



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

April 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

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NAME	REPRESENTATION
Rebecca Brouwer (RB)	City
Sarah Elder (SE)	City
Matt Engwall (ME)*	City
Katy Jones (KJ)	At-large
Chelsey Morrison (CM)*	Orange County
Sylvia Sichi (SS)	City
Jason Smith (JS)	Alamance County ETJ
Cy Stober (CS)	Development Director
Aaron Davis (AD)	Recreation & Parks Director
Corporal Rodney Ward (RW)	Mebane Police Department

*\*ME and CM joined the meeting after it was called to order.*

*Public Participation: James Allen joined the Zoom call.*

## **APPROVAL OF MARCH 22, 2021, MEETING SUMMARY**

RB conducted a roll call vote to approve the March meeting summary.

A unanimous vote (5-0) supported approval of the meeting summary.

ME and CM were not present for the vote.

## **2021 BIKE RODEO**

RB reviewed how the BPAC has participated in past bike rodeos. She described how the bike rodeo would be one distribution point for the bike helmets awarded through a NCDOT grant. RB introduced Corporal Ward and asked City staff if an in-person event is on the horizon.

AD replied a future in-person event is possible. He mentioned a positive conversation with the Alamance Health Department. The earliest possible City event would be the third weekend in June, based on the schedule for Recreation & Parks.

RB asked if RW was coming to the meeting with ideas or wanted to start fresh.

RW suggested playing off the last event and was open to considering new ideas.

RB recognized BPAC members who helped at the last bike rodeo (RB, SS, SE, AD, CS) and described the event, which included a maintenance station, cycling



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course, and volunteers helping children learn to ride bikes and practice signaling. The bike rodeo was held at the MACC. RB remarked on discussions of a bike rodeo in 2020 that included conversations about facilitating a bike ride, using the American Legion property, and connecting the bike rodeo with the Autumn Festival. RB suggested keeping the bike rodeo simple and revisiting how it was held in 2019.

CS asked RW to comment on the simplicity of the event given a transition period for the Mebane Police Department with Chief Caldwell's retirement.

RW mentioned people within the Department have contacted him and offered support for the bike rodeo. He remarked on the difficulty of completing a ride through Downtown given the number of intersections and his need for a police car at each intersection.

CS asked if it is simpler for the Police Department if the bike rodeo is held in conjunction with Autumn Fest when streets are already blocked, and Police are staffing the event.

RW replied it would be easier to pull officers from an event than from patrol. He asked if the Mebane Community Park could be dedicated for only the bike rodeo during the allotted time.

AD responded it would depend on how quickly a date is set for the bike rodeo. He noted something soccer-related is going on every weekend.

RB remarked Sean Ewing offered the American Legion and suggested stopping at the Community Park. She noted the need to specifically time events related to Autumn Fest. She confirmed with RW that Clay Street was blocked from Fifth to Third for the festival.

RB recognized that a ride from Autumn Fest to the American Legion or Community Park would require blocking three to four more intersections. She commented on the open house nature of past bike rodeos and the need for a distinct time if hosting a bike ride. RB asked for thoughts from the BPAC.

JS suggested hosting a rodeo over a floating period and then market a ride at a certain time.



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RW agreed to have a designated time for the ride and to know how many will be participating.

SS suggested hosting a ride beginning at the American Legion and circling through the Community Park to avoid blocking intersections.

RB recognized James Allen.

Mr. Allen commented on bike rides and races he has participated in. In one ride, a front and rear police escort was provided but intersections were not blocked or staffed by police. For road races, a rolling roadblock was often used, which allowed the road to remain open until the bulk of a group reached an intersection. Volunteers trained by police officers were used at the intersections.

RB mentioned the use of volunteers during 5K and 10K events. She mentioned that most of the children who will participate in the rodeo are under the age of ten. She asked for RW's opinion on using volunteers.

RW cautioned that due to the streets already blocked for Autumn Fest, traffic will be diverted to the discussed intersections to access North Mebane. He mentioned individuals are more likely to pay attention to blue lights at an intersection and reiterated that police officers have already contacted him with interest in assisting with the bike rodeo.

RB suggested the BPAC revisit the purpose of the bike rodeo, recognizing there are multiple purposes.

CS commented the ride is secondary to the rodeo, which is stationary and could include a ride as a feature.

RB mentioned the benefits of coordinating the rodeo with Autumn Fest and suggested to avoid a ride on Clay and travel Wilba and other side streets. She described a guided ride through residential streets that starts and ends at the American Legion building.



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RW commented a guided ride with a police car in the front and back would create enough buffer between cyclists and cars. He added a planned route is doable.

SS commented on the need to consider the number, age, and skill level of participants. She mentioned many children at the first bike rodeo did not know how to ride a bike. The most recent bike rodeo included more kids who did know how to ride.

AD suggested use of the Recreation & Parks software to help gauge the number of expected participants.

RB commented on how the ride could be marketed as a feature of the bike rodeo appropriate for certain ages and skill levels.

SS commented though the ride could be fun, it may be a lot of planning for only a handful of kids.

RB remarked she is happy to not do a ride and keep the rodeo simple. She expressed her preference for doing the rodeo Downtown in conjunction with an established event.

RB asked the BPAC to take a vote on including a bike ride with the rodeo.

ME asked for the principal goal of having a ride.

RB replied fun.

ME suggested setting up small courses to allow for different paces and skill level.

SE commented on how much the kids enjoyed the courses, especially the timed competitions, at the last rodeo.

KJ commented she was not a part of the BPAC in 2019 but attended the bike rodeo with her two sons. She decided to attend because she knew it was an enclosed space, making it more comfortable for her eight-year-old. She also appreciated the station on bike maintenance. KJ commented though the ride sounds fun, she is unsure how



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many will participate. She noted her oldest son really enjoyed the obstacle course.

RB remarked that less space would be available for a course if the bike rodeo is hosted at the American Legion. She mentioned the MACC may be a better option.

JS asked about using the parking lot at the school, which is immediately adjacent.

RB asked about the spacing between the two parking lots.

JS and RW commented it is just a flat, grassy area.

The BPAC viewed aerial imagery.

KJ remarked on the nearby track and how it could be used as an alternative to the ride.

CM agreed and thought what might be learned through a ride could be practiced on the track.

SE commented on the larger size of the American Legion parking lot.

JS asked about participation in the 2019 Bike Rodeo.

RB and RW commented 30-40, with maybe 15 at once.

RB mentioned that bikes may not be allowed on the track. She recognized James Allen.

Mr. Allen recalled servicing 24 bikes at the last rodeo and the other volunteer serviced 10-12 bikes.



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RB summarized the space at American Legion appears to be adequate, especially with permission from Yoder Elementary to use the additional parking lot or track. She also stated the MACC has adequate space.

The BPAC agreed.

RB asked for the BPAC's preference for connecting the bike rodeo with the Autumn Fest.

SS commented on considering what is happening at the MACC.

AD replied no large trade shows or tournaments are being planned and setting a date will help to reserve space at the MACC.

ME expressed his preference for connecting it with an event.

Other members of the BPAC agreed and mentioned the ability to cross-promote.

Mr. Allen asked about hosting at the MACC during Autumn Fest.

RB clarified if the bike rodeo is hosted the same weekend as Autumn Fest, it will be at the American Legion building.

RB asked RW for his opinion of hosting at the American Legion during Autumn Fest.

RW expressed his support of the idea.

RB asked who organizes Autumn Fest.

AD replied it is a Destination Downtown event.

RB stated she could check with American Legion and E.M. Yoder Elementary about using their spaces the morning of Autumn Fest.

CS advised considering when Autumn Fest kicks off. He mentioned the City should have a part-time coordinator for the Main Street Program hired by the spring, which would help with promotion. CS described support from City staff for the Autumn Fest.

RB suggested she contact Destination Downtown to discuss the timing of Autumn Fest.

AD replied the website says 10:00-5:00 and the event appears to be held the first Saturday of October.



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RB commented once a location and time are secured, the BPAC can plan the event and recruit volunteers. She suggested one adult for every two kids. RB asked if Mebane Police would be doing bike registration.

RW confirmed and explained the registration process.

RB commented the bike rodeo could include bike registration, maintenance, courses, and general teaching of how to ride a bike.

RB thanked RW and discussed follow-up.

RW commented he could contact E.M. Yoder since the Mebane Police works with the school.

RB replied she would include RW on her emails and they could talk offline about coordinating communication.

## **COMMUNITY INPUT & PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA**

CS provided background on the Town of Cary's adoption of a sidewalk prioritization program. He mentioned the topic of evaluation criteria re-emerged because of the BPAC's conversations about the Better Block Trailer. The adoption of criteria is intended to address the question: how does the BPAC review and evaluate projects, particularly requests from residents, for recommendation to Council for funding?

RB asked if more than sidewalks could be evaluated, such as crosswalks.

CS responded Cary intentionally avoided greenways because of easement acquisition concerns. He remarked shared-use paths and sidewalks are typically in the right-of-way. CS suggested evaluation criteria could be used for curb improvements, crosswalks, signage, and sidewalks.

SS commented she was not sure how many people would petition for the improvements.

CS replied establishing a policy would better allow residents to make requests. He noted it could be seen as just adding more paperwork.

ME asked about staff workload and who would conduct the evaluation.

CS replied staff would be responsible for completing the evaluation and the BPAC would make the determination of what to recommend for funding. He



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remarked on staff capacity and noted the review process would likely be one month.

RB commented the process would provide transparency to the public on how things are prioritized. She asked if the City is currently trying to solve a problem related to prioritizing improvements.

CS responded he has not received any complaints. He reiterated the criteria is rooted in the Better Block Trailer discussions and how the BPAC wants to be fair when recommending projects. CS noted the City has recently received some resident requests for sidewalk projects and must use the guidance provided in the adopted transportation plans.

SS asked how many requests the City receives.

CS responded the City receives around two sidewalk requests per year. If curb and crosswalk improvements are included, it is about one request every two months.

JS expressed his support for adopting criteria, especially given the smaller number of requests and the ability to defend a decision that could be viewed as subjective.

CS commented the Town of Cary criteria is not appropriate for Mebane (e.g. transit stops). The BPAC would need to draft its own evaluation criteria. CS clarified that BPAC feedback could be questions, especially for technical terms. He noted the feedback did not need to be provided during a meeting. CS commented the information has been provided to the BPAC to begin a discussion.

SS asked where the public would access the information.

CS replied it would be a spreadsheet maintained by staff and provided to the BPAC to review project scoring. The public could review the information at a meeting or upon request.

RB commented on continuity of BPAC membership and historical knowledge, recognizing how a project scoring spreadsheet would assist with transitions. She suggested adding information to the spreadsheet to describe what happened with the project and why.

JS agreed, especially with projects revisited later.





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CM agreed, but felt it was more applicable to permanent projects and not temporary events hosted with the Better Block Trailer. She added staff input would be needed for certain criterion.

CS added if the update to the Bike/Ped Plan remains in the Manager's recommended budget, a consultant may be able to assist with the development of evaluation criteria. This would delay when the BPAC adopts the criteria. He suggested the BPAC may want to work concurrently with the consultant.

JS supported the idea of working concurrently and receiving feedback from a consultant.

RB asked if the BPAC had any concerns with implementing evaluation criteria.

No one expressed concern.

RB asked if a good first step would be for the BPAC to mark up the criteria from Cary.

CS agreed and asked that any points of discussion or debate be documented and discussed at a future meeting.

KJ offered to begin editing the criteria and reflected on her professional experience developing scoring criteria for programs. She asked about communication with other BPAC members.

CS confirmed constructive editing and feedback can occur outside of meetings and any documents should be included in a meeting packet.

RB advised the BPAC on providing markup and suggested the edited document be included in the May packet. She asked to include more than sidewalks, such as signage, crosswalks, bike lanes, etc.

## **BETTER BLOCK TRAILER CHECK-IN**

RB reported that she presented her ideas to the Mebane City Manager and he was fine with the BPAC's ideas. She recapped the ideas discussed at the last meeting: (1) bike lane on Ruffin (2) Downtown outdoor dining with bike parking (3) traffic calming in Ashbury, specifically on Blue Lake Drive. RB reported the City Manager did not have problems with



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any of the ideas and thought the BPAC could present them to the City Council at the June meeting. He did request the BPAC complete some tasks before the June meeting:

- Ashbury traffic calming
  - Contact the Ashbury HOA
  - Consider the costs associated with certain traffic calming improvements; Manager's preference is for stop signs
- Downtown dining and bike parking
  - Decide on location and provide specifics
- Ruffin bike lane
  - Discuss with City staff

RB asked CM how to approach the Ashbury HOA.

CM replied it should be very easy and a quick sign-off. She remarked she has a good relationship with the HOA president. CM asked for the BPAC to discuss the best locations for the stop signs. She noted her conversations with neighbors tend to favor stop signs. She also likes the idea of mid-block crossings where neighborhood trails intersect with the road and a sidewalk is on the other side. CM shared her screen and reviewed a map of the Ashbury neighborhood, highlighting possible locations for stop signs and crossings.

RB asked if there were any temporary stop signs in the Better Block Trailer.

CM asked AO to review the inventory.

RB asked if Mebane Public Works could assist.

CS said he would ask Public Works and the Police about temporary stop signs.

SS expressed concerns about installing more than two or three stop signs.

JS recommended every other street or every third street.

CM highlighted where vehicles speed when entering the subdivision from York Loop Road. She recommended stop signs on Blue Lake Drive at the intersections of Grove Hall Lane, Five Pine Court, and Green Pasture Road. Additionally, CM recommended stop signs on Mockingbird Lane at the intersections of Snughill Court and Starling Street.



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RB asked if it is allowable for CM to propose what the BPAC has discussed to the Ashbury HOA and consider changes to the plan as recommended by the HOA. RB noted the importance of neighborhood input and asked if CM could bring the HOA's recommendations back to the BPAC.

CS agreed.

CM responded she could quickly get answers. She recognized concerns about stop-and-go.

The BPAC discussed driver fatigue with stop signs and the speed limit.

SS mentioned how police enforced new stop signs on London Lane. She noted the importance of reinforcement from the police.

CM and RB asked if a temporary stop sign would warrant police enforcement and how traffic violations would be handled.

CS responded staff could investigate.

CM requested the BPAC also consider a temporary crosswalk at the intersection of Mockingbird Lane and Ashbury Boulevard. She reviewed where sidewalk is located and suggested a diagonal crosswalk might be considered. CM reviewed her next step is to have a conversation with the HOA. She asked when she should report back to the BPAC.

RB reviewed that to get on the June Council, the BPAC will need to set deadlines before the BPAC's May meeting. Approval from the Ashbury HOA and Downtown businesses would be needed along with a depiction of the proposals.

CM commented she was unsure of the next scheduled HOA meeting but could connect with the HOA Board and post to the neighborhood Facebook page. She asked for a date for when the info would be needed.

CS replied staff would prefer information by Monday, May 17 and no later than the week of May 24.



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RB replied the BPAC would want to compile information and asked how fleshed out the plans must be for review by staff.

CS replied a narrative description of the projects would be needed to allow staff to prepare an agenda item summary.

RB suggested the narrative description be provided by May 17 and the BPAC work on depictions between May 17 and the Council meeting.

CS agreed and remarked Council packets would be distributed no later than June 2.

CM recognized James Allen had a comment.

Mr. Allen commented he uses Ashbury as a cut-through when he is commuting to work by bike. He remarked on the number of cars parked on Mockingbird Lane, which acts as a traffic calming device. Mr. Allen noted the curve on Mockingbird near the Blue Lake intersection carries a lot of speed and agreed that traffic calming is needed in the area.

RB asked ME about concerns related to the Ruffin bike lane.

ME responded Ruffin is a narrow road and the addition of a bike lane will reduce the amount of pavement available for vehicular travel. He mentioned redirecting traffic to be one-way would be a lot of work.

RB suggested consulting with Mebane Police and Public Works. She asked staff if it was okay for the BPAC to contact those departments to see if the project is viable.

CS asked if the City Manager had any concerns.

RB replied he did not have any comments other than to be specific with details. She asked if it was appropriate for BPAC members to work with other City staff on fleshing out a proposal to recommend to City Council.

CS responded the ordinance language gives the BPAC that latitude. He suggested the BPAC contact



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Corporal Ward and Chuck Smith, the Public Works Director.

ME responded engineering ideas and guidelines are needed to understand required pavement width.

RB asked if ME was comfortable leading the discussion with City staff.

ME agreed and suggested he would contact Public Works first and then contact the Police if the project is feasible.

RB transitioned the conversation to the third project involving outdoor dining and bike parking in Downtown Mebane.

ME commented at the last meeting the BPAC discussed not favoring a single business and asked if the City Manager is asking the opposite.

RB responded the City Manager wants the BPAC to be specific about the location, which would require conversations with affected business owners.

RB suggested not locating where outdoor dining already exists. She mentioned an area near Melville Trading and asked the BPAC for location ideas.

SS mentioned Dick & Jane's may be open for expanding their existing outdoor dining.

SE responded that may appear as favoring a particular restaurant.

SS mentioned the need to staff tables.

JS asked how large of an area could be created.

RB recalled borrowing tables and chairs from the City.

AD replied a few picnic tables (four to six) could be borrowed from different City parks.

RB recalled discussion from the last meeting about not favoring particular restaurants. She asked if the tables need to be staffed or if the area would be more like a food court and community seating.

SE was not sure a decision had been made but she leaned toward community seating. She did not think the tables



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need to be staffed and signage could be used to remind folks to clean up.

SS agreed.

RB recognized this would also avoid issues related to an ABC license.

SE asked if locating the dining outside of the Table is ideal since it is not currently operating.

RB confirmed the BPAC was considering parking spaces and suggested the two outside of the Table could accommodate four to six picnic tables.

SE added use of the spaces outside of the Table would avoid disrupting parking immediately in front of an active business.

RB recognized if the Table has sold, more activity could begin in the summer.

ME suggested Fourth Street as an option.

SS noted it is already a one-way street.

RB commented if the parking spaces near the intersection of Clay are used, the dining would be more visible.

ME commented Fourth Street is quieter and has tree cover, making it a more appealing spot to dine outdoors.

JS commented a pocket park is across the street and suggested it may be used as well.

RB asked AD if the benches were affixed.

AD responded the benches are affixed and it is not a level area.



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RB noted she knows the owner of SolGarden and could contact her. She asked how far out the BPAC should connect with other business owners on the street.

CS replied it is a public street and advised garnering as much goodwill as possible prior to the Council meeting.

RB suggested she would start with the owner of SolGarden and ask her opinion of others that might have concerns.

CS noted the property across from SolGarden on Fourth is not being actively used.

CM commented Whiskey Sours is only open in the evenings, which might preserve parking in close proximity to SolGarden during the day.

SS asked if parking in front of the building across the street is a better option since CS mentioned it was not being used.

RB responded it could be a minor impediment to cross another street, but it certainly is an option.

KJ commented a misconception is the removal of parking causes business to decline. She remarked how this presents an opportunity to have conversations with local business owners about bringing foot traffic directly outside of their businesses with extended dining space.

AD discussed the push for Food Truck Saturday and suggested the temporary dining space could be moved closer to where food trucks are parked.

RB asked who would move the tables.

AD responded it would be Recreation & Parks or Public Works. He commented the job would not be difficult for City staff to complete.



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RB suggested presenting to Council the mobility of the dining space to correspond with food truck activity. She mentioned the bike racks might move with the dining space. RB asked AD about previous discussion of borrowing bike racks from Recreation & Parks.

AD replied one bike rack was beyond repair and has been discarded. One bike rack is at Cates Farm and one at the MACC, limiting what is available to the BPAC to borrow. He suggested Recreation & Parks is considering a different type of bike rack for Cates Farm.

SE asked if the food trucks always park in the same place, suggesting the food truck could come to the dining space established on Fourth Street.

AD discussed previous locations of food trucks and how the location moves to different businesses.

SE suggested coordinating with Downtown groups to have a food truck placed near SolGarden during the Better Block event.

CS reiterated the need to have community support before presenting to Council.

SS asked how many picnic benches would be used.

RB replied four to six, borrowed from Recreation & Parks.

SS asked if there would be one big setup or if the BPAC wants to try multiple locations at once.

RB asked the BPAC for input.

SS expressed her support for trying different locations and asking the community what they like.

AD commented one concern of trying multiple locations is the need to block off the areas.





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RB commented on the need to make sure people know what the BPAC is doing, noting it would be easier to designate one space.

ME recommended one location and if received well, then expand. If received poorly, it would be easier to scale back one location with fewer picnic tables.

SE agreed.

SS asked if the idea is to use parking spaces or if the BPAC could explore a gravel lot.

RB commented a gravel lot would likely be privately-owned. She did not think the BPAC was attempting to remove parking, but it may be easier to use on-street parking spaces.

CS replied a temporary event permit and property owner permission would be needed if using a gravel lot.

AD added the Farmers Market begins in May. The location at SolGarden would be close.

ME commented on the need to have a space where people want to sit, noting a gravel lot would likely be full sun and dusty.

RB summarized the decision on outdoor dining, with BPAC support for considering the Fourth Street parking spaces outside of SolGarden.

RB reminded the BPAC of assignments and deadlines.

AO asked for a timeline and when she should request to reserve the Better Block Trailer.

RB discussed the need to market to the public and asked the BPAC for a preference of reserving the trailer from July to September or August to October.

SE preferred August to October, noting July would be a quick turnaround for planning and marketing the events.

JS agreed and suggested a later start might also allow for better weather.



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RB noted an August to October reservation would allow for coordination with the Autumn Fest and bike rodeo.

## **NEW & ONGOING BUSINESS**

The BPAC decided to wait on the Trello Board review. City staff did not have any updates to share on City projects.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

*Meeting summary by Ashley Ownbey, City of Mebane Planner*