



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

January 24, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

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NAME	REPRESENTATION
Rebecca Brouwer (RB)	City
Matt Engwall (ME)	City
Katy Jones (KJ)*	City
Chelsey Morrison (CM)*	Orange County
Sylvia Sichi (SS)	City
Aaron Davis (AD)*	Recreation and Parks Director
Cy Stober (CS)	Development Director
Ashley Ownbey (AO)	City Planner

*Sarah Elder and Jason Smith had excused absences.*

*\*Katy Jones and Chelsey Morrison joined by conference telephone. Aaron Davis joined by Zoom.*

## **APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MEETING SUMMARY**

RB moved to approve the December meeting summary.

A unanimous vote (4-0) supported approval of the meeting summary. SS was not present for the vote.

## **NEW MEBANE TRAILS MAP**

The BPAC reviewed the City Trail Map.

RB commented on notes added by staff – the need to include Cates Farm Park and Mebane Community Park. She remarked the new map should also reflect updates to the road network, such as the extension of Corregidor. RB asked how the trails at the Community Park and Cates Farm Park would be shown – in the legend or in a callout as is currently done for Lake Michael Park.

AD asked if a summary of the entire length of the trail network at Cates Farm Park (2 miles) and the Community Park (0.5 mile) was sufficient.

RB agreed.

SS requested public restrooms be shown on the new map.

AO asked for the location of public restrooms.

The BPAC listed restrooms at public facilities:

- The old recreation center on Third Street



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- Walker Athletic Complex
- Mebane Arts & Community Center
- Mebane Community Park
- Lake Michael Park

ME commented the restrooms at Walker Athletic Complex are only open when the park is in session.

AD reported the City is working to install heaters in the restrooms to avoid closing them during the off-season.

RB supported the inclusion of restrooms on the map. She remarked on Mebane's inclusion in the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

RB asked if the walking trails at the Mebane Community Park should be shown in a different color given the proximity to the existing trail network. She noted it would not be marked with pavers like the other trails.

The BPAC supported the idea.

RB commented she was not committed to the current design of the map. She asked that the Mebane on the Move logo still be included in the new design.

SS asked about including points of interest, such as Downtown, the library, and Tanger Outlets.

ME suggested trails remain the focus.

CS commented the historic Downtown district will be included on the new map.

CM asked if the street names would be more legible.

RB agreed and commented the street names would be easier to read on a larger sign.

RB asked if the new map was constrained to the size of the current sign.

CS replied a new map would need to maintain the current size and orientation.

RB asked if the City prefers to redesign the map.

CS responded staff was seeking the BPAC's input.



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RB reiterated she was not committed to the design and did not want the City to feel locked in by the current map. She reviewed the major elements to be included in a new map: trails that stand out; distances of trails; road names. RB added the inclusion of parks, public restrooms, and points of interest.

ME expressed concern with including too many points of interest on the map.

SS commented on how certain points of interest, such as the Tanger Outlets and library, include restrooms.

CS suggested staff would draft a map and add more points of interest if the map is not too busy. He added once staff is comfortable with a map, it will be sent to BPAC for further review.

AD commented he would be requesting funds in the next budget year to redesign and order new map holders. He reported SynTech is providing cost estimates. AD noted development of greenways, new trails at Lake Michael, and other improvements would necessitate a new map and discussion of size, scale, and orientation could occur with those changes.

RB suggested adding the Fitness Court at the Mebane Community Park and the fitness stations at the Mebane Arts and Community Center. She asked if the fields at E.M. Yoder are shared-use.

CS reported they are shared-use.

RB suggested any shared-use active areas may be helpful to add to the map. She noted the purpose of the map could expand to include more than trails.

AD suggested a name change to "City Wellness Map."

CS commented a broader map should include input from other advisory commissions and more City staff. He suggested this initial redesign remain focused as a trails map and the BPAC consider a larger revamp in the future.

RB asked for evaluation of the Dogwood Trail given the re-routing associated with the bypass project.

The BPAC reviewed how the Dogwood Trail connects from Third to Fifth via Foust.



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CS commented the road network is different in the area, but someone could still travel the established route.

SS asked if the sidewalk around Foust has changed and if the wayfinding pavement markers are now gone.

CS responded the pavement markers will be reinstalled.

SS asked if the community garden should remain on the map.

RB supported its inclusion on the map, remarking it remains an active garden.

## **BETTER BLOCK RECOMMENDATIONS CHECK-IN**

CS updated the BPAC the City has not signed the contract to begin the traffic study in the Ashbury neighborhood.

RB reported she has not had a chance to meet with the Main Street Coordinator but the two have a meeting scheduled for February 22. She recalled the BPAC had decided on moving forward with a general recommendation regarding crosswalks in Ashbury and the parklet in the spring, more of a report back to the City Council.

CS and AO agreed.

RB suggested tabling the recommendations until after she meets with the Main Street Coordinator.

RB asked if CM had any updates from the Ashbury neighborhood.

CM did not have anything new to report.

## **2021 ANNUAL REPORT AND WORK PLAN**

AO reported the annual report and work plan operate on the calendar year, despite the City's fiscal year running from July to June. She shared the purpose of the document is to celebrate the BPAC's accomplishments and plan for the coming year.

The BPAC reviewed a list of items summarizing 2021 activity and plans for 2022, which include projects recommended to the City Council for the 2022-2023 budget, updates to the Bike/Ped Plan, and possible bicycle campaigns.



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In review of the 2022 work plan, RB added she is working on the grant application for bicycle helmets and expects another bike rodeo. She added the BPAC will continue to support realizing a greenway.

RB asked if details were needed regarding the BPAC's role in updating the Bike/Ped Plan.

AO replied the Request for Proposals (RFP) is scheduled to be released soon. She noted once a consultant is selected, the BPAC's role will be more clearly identified.

RB referenced how community members assisted with drafting the current plan and asked if a similar structure is to be determined.

CS responded accountability to the BPAC is included in the RFP. He remarked the BPAC's time is expected, and the consultant is likely to hold regular check-in meetings with the BPAC.

RB suggested identifying the BPAC's role in the 2022 work plan.

CS added the role will need to be defined from the Recreation and Parks Advocacy Commission (RPAC) since a Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Master Plan will also be completed. He suggested liaisons from the RPAC and BPAC are likely to be needed.

CM asked if future Better Block projects should be included in the 2022 work plan.

AO and RB recalled discussion from the last meeting to identify future Better Block projects during the process to update the Bike/Ped Plan.

ME asked about previous discussion of a speed reduction on S Fifth given comments received about the intersection of Foust and S Fifth Street. He mentioned a request for crash data.

RB reported she does not expect the BPAC to receive the crash data requested a few months ago. She remarked speed limit recommendations drift towards a police matter and the City's established traffic calming policy. RB suggested it not be included in the work plan since it is not clearly in the BPAC's lane.

AO agreed and mentioned the traffic changes in the area have created hesitation with making a recommendation for a speed limit reduction.



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CS and RB reflected on changing traffic patterns with the opening of the bypass.

RB suggested including information in the work plan with how the BPAC will interact with and work alongside the RPAC and City departments.

SS asked about a completion date for the bypass.

CS responded the City is hopeful it will be completed in the near future and noted the limitations of painting during the winter months and supply chain issues.

RB asked if the annual report and work plan is presented to the City Council in March.

CS replied the document is typically sent to the City Manager first and not always presented to Council.

RB confirmed the BPAC would need to formally approve the document.

AO agreed and suggested the document will be prepared by the next meeting.

## **CELEBRATE OUTGOING BPAC MEMBERS**

RB recognized ME and CM who are ending their terms as BPAC members January 31, 2022.

She asked for them to continue to be involved and share their thoughts with the BPAC. RB asked if the BPAC application window has closed.

AO confirmed the application deadline has passed. She reported the City received one application for the Orange County position and five applications for the open City position.

RB reminded the BPAC the City Council will appoint new members at the February 7 meeting.

RB suggested the City keep a running roster of past BPAC members.

CM asked for the BPAC to alert her of events, like the bike rodeo, remarking she would like to volunteer when possible.

ME agreed.

## **PLANNING FOR THE BPAC 2022 RETREAT**



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RB recalled the BPAC had selected a tentative date of March 6 for the BPAC retreat but was waiting for new members to solidify a date. She commented the item is on the agenda to discuss how the BPAC and staff can prepare for the retreat. RB reported that she and ME have discussed using the retreat as an opportunity to take a 10,000-foot view of Mebane and consider where Mebane is headed. This would consider new neighborhoods and new bicycle, pedestrian, and recreational facilities and allow the BPAC to assess a bigger picture view of Mebane.

ME added CS had mentioned guest speakers.

CS asked if the BPAC wants guidance from the outside or if the BPAC is looking to hit a reset on approaching its mission. He added speakers could become part of the BPAC's regular meeting schedule.

ME supported RB's idea of focusing the retreat on a bigger picture of Mebane and suggested the BPAC return to that perspective every so often.

RB added the BPAC retreat is for the benefit of new members and to prepare for the upcoming kickoff of updates to the Bike/Ped Plan. She asked about the schedule for the plan update.

AO responded the projected kickoff is May.

RB asked KJ and SS to reflect on what topics would be helpful to include in a BPAC retreat.

KJ advised having clear objectives of what the BPAC would like to accomplish during the retreat. She suggested having a defined agenda ahead of the retreat.

RB asked if there were specific topics that would be helpful to brainstorm about ahead of the Bike/Ped Plan update.

KJ commented a walking audit by the BPAC would be useful to do, though she recognized that may not be possible before the retreat. She added that each member of the BPAC brings their own experiences traveling Mebane and she is craving a more holistic understanding of the needs of the entire community.

RB recognized that a walking audit could become part of the process to update the Bike/Ped Plan.

ME asked if a retreat could be in place of a Monday meeting.

RB agreed that was possible.



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SS commented on her desire to look at all of Mebane, including future developments and which areas need to be better connected.

RB asked about the possibilities of a large, printed map that shows what development and projects exist and are happening.

AO remarked it was on her to-do list. AO and CS discussed the process of creating such a map.

RB requested the map show which roads are maintained by NCDOT and which roads are maintained by the City.

ME suggested BPAC explore different parts of Mebane after reviewing the maps.

RB commented on past experience conducting street segment assessments in Mebane, which involved noting sidewalks, streetlights, stop signs, conditions, etc. Mebane was used as a community in research for work. She remarked on the value of the assessment, which was completed in 2011 over a period of months.

CM suggested including discussion of budgeting, funding sources, encroachment agreements, scheduling, and typical costs.

RB added having a type of cheat sheet for some of the operational components.

RB recalled the retreat could be off-site and include snacks.

CS asked for the BPAC to complete two tasks ahead of the retreat: 1) revisit the ordinance and 2) conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the BPAC. He suggested asking ME and CM to complete a SWOT before exiting could be helpful.

RB reflected on the value of collecting departing comments from ME and CM. She asked for AO to send the ordinance to the BPAC prior to the retreat.

RB asked about her meeting with the newly appointed BPAC members.

CS commented she could meet with them with or without City staff.

AO remarked on an orientation City staff will hold with the newly appointed members.





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RB asked about what links are shared with new members.

AO replied she created a new member packet, which she can share.

The BPAC reflected on the challenges on being a new member.

## **NEW & ONGOING BUSINESS**

RB commented the Mebane Women's Club and Mebane on the Move have gathered individuals interested in encouraging use of Mebane trails and the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. They are intending to partner with the City on educational offerings, hiking clubs, signage, events, and other things that would encourage use of the trails. Sherri Seagroves of the RPAC is leading the group, which is called the Mebane Trail Rangers. RB met with Ms. Seagroves, AD, and the City's Main Street Coordinator and voiced support on behalf of the BPAC.

AD added the City will be issuing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that could include the Triangle Off-Road Cyclists (TORC) for Lake Michael Park and possibly another group for Cates Farm Park. He clarified that Sherri Seagroves is now Secretary of the RPAC.

RB recalled previous conversation by the BPAC about the need for a "Friends of the Greenway" and how the Mebane Trail Rangers will be similar. She invited any interested BPAC members to visit the Mebane Trail Rangers' Facebook page.

SS asked who was the new RPAC Chair.

AD replied Jesse Whitaker who is a tennis enthusiast.

CM asked if Mebane Trails are available on trail and running apps. She mentioned the AllTrails app.

RB responded the Cates Farm trails have been submitted to AllTrails and the Mebane Trail Rangers are also submitting to other nature apps, such as one for bird watching.

ME added TORC is working to update trail information on apps as well.

AO mentioned the Watch For Me NC program is accepting applications. She commented it may be too late to apply this year but may be worth considering if the BPAC desires to partner with the Mebane Police Department in the future.



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CS remarked the City has historically found itself in this position due to the quick turnaround between the request for applications and the deadline.

The BPAC reviewed the requirements of the application. RB asked if anyone would like to do more research on the application process.

CS commented there may be two application cycles.

AO replied she would ask.

KJ commented she could research the program and noted she was involved when the program emerged.

RB responded it would be valuable for KJ to review ahead of a future application deadline. She mentioned discussing further at a future meeting.

RB asked if there are any grant opportunities the BPAC should keep on its radar.

CS responded it is dependent upon what the BPAC is interested in pursuing, noting funding would likely be specific to different programs and activities.

RB mentioned funding opportunities may be identified in the Bike/Ped Plan update process.

CS reviewed the opportunities for BPAC members to participate in the NC Main Street Conference and complete online surveys for revisions to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

SS asked about retrofitting the blinking light at the intersection of S Fifth and Jackson.

CS commented the NCDOT would need to be consulted and noted the improvement is not included in the proposed budget for 2022-2023.

RB remarked on her interest in traffic counts on Fifth once the Bypass opens.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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