



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

June 28, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

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NAME	REPRESENTATION
Rebecca Brouwer (RB)	City
Sarah Elder (SE)*	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

*\*SE joined by conference phone.*

*Matt Engwall had an excused absence.*

*Public Participation: Andrew Bixler, representing the Ashbury HOA, and James Allen attended the meeting in person.*

## **APPROVAL OF MAY 24, 2021, MEETING SUMMARY**

RB moved to approve the May meeting summary.

A unanimous vote (6-0) supported approval of the meeting summary.

## **BETTER BLOCK EVENT PLANNING**

RB suggested the BPAC discuss the projects and prepare for the presentation to the Mebane City Council. She asked if there were any items to discuss about the plans for the two projects.

AO replied the diagonal crossing of Ashbury Boulevard was shown to the City Engineer and he had concerns about the amount of time a pedestrian would spend in the intersection if crossing diagonally. The City Engineer recommended the typical L-shaped crossing.

CM commented she was okay with the L-shaped crossing and remarked residents may still cross diagonally.

CS responded the City wants to encourage good practice and safe movement.

Andrew Bixler commented the L-shaped crossing is beneficial in providing a crossing toward the pool.



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RB asked if staff would prepare a new rendering.

AO replied staff could prepare another rendering. She commented one of her questions for the BPAC was if additional renderings are needed.

CM asked for a rendering of a crosswalk connecting a trail to the sidewalk. She asked about a rendering for the imagined sidewalk extension near the intersection of Mockingbird and Blue Lake and questioned how the temporary treatment and permanent project would be realized.

CS replied a permanent sidewalk would be in the right-of-way, which is currently grass. For the Better Block project, he recommended marking off a short section in the gutter pan on the side of the street with cones. CS remarked the Mebane Police will need to determine the safest option.

RB asked if the affected homeowners have been contacted.

CM suggested she could visit the neighbor.

The BPAC discussed the missing sidewalk, noting it would only affect the one home addressed 100 Blue Lake Drive.

CS commented staff could accompany CM on her visit.

The BPAC determined CM should discuss the idea with the neighbor prior to staff drafting a rendering.

RB asked about the deadline for staff in preparing the packet for City Council.

CS replied by July 7.



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RB updated the BPAC on her positive conversations about the Downtown project. She commented most of her connections favored using a parking spot on Clay Street. RB remarked, if time allows, another rendering showing the outdoor dining on Clay Street would be ideal.

RB commented she emailed the Public Works Director and Police Chief. She received a response from Public Works but has not heard back from the Police. The Public Works Director asked about the role of Public Works in the projects. RB noted the following possibilities: help with trash removal; occasionally checking in to make sure everything is in good shape; and assisting with setup.

CS replied Public Works is on board to receive the Better Block Trailer and assist with setup. He suggested partnering with Destination Downtown and using other volunteers to keep an eye on the parklet and communicate with the City about any issues.

CM suggested installing a stand with sanitizing wipes to encourage users to keep the area clean.

RB commented she would contact Destination Downtown and the BPAC could establish a schedule to check on the parklet.

CS added when Public Works is Downtown, they will check on the parklet as well.

RB remarked the current rendering for the Downtown project is missing a bike rack. She recalled the Better Block Trailer did not have a bike rack.

The BPAC confirmed, noting previous plans to borrow a bike rack from Recreation and Parks.

AD responded most of the Recreation & Parks bike racks are large and may not be moveable.

SS commented her family purchased a bike rack and it was inexpensive.

CS replied staff will look into the bike rack further.



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RB mentioned she would send the list of her Downtown contacts to the BPAC presenters and noted she had shared with them about attending the Council meeting to support the project.

KJ and CM confirmed they would meet separately to prepare for the presentation to Council.

KJ asked if the BPAC is seeking approval of the project ideas.

CS confirmed the BPAC is seeking approval to use the Better Block Trailer to realize the two projects. He advised knowing of support and opposition prior to the meeting. CS remarked this is the first time for the City to complete these projects. He remarked it may be helpful to mention the City contributed matching funds towards a grant for the Better Block Trailer, allowing Mebane preferential access to the trailer.

RB suggested the BPAC may also want to describe the planned evaluation of the projects. She mentioned the use of QR Codes and surveys to inform the City if the projects are good ideas to pursue permanently.

CM asked if there should be mention that the potential measures would become permanent, noting many Ashbury residents have been wanting traffic calming for some time.

CS replied the projects are designed to test drive if the ideas work and are well-received and to troubleshoot any problems before anything becomes permanent.

CM asked if the evaluation would mainly rely on qualitative data.

RB recalled surveys available in the tactical urbanism resources that asked about satisfaction, acceptance, safety, etc.

AO confirmed there are resources that discuss evaluation.

She asked for any data describing existing concerns in Ashbury – speeding violations, number of pedestrians, etc.

CM responded most of the information is anecdotal.

AD expressed support for use of QR Codes and asked how this would occur in Ashbury.

James Allen suggested posting the codes to the stop signs.



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CS voiced support for the idea and also suggested using more traditional survey methods to reach Ashbury neighbors.

James Allen commented on the pedestrian traffic on Mockingbird.

Andrew Bixler asked about the use of temporary paint for the proposed crosswalks.

CS described the type of paint.

AD suggested using a paint other than what was used to film the Better Block video, noting the paint is still visible on the pavement.

Mr. Bixler commented on the neighborhood's desire to have well-kept streets. He remarked on possibly hanging a sign from the stop sign to include information and the QR Code.

RB asked who would complete research of evaluation methods.

AO said she could review.

CM commented she originally asked for support through the neighborhood's Facebook page, which is active.

Andrew Bixler added he could send out a mailer or mass email from the HOA. He reiterated the activity of the neighborhood's Facebook page.

CM suggested she could share a screenshot of the original Facebook post to capture the enthusiasm for the project.

SS asked if the plan was to evaluate individual stop signs.

CS responded staff will complete research.

The BPAC discussed preparation of a slide deck and expectations for the presentation.

CS advised the BPAC to prepare for a 10 to 12-minute presentation, with that time including questions.

KJ suggested the presentation focus on the why, support for the projects, and the benefits of the projects.

RB remarked the "try before you buy" aspect of the temporary projects is a major benefit.



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KJ commented on the importance of recognizing other communities doing similar Downtown projects, noting a recent trip to Downtown Elon. She added the need to consider counterarguments, particularly to explain why Ashbury was selected.

AD advised framing it as an opportunity to test first in Ashbury and later in other areas.

CM asked if Ashbury is one of the top subdivisions generating traffic complaints.

CS replied Ashbury is likely near the top for completed subdivisions. He recognized traffic calming measures required by Council for recently approved subdivisions.

Andrew Bixler mentioned Ashbury's location, noting it is a main cut-through to US 70.

James Allen echoed Mr. Bixler's point.

RB asked if there was anything else to discuss, noting time to discuss more details at the July meeting.

AO confirmed the BPAC wanted to use Graham's mobile parklet.

The BPAC agreed, with RB remarking on the benefits.

AO asked about when to reserve the parklet.

RB suggested making a reservation for after Labor Day through mid-October. The BPAC agreed.

The BPAC discussed final steps to prepare for the Council presentation, deciding AO would begin drafting slides, RB would share her notes with KJ and CM, and Planning staff would work on the draft agenda item for Council and assist CM with outreach to her neighbor.

## **BUDGET & PROJECT UPDATES**

### **BPAC Work Plan**

CS reported the 2021-2022 budget was approved by City Council and reviewed the BPAC's recommendations. He noted one BPAC recommendation was not included in the approved budget – construction of sidewalk on S Fourth Street – because of lack of



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neighborhood support. Funds for the sidewalk remain in the budget and are now discretionary bicycle and pedestrian funds. CS remarked construction of the two design projects affect calendaring, noting final designs will be needed by December. He commented on working with Duke Energy on the Third-Fifth Greenway Connector. CS reported the Bike/Ped Plan update was approved along with the Recreation & Parks Master Plan. The plan updates are designed to be completed together.

AD commented on the Lake Michael Connector, which was approved in the 2021-2022 budget. He updated the BPAC on public input meetings to extend Lake Michael trails around the lake.

Andrew Bixler asked about connections from Ashbury to Lake Michael.

AD replied the master plan project will help identify that and other needs. He commented on the installation of a trailhead.

Mr. Bixler suggested discussing the matter with the Ashbury HOA.

CS remarked on the parking challenge.

CM and RB asked for additional information on parking requirements.

CS recognized further discussion is needed and recommended the discussion begin with the HOA.

AD highlighted some obstacles and agreed with CS regarding the first step being with the HOA.

JS suggested some users would park at Lake Michael and walk to the Ashbury connection.

## **FY22 (July 2021 – June 2022) Calendar**

AO reviewed a calendar draft, commenting on when conversations should occur related to street resurfacing and capital project recommendations.

RB asked when discussion of the Bike/Ped Plan update would occur.

CS suggested a start date of January 2022.

RB asked if more than the BPAC will be engaged with the plan update.



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CS responded his idea is a core group of BPAC members with additional members to increase geographical and demographic representation. He suggested a liaison from the RPAC.

RB suggested a “look ahead” appended to every BPAC agenda.

CS commented on the value of having a calendar and anticipating agenda items.

RB commented on the need for more information about when new subdivisions will be completed.

CS asked RB to define “completed.”

RB remarked her interest may be more for projects, such as the trails at Cates Farm or the first leg of the greenway. She commented on the evolving connection points as new projects are approved and completed.

JS referenced Tupelo Junction and suggested using when people will be living in houses and accessing Lake Michael Park from the subdivision.

CS reviewed a map of subdivision activity around Lake Michael Park, discussing progress of the subdivisions and bicycle and pedestrian improvements. He asked the BPAC to identify what level of information they would like regarding the new subdivisions.

RB agreed with the previous description by JS, noting the BPAC would want to know when people or access points exist in a subdivision.

JS suggested when bike/ped infrastructure is complete and 25% of the lots built.

The BPAC agreed.

SS asked for more information about what type of infrastructure will be built.

RB suggested a quick update of bike/ped infrastructure as plans are approved.

KJ requested a list categorizing projects by approved, in progress, and useable or “complete.”





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RB asked if a running list already exists.

CS replied this is a summer project for Planning staff.

KJ suggested using the Trello Board.

CS commented Planning staff intends to have a development map available online by Labor Day.

JS referenced a presentation by NCDOT that mentioned a five-year resurfacing plan for municipalities. He asked if that was available for the BPAC and if the plan was accurate enough to assist with projections.

CS replied the plan is available and he can request. He commented the plan has historically been 70-80% accurate due to priority projects. CS remarked on NCDOT's financial issues that placed a pause on resurfacing projects.

SS asked about types of crosswalks, noting the two parallel lines (e.g. Jackson and Fifth) may not be as effective as a more traditional crosswalk (e.g. Mebane Oaks and Fifth). Additionally, she asked about crosswalk decisions by NCDOT.

CS responded municipalities are allocated Powell Bill funds to improve City streets. NCDOT programs its funds according to federal and state funding. He remarked on the differences in responsibilities and approval processes for the City and NCDOT. CS described three tiers of crosswalks: simple, painted high-visibility, and thermoplastic high-visibility.

CM commented she recently had a similar thought that a major issue with the crossing at Jackson and Fifth is the simplicity of the crossing.

RB agreed, remarking it does not seem to be taken as a serious crosswalk.

RB asked if that is a blanket recommendation that could come from the BPAC.

CS responded the usual practice by City staff is to recommend the simple crosswalk (parallel lines) where stop signs are present. A non-stop condition in any direction would result in a recommendation for a high-



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visibility crossing. He noted staff would likely recommend a higher visibility crossing of Fifth at Jackson if the crosswalk were being installed today.

CM asked if the question was if it would be faster to have NCDOT improve the crossing or for the City to pursue an encroachment agreement.

CS agreed.

The BPAC briefly discussed the recommended crossing of Brown at Ninth, commenting the recommendation was for a high-visibility crosswalk without thermoplastic.

## **PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET**

RB referenced discussion at the May meeting and suggested asking for the City Engineer's opinion on previously discussed items related to "Stop Ahead" markings on London Lane and improvements to the Jackson/Fifth crosswalk.

James Allen commented on a recent experience in Greensboro where he noticed the integration of the pedestrian push button with the stoplight to allow the pedestrian to get ahead of turning vehicles. He asked if that was standard practice.

CS replied there is best practice and not every intersection is currently to that standard. He commented on the need for NCDOT approval and the City's role.

SS asked if Mr. Allen was referencing programming/timing of the signals.

Mr. Allen confirmed.

CS clarified his earlier statement, remarking it is becoming a more common practice and involves programming of signals.

KJ remarked on safety concerns with pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Mebane Oaks and Fifth, noting the need for pedestrians to get an earlier start than turning vehicles.

RB asked if Arrowhead Boulevard was City-maintained.

SS asked about overhead signs on Arrowhead approaching the intersection with Mebane Oaks to better inform drivers about through and turn lanes.



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CS commented the intersection is included in the bridge improvement project. He suggested SS take the comment to Council as public comment or an email, outside of her role as a BPAC member, to request the City put up additional signage in its right-of-way. He commented the bridge project will be ongoing for at least two years and is not sure when the Arrowhead-Mebane Oaks intersection will be improved.

Andrew Bixler suggested using pavement markings in the travel lanes.

RB asked about crossings of Arrowhead. She commented on the need for the BPAC to consider if there are parts of the City they are missing.

James Allen commented on the number of walkers and runners on Arrowhead.

RB asked about sidewalk on Oakwood from the intersection with S Eleventh to Arrowhead.

CS responded a 10' multi-use path will be constructed by new development on the east side of Oakwood. There will be gaps due to existing single-family residential.

RB asked if the BPAC knew of anyone south of the Interstate along Old Hillsborough Rd.

James Allen commented on development in the West Ten Road area.

CS replied residential development is approved along Bowman Road. Other development in the West Ten area is industrial.

Andrew Bixler suggested asking residents of Collington Farms for input.

CS commented in the past two years, the BPAC made a request to Council for a bridge connecting Forest Oaks Lane and Sutton Place (Collington Farms). He remarked the City has only received preliminary scores from NCDOT for the project, which scored well. CS commented it would be a 5-10 year process to realize a project funded by the State. He added the proposed multi-use path along US 70 connecting to Ashbury also scored well. The connectors to Mill Creek and the S Third St Extension did not score well. CS commented on the need to serve residents of Governors Green and Villages at Copperstone with a multi-use path along S Third St Extension.



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CM asked about updates for the well-scoring SPOT projects.

CS replied it would likely be the winter.

James Allen asked about a pedestrian culvert access under the railroad around Ninth St.

CS replied an underpass was considered at a different location as part of a traffic separation study. The cost estimate was \$3 million with a year or two of permitting.

JS asked about the projects that did not do well and the process to make them more desirable.

CS responded safety is the biggest driver. Additionally, the NCDOT considers existing right-of-way and environmental challenges. He remarked on the challenging grade of 119. CS added new development on 119 would be required to construct a greenway.

CM mentioned a goat path on Buckhorn beginning at US 70 and extending to Washington or Frazier.

CS commented the area is outside of the City's jurisdiction and questions exist about maintenance of any pedestrian infrastructure. He added the City is a stakeholder in a US 70 corridor plan.

JS asked about a crossing of Lebanon at Ashland/Lake Michael Way. He commented on the need for a crossing and/or improved traffic calming.

RB added a need also exists on Lebanon from Ashland to York Loop to improve safety for pedestrians.

CM commented on how residents of Ashbury often cross Lebanon from York Loop to Hunters Run.

CS commented on recommendations of the Bike/Ped Plan in the area.

RB commented on discussion in the past that identified issues with realizing sidewalk in the area.

CS commented Engineering and Public Works will need to weigh in.

RB commented the BPAC will brainstorm ideas to discuss during the July meeting.



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## **NEW & ONGOING BUSINESS**

The BPAC had no new business to discuss.

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

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