

**FINAL MINUTES OF THE FAIRFIELD
BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 22nd, 2013
2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
SULLIVAN INDEPENDENCE HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrew Graceffa, Jack Franzen, Larry Ogren, Betsy Gardner, Alyssa Israel, Meg Capodanno, Clif Meyers. **ABSENT:** Cristin McCarthy Vahey, Selectman, Katina Wolfe, Kirstin Etela. **ADVISORS PRESENT:** Sarah Levy, Fairfield Health Department, Diane Sell, Fitness Council, David Abraham, Fairfield Board of Education, Mary and Tom Magnusson, residents, and Lou Heumann, Charles Case, Bob King, and Lisa DeWitt (all members of the Fairfield Bike Walk Coalition).

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:13 p.m. by Andrew Graceffa, Chair.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: The April 24th, 2013 minutes were passed unanimously by the Committee.

III. DRAFT PLAN DISCUSSION – STAFF COMMENTS: The Committee discussed the below commentary provided by Sands Cleary, Director of Health.

While I am in favor of the overall effort, as demonstrated by the Health Department providing the funding for the Town's first bicycle route, I can see areas in the plan where there may be some resistance by some members of the various the boards. I am not saying that I am opposed to these aspects of the plan but I am only trying to provide some insight in to areas where there may be resistance.

1. There are numerous recommendations within the different categories with fiscal implications and some of the more fiscally conservative members when considering whether to vote to adopt the plan may have concerns about that approval of the plan is committing the Town to those making the improvements necessary to meet the recommendations. Even though the plan includes lists of other potential funding sources, unless the plan states that the Committee will work move forward with these project as developer, private or grant funds become available I think there will be some opposition
2. The authorities of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee are very broad and may conflict with authorities given to existing boards and departments and could add to the work load of existing departments, see section a.-e. below. As an example under section d. below the volunteer Committee would "oversee the planning, design and construction of all Complete Streets

3. projects". Unless the committee will have field inspection responsibilities, these will likely fall to the various departments and would require those departments to provide status reports to the Committee. Departmental work required to oversee compliance with recommended design policies (and recommendation implementation) will necessitate a reduction of or impact to services in some other area. Some may use the unfunded mandates argument that is so often used with new State policies or guidelines.
4. The plan calls for the assignment or hiring of a Town Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator (when possible). Not many department saw new positions created this year with many losing positions while rolling those responsibilities into other remaining positions. Did have job description (don't see appendices) so not sure of the role of this position.
5. Not certain of where the authority to compel property owners/developers to comply with the recommendations. If they are not required then some will likely decline to implement them citing fiscal issues.
6. I am sure some will state that more demand placed on potential developer will cause them to look to other towns for their projects – needs to have statistics available to support lack of impact and/or benefit to businesses

These are my initial thoughts on where there may be some opposition. Again, not my oppositions but thoughts on where the plan may see some.

Upon review of Mr. Cleary's commentary, the committee agreed to clarify that the proposed Bicycle & Pedestrian Standing Committee will assist Town Departments, but it will not act as an authority. Betsy suggested eliminating 1a and 1d due to duplicative language and the Committee agreed. Based on Mr. Cleary's comments, Andrew also suggested taking the Davis, CA Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator job description out of the appendices and putting it directly into the Plan after the maps to make it more accessible. Alyssa will make the proposed changes to Draft 8. Kathleen Griffin, Assistant to the First Selectman should have all of the staff comments within a few days. Andy stated that the Committee will likely be put on the June 5th Board of Selectman agenda.

IV. FUTURE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE – SHORT TERM, LONG TERM: Andrew Graceffa suggested that the Fairfield Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Fairfield Bike Walk Coalition convene at the same time over the next 3 months in order to work together on getting the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan passed through the Board of Selectmen and TPZ, and to plan events such as the Mill Plain Road Bicycle Route Ribbon Cutting. Committee members agreed.

V. STRONG TOWNS PRESENTATION (FBWC): Andrew presented Strong Town's *Curbside Chat: A discussion of new strategies for the economic realities facing America's towns* to the Committee. Strong Town is comprised of engineers and planners from St. Paul, Minnesota who are planning a New England tour this October. Andrew expressed to the committee his interest in raising \$500 to hire these professionals for a ½ day seminar, similar to Mark Fenton's inspirational morning seminar that the Fairfield Health Department hosted last fall at the Fairfield Senior Center and attended by Town leaders and staff. If the group raises more funding (\$1,500 - \$2,500) we could enter a contest to have these professionals host a 3-day seminar. Committee members asked Andy to obtain more information from Strong Towns about the benefits of hosting such a seminar in Fairfield and about the timing of the event.

VI. MILL PLAIN ROAD KICK-OFF EVENT PLANNING: Sarah Levy distributed a draft press release about the Mill Plain Bike Route for Committee members to review and edit. Andy stated that the route should be striped (with a glistening and durable epoxy) and signed within the next few weeks. The Committee agreed upon a Saturday, June 15th ribbon-cutting at the park on the corner of Brookside Drive and Mill Plain Road. Details about promoting the event will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Meg Capodanno has already released a safety and promotional campaign about the bike route to the elementary schools through the School Health, Fitness and Safety Council (see below).

Health, Safety & Fitness Tips for May!



Coming Soon: The Mill Plain Road Bike Route! Look for signs and painting to begin mid-May...just in time for "Bike To Work Day" on May 17th and CT Rides Week May 13th -17th. Make sure your child's helmet and bike are ready for safe and fun spring riding. [Click on the image for Bicycling and Skating tips!](#)

VII. BICYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION PLANNING: David Abraham, Director Physical Education Curriculum Development, explained that the Fitness Council had talked about the Mill Plain Bike Route and the importance of educating school children about bicycle safety in advance of the 2013-2014 school year. One idea is to deliver a bicycle safety education through the Fairfield Parks & Recreation Summer Camps. Dave Abraham and Sarah Levy offered to organize a meeting with Gerry Lombardo in the coming weeks to discuss this idea.

Lisa DeWitt has developed a detailed plan for sponsoring a "Bicycle Round-Up" event for school children that she would like to share with the committee.

Meg Capodanno stated that her children had attended a 1-day *Safety Town* program at Burr Elementary School during the summer that our Committee could possibly expand upon. Sarah Levy and David Abraham said they would find out more about this program and who sponsors it.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: Alyssa Israel stated that she learned through Ken Camarro that the North Benson Road Railroad underpass/overpass is being refurbished. Bill Hurley (via email) said that he had talked to ConnDOT's Resident Engineer about the situation. He, in turn, will talk to Project Design Engineer and see if they can at least provide a curb and walkway through the underpass where currently no sidewalk exists. Alyssa suggested that in the future, one role for the Bike Walk Standing Committee would be to facilitate such bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements when ConnDOT is working here in Fairfield on road and rail projects.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alyssa Israel, Secretary