



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

November 22, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

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NAME	REPRESENTATION
Rebecca Brouwer (RB)	City
Sarah Elder (SE)	City
Chelsey Morrison (CM)*	Orange County
Sylvia Sichi (SS)	City
Jason Smith (JS)	Alamance County ETJ
Aaron Davis (AD)	Recreation and Parks Director
Cy Stober (CS)	Development Director
Ashley Ownbey (AO)	City Planner

*\*CM joined by conference telephone.*

*Katy Jones had an excused absence. Matt Engwall had an unexcused absence.*

*Public Participation: Sean Ewing*

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

AO reported no public comment was received and the inclusion of the item on the agenda was to account for any in-person attendance by the public.

CS remarked on the need to include “public comment” on agendas for open meetings.

RB asked if meetings of other boards and commissions are considered open.

CS confirmed meetings of all appointed board and commissions are considered open, though the BPAC is the only commission not governed by State law with livestreamed meetings. Meetings of the REAC and RPAC are not livestreamed.

## **APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 25, 2021, MEETING SUMMARY**

Approval of the October meeting summary was delayed due to absent BPAC members.

RB commented on the need to schedule future discussion of Better Block ideas mentioned in the summary, specifically the Ruffin bike lane.

AO mentioned an idea from KJ presented during the October meeting to couple presentation of new Better Block ideas with results from the completed Better Block projects.

RB asked if the BPAC discussed scheduling a presentation to City Council.



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JS responded a presentation date had not been discussed.

CS replied the BPAC will need to communicate with the Manager's Office to schedule presentation to Council. He offered staff's support.

## **DEBRIEF OF BETTER BLOCK PROJECTS**

RB asked if the BPAC is expected to take action after reviewing the results, such as making recommendations to Council for permanent projects.

CS replied the BPAC does not have an obligation to arrive at recommendations during the meeting. He suggested the next step is for the BPAC to present recommendations to the Council according to results of the projects.

AO asked CS to discuss the technical review of the Better Block projects by City staff.

CS described that the City's departments are reviewing what the temporary projects accomplished and evaluating recommendations for permanent projects.

RB summarized the BPAC would focus on consideration of feedback from the public and defer to the professional judgment of City staff.

CS discussed the budget timeline and how it corresponds to a recommendation from the BPAC. He suggested a recommendation by January.

The BPAC reviewed survey results for the Ashbury traffic calming project.

CM commented on her interaction with Ashbury neighbors. She remarked that most of her interactions were positive, though angrier voices were louder on the neighborhood's Facebook page. She suggested she could screenshot the Facebook posts to share them with the BPAC and noted she encouraged everyone commenting on Facebook to complete the survey.

CS replied City staff have discussed the influence of social media on the Better Block projects. Staff has decided to focus on official responses to the survey and not include social media posts and discussions. CS emphasized the formal survey as the source for public feedback. He remarked on the City's desire to improve outreach



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and ensure feedback is received from a variety of individuals, which does mean using social media.

The BPAC expressed agreement with this approach.

CM asked if there was a way to determine if someone submitted multiple responses to the survey and expressed concerns about individuals with strong feelings about the stop signs.

AO responded there was not a way to track that information.

RB asked the BPAC about recommending crosswalks in Ashbury, given the neighborhood's positive response. She suggested pursuing crosswalks from sidewalk to sidewalk as opposed to the midblock crossings to private trails. RB mentioned the Mebane Police Department (PD) is completing a more formal evaluation of the stop signs and asked if the BPAC should defer to the Mebane PD on that matter.

CS agreed and remarked the value of traffic calming is something the BPAC can consider. He mentioned traffic calming of automobiles is to the benefit of pedestrians and bicyclists. CS suggested the BPAC could make general recommendations for traffic calming in areas of Mebane, with decisions regarding specific measures and locations decided by law enforcement. He mentioned the City may request support from a consultant to assess the stop signs.

CM commented a neighbor suggested lowering the speed limit in the neighborhood to help with traffic calming.

SE commented on her experience living in Mill Creek and the lack of attention paid to neighborhood speed limits. She suggested traffic calming with stop signs is more effective at slowing motorists down unless speed limits are actively enforced.

CM agreed and commented on speeding in Ashbury. She remarked on the location of her home at a curve in the road and how she noticed cars slowing down because of the stop signs at Blue Lake and Mockingbird. CM commented on the lack of police enforcement of the temporary stop signs and suggested enforcement be included with future temporary projects.

SS recalled discussion of cost differences for the crosswalks due to curb ramps. She asked AO which crosswalks were considered more expensive, remarking the crosswalk at the four-way intersection of Ashbury was a given.



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AO agreed and commented the crosswalk at the four-way intersection was the only one without the need for curb ramp improvements.

CS commented staff will be reviewing the crosswalks as if Ashbury were a new subdivision and considering who would be responsible for installing the crosswalks, given some of them connect to private trail networks.

The BPAC reviewed a document reporting an engineer's preliminary assessment of the crosswalks.

SS asked the cost of a curb ramp.

AO was unsure and suggested she could review the cost of the curb ramp at N Third and Crawford installed Spring 2021.

CS estimated \$3,000, give or take \$1,000.

Later in the meeting, AO reported the pricing estimate for the curb ramp installed in Spring 2021 was \$2,500/ramp.

The BPAC moved to review of survey results for the Downtown parklet.

CS congratulated the BPAC for the number of survey responses to the two Better Block projects and the level of community engagement.

During discussion of the survey results, the BPAC discussed the following:

- Ability to address negative feedback by considering a new location and design
- Models/approaches for permanent parklets, such as application by local businesses or City-led initiatives
  - During this discussion, CS mentioned the City's recent approval of the Downtown Exterior Improvement Grant, which may be used to support outdoor seating in Downtown.
  - JS mentioned potential issues with a model in which businesses apply to install a parklet, noting a scenario where multiple businesses apply and then parklets easily crowd Clay Street.
- The width of Downtown sidewalks and maintaining ADA compliance

RB asked the BPAC if they would like to make any immediate recommendations for the Better Block projects.



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JS responded if the BPAC is able to come to conclusions at the meeting, it makes sense to move forward more quickly while the projects and survey results are fresh.

SE asked how to know if the survey results are revealing community support for the projects.

CS and RB replied the BPAC will not know, with CS adding the BPAC will have to use its expertise as an advisory body when making recommendations.

RB remarked she is comfortable recommending the crosswalk at the four-way stop in Ashbury, completing the sidewalk gap on Mockingbird, and installing a crosswalk at Blue Lake and Mockingbird. She expressed hesitancy recommending mid-block crossings to trail connections.

CM agreed and recommended adding language for traffic calming measures, such as “stop signs placed based on the recommendation of consultant and Police Department.” She expressed interest in understanding how the consultant feels about a speed limit reduction. CM reported the speed limit is 25 mph throughout the neighborhood, which she finds appropriate for Ashbury Boulevard but not for other streets.

RB agreed with CM’s recommendations and asked the BPAC about the type of crosswalk. She expressed concerns about the visibility of a crossing at Blue Lake and Mockingbird.

CM suggested the BPAC recommend stop signs at the Blue Lake and Mockingbird intersection, which is the first intersection if entering from York Loop.

RB agreed and suggested a high-visibility crossing would be necessary if stop signs were not installed.

CM commented she does not want to ask for too little and asked if all stop signs should be recommended by the BPAC.

RB deferred to staff and asked if it is better for the BPAC to consider the recommendations of City staff and any consultants.

CS replied the BPAC is welcome to have positions regarding the need for traffic calming and whether the project appeared successful, but recommendations



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regarding location of stop signs would be the responsibility of others.

CM asked if the BPAC should wait for the consultant on the crosswalks as well and then make a recommendation.

CS replied that is not necessary but can be the BPAC's strategy. He remarked on the differences between traffic control and bicycle/pedestrian improvements.

JS remarked he is not sure how the BPAC would react differently if they waited on the report from the consultant regarding crosswalks.

The BPAC agreed to recommend the crosswalk improvements described by RB and general traffic calming to promote safety, deferring to the Mebane Police Department and traffic consultant on the exact measures and locations.

RB asked the BPAC to consider any specific recommendations regarding signage and design of crosswalks, noting the addition of stop signs would impact the decision. She suggested including language with the recommendation to consider additional signage if stop signs are not recommended in certain locations.

The BPAC agreed.

SE asked how to keep the Ashbury neighborhood informed of the project's progress.

CS asked if the BPAC is making a recommendation to the City Manager now or after the next meeting.

RB expressed a general need to know more about the expectations regarding formal recommendations from the BPAC and the pathway.

CS replied it would depend on the urgency of the action, which can be specified in the memo to the City Manager. The letter would also need to include any requests to present to City Council or link recommendations to budget requests. CS summarized the BPAC would 1) determine the timing of the recommendation, and 2) determine if the recommendation ends with the City Manager or City Council.



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RB asked how the BPAC would know the right path.

CS replied it would depend if the request is for the upcoming budget or outside the budget process.

The BPAC asked how they would know if a request fit in either of those categories.

CS asked if the BPAC would be satisfied waiting until June 2023 or if action is needed sooner.

RB suggested immediate action items are ones related to safety concerns and noted the City Manager would determine what requires Council action.

CS commented any appropriation of funds requires Council action. He remarked on the differences between more affordable projects that use discretionary funds and more expensive, capital projects.

After the discussion, RB suggested the crosswalks do not appear to be an immediate need and the BPAC should wait to formalize a recommendation to the City Manager once the traffic calming has been evaluated by others.

JS agreed the stop signs are critical to determining a path. He asked CS if he expects information from the consultant by the next BPAC meeting.

CS replied probably not, though he expects City staff to have completed an evaluation.

The BPAC agreed to discuss a more formal recommendation at the December meeting.



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SE asked to return to discussion of communicating with the residents of Ashbury and requested input from CM.

CM responded the recommendation for sidewalk on Mockingbird should be communicated separately since a single property is affected. She commented she would draft a more general email, without any promised action, for the BPAC to review.

The BPAC moved to discussion of the Downtown parklet.

SE asked if the BPAC should do a “Round Two” in another location.

RB suggested reviewing the feedback and experiment with another location in alignment with survey comments.

SE remarked the feedback for the parklet was varied, making her less confident in making a recommendation.

JS asked how much more positive or negative sentiment would be required to help with a decision.

SE asked how many of the individuals rating the parklet as “1” were due to location and appearance.

RB suggested the BPAC review responses from the individuals rating the parklet with one, two, or three and determine if there is an opportunity to improve. She requested sharing of the raw data with the BPAC to determine if a Round Two of the parklet should be considered. RB asked if the City would be amenable to testing a parklet in a new location for one month, perhaps in March, and reminding the public the appearance will change with a permanent project.

JS suggested revising the survey to not ask about the appearance and to focus on assessing the new location and safety.

AO suggested coordinating with the Downtown community before moving forward with plans.

CS advised communicating with the City’s Main Street Coordinator.





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RB suggested the BPAC review the survey results, paying attention to location in particular, and discuss new locations at the December meeting. She advised inviting the Main Street Coordinator to the January meeting for discussion with the BPAC and consulting with Downtown businesses.

CS advised setting up the parklet in one day or one weekend at the longest.

The BPAC briefly discussed possible changes to the design of the parklet.

JS asked about the timing for Council approval for a parklet in March.

RB suggested meeting with the Downtown community before the BPAC's January meeting.

CS commented members of the BPAC could discuss the matter with the Main Street Coordinator at any time. He mentioned coordinating with the Dogwood Festival in April.

## **2022 BPAC RETREAT**

RB reported ME and CM are rolling off the BPAC and there will be two new members. She described conversation she and ME have had regarding revisiting the big picture for the BPAC. RB asked if the BPAC would find value in holding a retreat.

SE expressed her support and noted the challenge of getting caught up as a new member.

RB asked what would be helpful to do at the retreat.

SE commented on the extensive information provided to the BPAC, which can be overwhelming. She suggested reviewing the original plan, changes to the plan, and thinking about the future.



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JS added including conversation of what projects in the Bike/Ped Plan have been completed.

SE commented on the value of including the entire BPAC in the orientation for new members.

CM mentioned the Trello Board as a useful resource for providing an overview.

SS mentioned looking at Mebane as a whole and considering the future with the approved developments.

RB agreed and suggested review of paper maps at the retreat that the BPAC can mark up.

RB asked if the BPAC could have a meal at the retreat.

CS confirmed the City can cater a retreat.

RB asked if the BPAC would be comfortable scheduling a retreat for March, noting the new members' first meeting will be in February.

SE mentioned the possibility of Round Two with the parklet in March and asked if that would be too much.

The BPAC agreed it would not be too much.

SS asked if there were any maps showing future development, with sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.

CS replied a master map with those details is unlikely to be available, but staff could have site plans on hand.

AO responded she could add subdivisions to the map she created for previous discussion of the pedestrian network in the Lake Michael area.

AO mentioned the timeline presented in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the update to the Bike/Ped Plan includes a kickoff meeting in March. She suggested the BPAC stay ahead of that schedule to be more prepared for the plan updates.



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RB asked the BPAC if Sunday, March 6 would work for the retreat, suggesting the morning.

SS expressed preference for Sunday afternoon.

SE commented on the need to consult with the new members.

## **NEW & ONGOING BUSINESS**

### **NCDOT Resources**

AO commented information on crash data was requested at the October meeting. She reviewed links provided to the BPAC for NCDOT data and added coordination with the Mebane Police Department would be needed for more information on local streets.

CS commented on streets maintained by the City.

RB asked if the BPAC could have a hidden page to include its resources.

SE suggested using the Trello Board.

JS asked for more Mebane-specific data related to City-maintained streets.

CS commented the BPAC would need to request the data from the Manager's Office.

He commented on the [Vision Zero program](#).

RB replied she would make the request and asked if any other data would be helpful to the BPAC.

AO mentioned data from the Citizen Reporter could be useful in the future.

### **Advertising Open BPAC Positions**

AO mentioned the City is advertising for the two open positions and asked the BPAC to share the information with anyone who may be a good fit.

### **City Email Accounts**

Members of the BPAC commented on issues with setting up and accessing the new email accounts. City staff agreed to follow up on the issues.

JS commented he was receiving all emails sent to City employees, which are not often relevant.

### **Burlington-Graham MPO (BGMPO) Highway Safety Program**

CS reported the BGMPO will be holding a kickoff soon to develop a highway safety program, which will include consideration for bicyclist and pedestrian safety. He mentioned the consultant will likely want to meet with the BPAC.



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## **Updates from the Chair**

RB reported on a meeting with CS, AO, the City Manager, and the Assistant City Manager to discuss the BPAC's role in traffic calming requests. She commented on the traffic calming policy established by the City and the need for the BPAC to follow the policy.

RB suggested providing a recap at the end of each BPAC meeting to review communication needed with the Manager's Office. She noted the only item on her to-do list is request for crash data.

## **December Meeting**

The BPAC agreed to meet Monday, December 20 due to City offices being closed on Monday, December 27.

## **Trello Board**

The BPAC briefly reviewed the Trello Board and discussed the anticipated schedule for updates to the Bike/Ped Plan.

## **Capital Project Recommendations**

AO asked CS if he needed recommendations from the BPAC on any capital projects.

CS requested a recommendation to support continued work on the W Crawford sidewalk project and Third-Fifth greenway connector.

SE made a motion for the City to budget for continued work on the preliminary and final designs for the W Crawford sidewalk and Third-Fifth greenway connector.

JS seconded the motion. A unanimous vote of approval (5-0) supported the motion.

CS provided updates on neighborhood outreach for the W Crawford sidewalk project, commenting on the need to hear from a few more neighbors before investing funds in a design.

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

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