun clarified that is an IDOT project, so those are state workers doing a road project.

Chairman Niedermaier encouraged her to send pictures to the Village as it helps us know what areas need to be improved, and set priorities.

Voula Vaux, 6941 Jarvis Ave: Ms. Vaux said the alley behind the empty lot on Waukegan and the first house on Jarvis is really broken up, and hopes it can be replaced. Mr. Powers gave a history of the alley and agrees it needs some work. Unfortunately the Village does not have enough money to fix all the alleys.

Deena Gibson, 6912 Fargo Ave: Ms. Gibson's mother had a question: what is the width of the proposed carriage walks? Mr. Powers said the width is 5'.

Group Member Reins said she thinks framing is important for this compromise, and it should be framed as an "opt out" of sidewalks rather than an "opt in," and it must be very clear to the homeowners what the repercussions are for opting out.

Chairman Niedermaier said he wanted to take a quick poll of the BPAG committee members' opinions on the proposed compromise. Group Member Reins said she doesn't feel she would be doing her duty as a BPAG member by endorsing the compromise. She appreciates all the effort that has gone into creating the compromise, but the duty of the BPAG is to look out for the village in its entirety, and a majority of residents in the area were polled and the poll results show a majority supported the sidewalk infill project. Group Member Brian Lee said he is in 100% agreement with Peggy. Group Member Sanders said he agrees with Peggy, and generally doesn't like the plan. However, there are a few things he does like; it maintains a connection to the bike path, it will provide for complete streets eventually, and it does seem to be endorsed by the people living in the immediate area. He's not a huge fan, but he would vote yes with reservations. Overall, he sees some value in it. Chairman Niedermaier said he agrees with Steve.

III. Safe Streets for All Program Update

Village Engineer Tom Powers said at the last meeting we discussed the Safe Streets for All grant funding, and potential projects we could pursue funding for. According to CMAP, there aren't many municipalities applying due to the requirement of having an adopted safety plan. This raises Nilas' chances. Unfortunately, the Village contacted Park Ridge and their board had previously voted not to support an Oakton St side path. This means we can go from Oriole to Caldwell on Oakton, and we can do the Cumberland project, but it would be missing the Park Ridge piece on Oakton. There's a bit of risk in the Cumberland project if we aren't able to document that the ROW was granted. Tim Gustafson, Epstein, suggest going for grant funding for a project which is entirely under your control. Group Member Reins said this could be a very good project from a safety perspective. She asked what scale of project will be

competitive. Mr. Gustafson said the grant has a total project minimum of \$5 million, so we'd want to cobble together a couple projects that meet that threshold.

Mr. Powers said there is a resolution of support for the project on the agenda for the next Village Board meeting. Mr. Powers asked the BPAG for a recommendation to support both the Oakton and Cumberland projects.

Chairman Niedermaier moved to take a vote supporting the grant funding for the two projects. Group Member Reins seconded. On a voice vote, all concurred. The motion passed.

Other Discussion

Chairman Niedermaier said technically this committee is supposed to expire after the update to the Bike Plan. However, he thinks it makes very good sense to continue the group. He would like to put it to the committee to see if there's value in continuing to meet and evaluating other opportunities for safety enhancements in the pedestrian and bicycle realm. Group Member Reins said when she was invited to serve on the committee, she was under the impression that the role of the BPAG was to continue to work towards plan implementation. Her understanding was the group wouldn't end with the adoption of the plan. Chairman Niedermaier said he felt the same way, but asked if we're in favor of continuing it. Group Member Lee said he is in favor of continuing it, and said the committee description does not end with the adoption of the Plan. There was some discussion about the role of the committee. Group Member Sanders said he supports continuing the committee as well.

Comments from the Public

None.

Next Meeting

September 26, 2022

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Niedermaier, seconded by Group Member Peggy Reins; all concurred and the meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

Nathan Bruemmer
Staff Liaison