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MINUTES
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN ADVISORY GROUP
Remote Participation
August 25, 2021 – 12:00 p.m.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Advisory Group meeting was held remotely on Wednesday, July 28, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 12:08 p.m. by Acting Chair Peggy Reins.

Members Present:

Chairman Craig Niedermaier
Peggy Reins
Stephen Sanders
Ticia Doughty-Ashcroft
Brian Lee

Staff Present:

Nathan Bruemmer, Staff Liaison
Tom Powers, Village Engineer
Katie Schneider, Community Engagement Coordinator
Andrew Vitale, GIS Coordinator
Kathy Thake, Assistant to the Village Manager
Nick Zakula, Police Bureau Chief
Tim O'Brien, Civil Engineer II

Also Present

Cody McChane, Epstein

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Group Member Brian Lee, seconded by Group Member Steve Sanders, moved to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2021, meeting; on voice vote all concurred.

New Business

I. Epstein Plan Update

Cody McChane of Epstein introduced himself to the committee. Mr. McChane is the deputy project manager for the Bike and Pedestrian Plan Update. Mr. McChane gave a brief progress report on the update, discussing upcoming stakeholder interviews, the project website, existing conditions, and the general timeline for the project. Mr. McChane said he'd like to get a good list about the Village's current programming as it relates to bicycle and pedestrian issues, and was wondering if anyone on the committee would be interested in developing a list in what's going on around town. Group Member Reins volunteered to discuss.

Mr. McChane then led an exercise to get the Committee's feedback about where speeding vehicles are most prevalent in the Village. Group Member Reins suggested Caldwell and Cleveland as being an informal drag strip that's extraordinarily difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross. Group Member Doughty-Ashcroft said she knows many people who live on Caldwell, and it's like a race track. She also said that the curve makes for poor visibility. Group Member Sanders said that it's basically like that all up and down Caldwell. Tom Powers said the spot by Tam O'Shanter is very dangerous for anyone stopping for a left turn there, especially with the sight curve. Andrew Vitale referenced the condos at Wood River Drive as being a place where residents cross blindly. Group Member Doughty-Ashcroft said there's also drag racing on Waukegan south to Oakton. Group Member Lee said this is happening even in broad daylight. Group Member Reins added a couple streets of concern, wondering what the Village's approach is at Washington Street between Golf and Dempster, and how we want to treat the entirety of Harlem Avenue. Group Member Stephens said something needs to be addressed on Oakton between Milwaukee and Prospect, and Dempster St between Milwaukee and Harlem. These are both stretches that don't have crossings for pedestrians. He also said Milwaukee Avenue for biking. Group Member Reins asked how we're going to treat Gross Point Road, as she feels it probably deserves some attention in terms of providing some facilities for cyclists.

Note: Chairman Niedermaier joined the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

Chairman Niedermaier noted how wacky the intersection is at Gross Point Rd and Lehigh Ave, and wondered if the intersection could be improved for either a bike/ped or just general traffic flow perspective. Chairman Niedermaier also said we would be remiss if we didn't include Golf Rd, which could be considered the most dangerous street in Niles. He noted that the Village will be adding sidewalks in along the entirety of Golf. He thinks that Dempster St. should be priority number 2, as the dip below Milwaukee means people crossing the street outside of the crosswalk can't see people coming. Tom Powers said that any time you get a long stretch of Milwaukee between lights drivers really get going quickly.

Group Member Doughty-Ashcroft gave a quick run-down of her effort to promote the new crosswalk on Nordica near Culver School. She was joined by Village Staff and elected officials, and had a great success raising awareness to the students.

II. Waukegan and Cleveland Design Options

Tom Powers gave a quick update on a recent meeting with IDOT regarding the Waukegan and Cleveland intersection improvements. There was a big breakthrough with IDOT, where they mentioned the possibility of a road diet on Waukegan. One IDOT person said if the Village is concerned about the widening of the street and want to make it more safe- and the traffic volumes warrant it - then the Village should study it. This would be a big change in direction than what the Committee had previously been looking at, and it will slow things down in terms of getting an improvement made there. This would affect the whole corridor from Oakton north, and would have to stop short of where Waukegan merges with Caldwell. Tom Powers asked whether the group would be interested in exploring that. Chairman Niedermaier said that he feels the road is really never that heavily traveled, and some dieting could be very nice. Group Member Sanders said he would love to explore it as well. Tom

Powers said he would be happy to work with HR Green to put together a concept that IDOT would be willing to consider.

III. Milwaukee Avenue Crossings – IDOT Meeting

The meeting for this agenda item was postponed so it was not discussed.

Discussion returned to the Epstein mapping exercise. Group Member Reins mentioned two other corridors that needed attention; the first was bicycle facilities on the portion of Lehigh that goes through Niles, and the second was Greenwood Avenue, as it's a road people use to access shopping areas on the north end of town. Mr. McChane shared a heat map with the Committee showing crash hot spots in the Village.

Mr. McChane moved on to discussing the upcoming stakeholder interviews Epstein will be conducting. They have reached out to the first two stakeholder groups to schedule interviews; one composed of school district and Teen Center employees, and the other composed of representatives from the Village and Park District. The scope also calls for a third stakeholder interview, but the list isn't fleshed out yet, so Mr. McChane asked for suggestions from the group. This third group would be considered "other interested parties." Group Member Lee suggested reaching out to people who ride the busses, as they have to walk after getting off the bus. Group Member Reins said that engagement with the Park District needs to be robust, as previously engagement had been somewhat limited, and Park District Facilities have been built without great pedestrian access. Group Member Sanders suggested the Chamber of Commerce, as bike and pedestrian friendly businesses are important to fostering a culture of biking and walking. Group Member Reins suggested reaching out to the Senior Center as well. Chairman Niedermaier added the Fitness Center.

Other Discussion

There was some discussion about meeting logistics moving forward.

Comments from the Public

None.

Next Meeting

September 22, 2021, time TBD.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Group Member Lee, seconded by Group Member Reins; all concurred and the meeting adjourned at 1:21 PM.

Nathan Bruemmer
Staff Liaison