

Holyoke Biking and Pedestrian Committee Meeting Minutes

On **Monday, June 7, 2021**, the Holyoke Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee held a public meeting via zoom.us (Meeting ID: 844 3840 5587 Passcode: 099221 or call in 646-558-8656) This meeting took place at 6:00pm.

Attendance: Committee Members present– Price Armstrong, Eduardo Baez, Kristen Sykes
Municipal Staff: Cynthia Espinosa (OPED) Late join: Bob Perient and Shannon Bliven (6:10pm)

- 1. Call to Order:** At 6:07pm, Eduardo Baez made a motion to call the meeting to order. Shannon Bliven seconded the motion. All were in favor, via roll call, 5-0-2 (Absent: Elena Langdon, Shannon Bliven)
- 2. Review of minutes May 2021:** Bob Perient made the motion to approve the minutes. Eduardo Baez second the motion. All were in favor, via roll call, 6-0-0.
- 3. Public Participation:** Lucy Friedman-Bell, New Safe Routes to School Coordinator attended to listen into the meeting. Julia Agron from Chronic Trips, a cooperative juice bar and outdoor adventure and recreation cooperative. Excited to check out the bike ped committee. Julia Agron mentioned that they do meet up for members only and for the public specific for Holyoke. Seth Frappier from Chronic Trips will most likely be leading the in-person trips and would like to connect with the bike ped committee to improve their programming. Bob Perient introduced Jim Czach who has joined the City Engineering Department, formerly worked in West Springfield and an avid cyclist. Price Armstrong asked Bob Perient about the membership of city staff, specifically DPW. Bob Perient mentioned that the Bike Ped by laws and it states that the membership of the bike ped committee is from City staff. Kristen Sykes recited the language from the bylaws “*a. The BikePed Committee shall be comprised of no fewer than 7-member positions, no fewer than 5/7 of which are reserved for community members of Holyoke. The remainder may be filled by local elected officials or municipal staff serving in their official capacity.*” Bob Perient mentioned that to make it legal for Jim to be part of the committee and Eduardo Baez concurred and agreed to include him. Bob Perient asked what is the procedure to include Jim as an official committee member. Price Armstrong asked if there a possibility of think and talk about membership in general when it comes to city officials or municipal staff. Kristen Sykes mentioned that she also attends the bike ped committee members in Northampton and they usually have a city council official and wonder if the committee can think about potentially have a city official attend the meetings or invite them. Price Armstrong recommended that the committee thinks about it for the next meeting. Bob Perient only mentioned that municipal staff has been needed to meet quorum so it is important to consider membership. Kristen Sykes asked if there can be a subcommittee to discuss potentially having a city official. **Price Armstrong, Cynthia Espinosa and Kristen Sykes made a subcommittee to discuss membership of the committee.**
- 4. Events-**
 - a. Latino Outdoors July Event-** Price Armstrong mentioned that Latino Outdoors is a volunteer led organization whose mission is to bring Latino youth and families to open space and natural areas. There was a call in late May to discuss

an event in Holyoke due to the high Latino population. There was an idea to create an event in July for Latino Conservation Week at Scott's Tower and Anniversary Hill. The Bike Ped Committee was invited to see there is a collaboration opportunity. Kristen Sykes mentioned that there was an email thread from Jackie Diaz going around about the event and to do a site visit on Friday, June 11th at 2pm. Price Armstrong asked what would the committee's role be during the meeting and to share on the Bike Ped social media pages. Shannon Bliven mentioned that Latino Outdoors would like the Bike Ped Committee to volunteer on a station along the walk. Kristen Sykes placed on the chat that the group is looking on how to get people to get to the site. Kristen Sykes forwarded an email of the event to Cynthia Espinosa to attend the site visit. Cynthia Espinosa suggested that the Bike Ped Committee created a sub-committee for the events listed on the agenda. Price Armstrong mentioned it would be great to create an Events Sub-Committee. Seth Frappier from Chronic Trips offered to help with any event logistics/planning as he has experience with them.

- b. Holyoke Farmers Market-** Price Armstrong mentioned that it would be great to share images on the Bike Ped Facebook Page. Cynthia Espinosa added that the committee should think about the Farmers Market as a destination for events, including the idea that Shannon Bliven mentioned in the past of ValleyBike Tours. Kristen Sykes was wondering if there is a possibility to do a group ride to the Farmers Market and partnering with MassBike for this event. Cynthia Espinosa suggested to also consider pedestrians on the event. *Price Armstrong suggested that the committee makes an event in August to make the Farmers Market as a destination.*
- c. Chestnut Community Alliance-** Price Armstrong mentioned that Chestnut Community Alliance has a monthly walk in the neighborhood. Price Armstrong mentioned that the committee has a goal to consider the safety of pedestrians and bikers and these walks hosted by Community Alliance address that. Price Armstrong encourages committee members to attend.

5. Complete Streets Updates- Bob Perient & James Czach

- a. High/Maple St:** DPW had a meeting with MassDOT about the design. There is a piece of the design that has to be approved and once it is approved there will be a public hearing, potentially during this summer. Bob Perient mentioned that there will be a notice of the project before the public hearing, specifically an online presentation and can gather comments then. Price Armstrong asked if there is anything that the committee can do to address the concerns about the project. Bob Perient mentioned that one primary concern may be parking. Cynthia Espinosa mentioned that the committee discussed in the past to create an educational campaign along the corridor about the benefits of the project. Price Armstrong mentioned that not to go about the educational campaign but for the committee can do a testimony or letter and address the specific issue of parking may be more appropriate. Bob Perient mentioned to focus on the benefits of the project. Kristen Sykes mentioned that studies show that making a city more people centered increases economic opportunities for local businesses. Price Armstrong asked that the 45 days before the public meeting there is a chance to send testimonials.

James Czach mentioned that during the public meeting time to ask questions, the Bike Ped Committee can share a testimonial. There are also opportunities to submit written comments after the public hearing. Bob Perient mentioned that the project challenge is time so during Fiscal Year 2022 the bid will go off and if there is no selection, the money will have to be spent on something else. Price Armstrong volunteered to help with the written comments and asked if other members were interested in volunteering as well. Eduardo Baez recommended to make a report or presentation of when projects are groundbreaking, when contracts are sign and a timeline so that it is easier to understand and they can have some participation. **Price Armstrong and Eduardo Baez will draft testimonials about the benefits of the project and share it with the committee.**

- b. Lyman St Bridge:** Bob Perient its scheduled to be wrapped up later this year and has a first course of pavement. Price Armstrong asked if there is no new biking or pedestrian facilities on this project. Bob Perient confirmed that it is no new facilities included on the construction. **Price Armstrong asked Cynthia to remove this item on the agenda as it is not a Complete Streets Project.**
- c. Safe Routes to School (SRTS):** no updates
- d. South Holyoke Homes:** Bob Perient gave a summary of the project, a streetscape improvement project near Carlos Vega Park in partnership with Holyoke Housing Authority for new housing. Good news is that looking at a good budget and MassWorks allowed to extend the geography of the project, so that the entire South Holyoke neighborhoods will get new sidewalks, as many areas have poor or no sidewalks. Price Armstrong asked if there can be a visual refresher of this project in a future meeting.
- e. MassTrails:** James Czach gave a summary of the feasibility study, a shared use path including raised crosswalks and rapid flash beacons along the corridor. This project is a compliment of the share used path project in West Springfield. Cynthia Espinosa mentioned that once the study is done, we will share a copy with the committee members. Price Armstrong asked where does the shared use path terminates at Springdale Park. Bob Perient shared that yes, the shared use path will end at Springdale Park and it complements the Springdale Park Master Planning. Cynthia Espinosa mentioned that this feasibility study is a pilot for OPED to look at future similar projects of accessibility all along Main Street. Price Armstrong asked if this is a conceptual study and Bob Perient confirmed as there are many solutions to address shared used/mobility.

6. Valley Bike Update- Cynthia Espinosa and Shannon Bliven:

- a. Three new stations update:** Bob Perient mentioned that new stations will be on Ely Court, Beech & Appleton St (Peasants Park) and Main Street by Spring Street (Parking Lot) and got funding from the Shared Street Grant to pay for the installation costs of all three stations.
- b. Holyoke User Survey:** Cynthia Espinosa shared the survey results to all committee members and one feedback was that the price was high. Therefore, Cynthia Espinosa is sharing information with folks about the Access Pass, which is free memberships. Shannon Bliven has flyers that has instructions on how to

sign up for Access Pass. Kristen Sykes asked how are bikes distributed. Cynthia Espinosa mentioned that each city has a certain amount of number of bikes and some may be out of maintenance.

7. Old Business: no updates

8. New Business:

- a. Meeting in person:** Cynthia Espinosa shared that there was guidance if there is an in-person meeting that there is enough space for social distancing and other commissions will host a hybrid meeting. Cynthia Espinosa asked how the committee how they felt about either in-person or hybrid. Eduardo Baez suggested to have the meeting at a park. Kristen Sykes, Shannon Bliven, James Czach, Price Armstrong would like to meet in person and/or hybrid starting either July or August.

9. Scheduling next meeting: Monday, July 12, 2021

10. Adjourn meeting: At 7:35pm, Kristen Sykes made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Shannon Bliven seconded the motion. All were in favor via roll call, 5-0-2. (Left early: Bob Perient, Absent: Elena Langdon)