



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

NAME	REPRESENTATION
Rebecca Brouwer (RB)	City
Sarah Elder (SE)	City
Matt Engwall (ME)	City
Andy Lynch (AL)*	Alamance County ETJ
Chelsey Morrison (CM)	Orange County
Sylvia Sichi (SS)	City
Cy Stober (CS)	Development Director
Aaron Davis (AD)	Recreation & Parks Director
Franz Holt (FH)	City Engineer

Public Participation: Sean Ewing, Patty Phillips, James Allen, Jason Smith, and Omega & Brenda Wilson joined the Zoom call.

**AL was not present for the vote on the approval of the December meeting summary.*

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 21, 2020, MEETING SUMMARY

Action on the item was delayed until more BPAC members joined.

GREENWAY UPDATE

CS provided an update on the easement acquisition process, remarking the City is in the home stretch and hopeful that the easements needed for the east-west section of the greenway will be finalized soon.

FH commented the plans have been revised to address concerns by a property owner with a subdivision layout to ensure the greenway does not adversely affect any proposed lots.

CS asked FH for an update on permits.

FH replied all permits have been approved. An encroachment agreement with NCDOT was the last item and was received last week. Environmental, land disturbance, and Duke Energy approvals had already been received.

RB asked about next steps once all easements are acquired.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

CS responded with active permits, acquired easements, and approved construction plans, the City could move forward with approvals needed to finance the greenway. He asked for FH's opinion.

FH responded he was uncertain if this year's budget included greenway funding and referenced the Council Members in attendance might be better able to answer the funding question. He added a bidding period for this type of project is typically 30 days. FH remarked it would likely be 30 to 60 days before the greenway goes back to City Council and it would be a tentative approval from Council if the City pursues financing the greenway with a loan.

CS commented the BPAC may wish to discuss extension of the east-west connection in further detail and noted it is a later item on the agenda.

RB asked about the timing of the BPAC's presentation of budget recommendations.

CS replied the conversation would need to precede approval of next fiscal year's budget, which occurs in June. He suggested a formal presentation during the budget hearings. Budget workshops are scheduled for March and April and formal public hearings are likely in May and June. CS recommended the BPAC Chair connect with Management to discuss communicating with City Council.

RB responded she would follow up and suggested further discussion at the BPAC's February meeting.

RB recognized public participants and asked that they raise their hands if they wish to participate.

CS reminded everyone of Zoom guidelines. He remarked anyone with a question or comment will be admitted.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 21, 2020, MEETING SUMMARY

RB conducted a roll call vote to approve the minutes.

A unanimous vote supported the motion.

RB reviewed the agenda and asked if any items should be added.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

CS asked for an item of discussion to be added for an encroachment agreement request update from FH. He noted the discussion would lead into the planned discussion of CIP recommendations.

UPDATE – NCDOT ENCROACHMENT AGREEMENTS

CS reviewed the crosswalks previously discussed by the BPAC.

FH commented the encroachment agreements were originally submitted to the local NCDOT office but now involve Design Services and Traffic Services. These groups review with consideration for ongoing NCDOT projects. FH noted one of the submitted crossings (E Washington and S Fifth) was on the list of ongoing NCDOT projects. The submitted exhibits have been revised to address comments from Design Services. Traffic Services has not sent comments for the proposed signage. FH remarked the process has been long and seems to be coming to an end very soon.

CS asked FH if he advises the BPAC to reserve this fiscal year's discretionary funds for these crosswalks or allocate them to other projects.

RB responded it did not seem necessary to allocate for crosswalks this year. She asked how much had been allocated.

AO responded \$4,000.

FH commented the encroachment agreement included all crosswalks. They were not separated but could be if the BPAC had priorities.

RB remarked the BPAC has \$4,000 to re-allocate and could increase the amounts allocated for curb ramp improvements or outdoor benches. She asked if a decision was needed during the meeting.

CS advised the BPAC to move quickly, noting they have until the end of the fiscal year (June 30) to spend the discretionary funds. He requested one to two months for staff to coordinate with others and suggested the BPAC decide by March.

RB asked the BPAC if the item could be discussed at the February meeting. The BPAC agreed.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

CAPITAL PROJECTS & BUDGET DISCUSSION

AO reviewed staff requests for FY2021-22 capital projects – design of the Third-Fifth Connector; design of the W Crawford sidewalk; design and construction of the N First sidewalk and crossing; design and construction of the S Fourth sidewalk.

RB asked about conversations with neighbors for the S Fourth sidewalk.

CS replied the request was from property owners on the S Fourth block. He remarked the City has received a call from someone on the western side (where the sidewalk is proposed) with concerns. CS remarked the decision between east and west side of the street is mostly due to stormwater. The sidewalk would be kept completely within the public right-of-way, which might now be grassed area.

RB asked AO for clarification regarding costs and asked if the BPAC was constrained by a budget.

AO responded the projects would be requests to City Council for inclusion in next fiscal year's budget. She clarified that staff has already submitted the presented requests and is seeking the BPAC's support and input.

ME asked if the S Fourth sidewalk was just the one block from McKinley to Roosevelt and did not extend to the existing cul-de-sac.

CS confirmed.

ME asked how the City would benefit from one block of sidewalk. He was contemplating how it contributes to a pathway through Mebane.

RB responded the sidewalk gap has been a missing connection for many families walking to South Mebane Elementary. She noted the sidewalk would eventually take someone to the greenway via Roosevelt.

SS asked about the distance required between the Third-Fifth Connector and the Duke Energy poles.

CS replied 25 feet is required.

SS asked how a greenway connector would fit within the right-of-way given the spacing requirement.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

CS responded this is why a design is needed. He commented easements may have to be acquired from property owners in the area but that is currently unknown without a design.

ME asked about “checking the temperature” with homeowners who may be affected by easement acquisition.

CS agreed and commented a design would help communicate with homeowners about the possibilities.

RB advised checking with neighbors before spending money on design.

SS asked if design of the Third-Fifth Connector would include a crossing of S Fifth given the S Fifth sidewalk is on the other side.

RB commented on the need for NCDOT approval.

CS replied the design would not include a crossing of Fifth at this time. He commented on the need to negotiate with Duke Energy and NCDOT before completing the Third-Fifth design and discuss a crossing of Fifth, which will be tough.

Members of the BPAC commented on the difficulty of crossing S Fifth.

ME questioned if the Third-Fifth Connector makes sense without crossings of Third and Fifth.

RB responded crossings might not be included with the design project but could be requested later.

CS commented approval of a crossing of Third would be simpler given lower traffic volume and the presence of a school. He added the volume on Fifth reasonably requires more scrutiny from NCDOT. CS confirmed crossings are a possibility and referenced crossings in Apex and with the American Tobacco Trail.

RB asked if a sidewalk on the west side of S Fifth, particularly between Roosevelt and the greenway connection, had ever been explored. She noted the challenges of the road.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

CS commented on the age of the road, which has less right-of-way.

CM asked if consideration of additional S Fifth sidewalk or a crossing of Fifth would be concurrent with the Third-Fifth design work. She expressed a need to consider where people will go after they get to Fifth.

CS suggested the recommendation to Council could include a temporary turnaround until a crossing could be identified.

RB asked CS to clarify “temporary turnaround.”

CS replied it could be gravel or paved but would look like a final product that would be restored in the future if a crossing is provided.

CM suggested something like a trailhead.

CS agreed.

RB commented on the need to avoid inadvertently encouraging individuals to unsafely cross S Fifth to get to the trail. She noted it would be hard to get the process going for a crossing without the Third-Fifth Connector in existence.

CM asked if the crossing could be bundled with the design project and if that would increase the cost of the design project.

CS remarked it would mean more time on the phone.

RB asked if the design and crossing had to be separate or if they could be considered together.

CS replied the recommendation just needs to explicitly include the crossing.

RB asked the BPAC to include a crossing of Fifth as part of the design project.

The BPAC agreed.

CM asked for a crossing of Third to also be included.

RB asked if portions of the project could move ahead while other parts are pending,



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

noting a crossing of Fifth may take years for approval.

CS replied yes.

AO asked if right-of-way for S Fourth St extends to connect to the Third-Fifth Connector.

CS replied debate exists and deed research would be required.

CM questioned if the proposal for the W Crawford sidewalk would connect to E.M. Yoder Elementary. She commented a sidewalk is missing along N Wilba where the W Crawford sidewalk would end.

CS recalled the discussion from last year and agreed the sidewalk needs to be extended. He added a sidewalk extension along Wilba appears possible given a larger right-of-way and noted the block of Wilba sidewalk appears to be missing from the project description but would be considered in the design.

CS commented on his preference for the BPAC to drive staff recommendations for capital projects and recognized a different and expedited process this year. He thanked the BPAC for feedback. CS recommended a “parking lot” of capital project ideas to avoid a flurry of activity at the start of budget season and allow time to gather information, particularly budget estimates, for projects.

RB asked for staff to advise when the BPAC should consider certain items.

BETTER BLOCK TRAILER CHECK-IN

RB reviewed two items to be discussed – the demonstration video and ideas for future use of the Better Block Trailer. She asked if staff had checked about future reservation of the trailer.

AO replied she was waiting until after this discussion to communicate with Graham.

RB asked AD to describe his ideas for the video.

AD commented the GoPro footage did not turn out the way he had hoped because of the focus on a larger area. He decided to use videos and photos with “what if” questions highlighting the demonstrations. The end of the video asks viewers to send their thoughts.

The BPAC expressed their support of the video’s direction.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

SS suggested editing the language at the end to shift from “we need your help” to “we have these tools to help you.”

RB asked if central email addresses, such as bpac@cityofmebane.com, exist for advisory boards and committees.

CS replied email addresses do not currently exist, but it is an active discussion among City staff.

RB added it would be nice to have a mechanism to hear from the community.

AD asked about using a Google Form, listing a URL at the end of the video and sending a spreadsheet to the BPAC with responses.

CS commented this would be an appropriate ask for ArcGIS Online.

RB expressed her support of using an online form.

RB asked AD if he would need anything from the BPAC as he finishes the video.

AD replied the video is for the BPAC and he would like their approval. He also noted the video would be used at the BPAC’s discretion. AD commented the video would be ready by the next meeting.

RB asked if the BPAC could provide feedback on the video outside of a meeting and over email.

CS and AD agreed. AD added the video would be sent prior to the next BPAC meeting.

CS added the BPAC could provide edits and comments on the video to the group as a whole if they are directed at staff.

AD requested the BPAC tell him what should be asked on the Google Form.

RB asked CS if using ArcGIS Online would allow respondents to choose a location for a recommended improvement.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

CS replied the online form could be restricted to a simple survey with a mapping component added later. The City is working to release new maps. CS suggested that in the future a map could be created to allow community members to tag locations and also specify concerns according to day and time of day.

The BPAC discussed ideas for using the Better Block Trailer.

ME proposed trying outdoor seating with a bike lane on Clay Street.

SE asked if the tools and materials available in the trailer could successfully set up the on-street dining/bike boulevard experience.

ME believed so. SE seconded the idea.

ME questioned how businesses would be selected.

CS suggested the BPAC allow businesses to sign up, with essentially a free lease of the space.

RB asked if businesses could provide additional tables and seating without permitting from the City.

AO reviewed the permitting process established for temporary outdoor seating during the pandemic.

RB asked if that would still be required during a pop-up event.

AO responded those requirements would likely be waived as the project would be City-led.

CS added staff would need to consult with the City Attorney regarding any forms that might be needed. He commented City staff would coordinate all the processes reviewed by AO and added Graham and Greensboro could serve as models for the BPAC.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

AL added his support of outdoor dining as a project. He expressed concerns about the functionality of seating available through the trailer, noting he would not trust the chairs and tables.

RB suggested businesses provide tables and chairs to augment what is available.

ME asked how the BPAC should consider ADA compliance, asking if a platform would be needed from the curb to dining in the street.

CS responded he would need to check with others.

SS asked how often Downtown businesses meet.

CS replied a meeting is held once a month as part of the City's Main Street Program. He suggested the BPAC contact him if anyone wants to be added to the Main Street meeting list.

SS added it would be nice to work with Downtown businesses given the BPAC will be operating in their front lawns. She voiced support for considering Clay as a one-way street, which would allow on-street parking on two sides.

CS reviewed findings from the Downtown Vision Plan and noted he would add SS to the email list so she can be a part of the discussion. He remarked Mebane is currently a Downtown Associate Community, which is more of a training program so discussion is somewhat limited, though it is growing.

SS added the one-way section would be a short strip, with 70 and Crawford providing two-way travel.

AL proposed a bike lane on Ruffin and suggested different places to park bikes to connect Ruffin and Clay.

RB commented she also wrote Ruffin bike lane as an idea. She asked if the BPAC could borrow extra cones from the City.

CS replied yes. He added the City does have additional and better chairs and suggested the BPAC also consider use of consumables (\$500 budget).



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

RB proposed the following ideas: Fourth St as a bike boulevard; crosswalks to coordinate with urban trails around Holt St; crosswalks at Fourth and Jackson; crossing of N Charles at Ruffin to E.M. Yoder.

SS asked if Third and Fifth were untouchable.

CS responded it would be a similar discussion as what the BPAC heard from FH.

CM asked if the BPAC could consider neighborhood-specific issues. She described traffic calming needs along Blue Lake Drive in the Ashbury subdivision. She indicated a desire to avoid measures unlikely to be implemented and asked if there are stop signs to temporarily use.

CS suggested the need for traffic calming might be the recommendation and staff could assist with determining what might be considered. He noted a temporary stop sign would need action by City Council. CS commented Council has required traffic calming be integrated with two recent subdivisions.

AL asked about experimenting at Cates Farm Park.

RB remarked on previous conversations about a crosswalk not being a good idea at this time.

SE commented on the need for signage to prevent people from riding bikes on the trails.

AD commented he was working on signage.

AL suggested a bike rack would be good reinforcement for the signage. He also recommended trash cans.

AD replied four DOGIPOT stations are coming.

RB suggested allocating some funds to bike racks at Cates Farm with language about parking the bikes before entering trails.

RB asked about Lake Michael.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

SE suggested considering new benches at Lake Michael.

RB recommended reviewing the list of ideas at the next meeting and deciding which projects to move forward for coordination with the City. She added once project ideas are approved, the BPAC can socialize them with the community and organize to have the Better Block Trailer later in the summer or fall.

The BPAC agreed.

CS added the October-December quarter is the busiest for the Downtown and may be a period of good weather.

RB asked if the trailer could be reserved for three months.

CS confirmed, noting Graham gets priority.

RB suggested if the Downtown project is selected, it should be timed very carefully. She asked about measuring results and people's reactions.

CS suggested staff discuss with Graham.

AO added the City of Charlotte has published reports evaluating demonstration projects.

AO asked about returning the trailer.

ME and RB expressed no need to keep the trailer and were okay with its return.

AO confirmed she should wait until after next meeting before contacting Graham to reserve future use of the Better Block Trailer.

RB agreed.

2021 BIKE RODEO

RB reviewed how the BPAC, Mebane on the Move, and the Police Department previously participated in a bike rodeo after receiving a grant from NCDOT for bike helmet distribution. She asked for interest from the BPAC in participating in a similar, covid-modified event this year. RB added details of the event have not been planned because of so many what-ifs.

CS asked if staff should wait to coordinate until grant awards are announced.

RB agreed. She asked if the BPAC was generally okay with participating.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

The BPAC agreed.

RB commented the Burlington-Graham MPO was also a partner with the helmet initiative application and plans to distribute helmets during one of its cycle-safety events. She requested 100 helmets with the application. RB remarked if the grant is awarded, representatives of Mebane Police may attend a future meeting to coordinate the bike rodeo.

NEW & ONGOING BUSINESS

FY21 Improvement Funds

AO commented the BPAC discussed this item with FH. She has it noted as an item of discussion for the next meeting.

City Projects Updates

AO remarked on a question from Jason Smith during the December meeting she was not able to answer.

Mr. Smith asked about progress on the crosswalks across Center St.

CS replied he did not have an answer but would ask NCDOT, noting progress has slowed with NCDOT's budget shortfalls.

SS asked if a crosswalk was planned at the intersection of Mebane Oaks and Arrowhead between McDonald's and Bojangles.

CS replied a crossing is part of the Mebane Oaks widening project. He added a sidewalk will be provided along the bridge when it is widened.

SS asked about a crossing of S Fifth at London Ln.

CS replied the City is hopeful construction will occur by the end of the year. The project is by private development. He added the project recently received construction plan approval. As part of the approval, a portion of Fifth St is to be widened.

BPAC Member Transitions

RB recognized this as AL's last meeting and three seats are up for appointment. RB thanked AL for his BPAC service.

AL commented on his appreciation for the BPAC and the experience.



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

RB added since AL is the vice-chair, an election of a new vice-chair will be needed. She asked how many applications were received.

AO replied applications were received from 7 individuals who are eligible to serve.

CS commented on the need to make appointments of the Chair and Vice-Chair, which are annual appointments.

RB expressed her interest in helping to onboard new members and suggested BPAC members contact her offline if they would like to assist.

AL expressed hope to join the BPAC in person at a future time to celebrate BPAC accomplishments.

SS indicated she would miss the February meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Meeting summary by Ashley Ownbey, City of Mebane Planner