



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

February 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

NAME	REPRESENTATION
James Allen (JA)	Orange County
Rebecca Brouwer (RB)	City
Matt Cummings (MC)	City
Katy Jones (KJ)	Chair, At-Large
Jason Smith (JS)	Alamance County ETJ
Allison Tate (AT)	City
Nate Wood (NW)	Vice-Chair, City
Franz Holt (FH)	City Engineer
Aaron Davis (AD)	Recreation and Parks Director
Ashley Ownbey (AO)	Development Director
Rachel Gaffney (RG)	City Planner
Barbara Hollerand (BH)	Executive Director, Downtown Mebane Dev. Corp.
Joan Lyons (JL)	Transportation Planner, Stewart
Ryan Eldridge (RE)	Transportation Planner, Stewart
Doug Taylor (DT)	Transportation Planning Leader, Stewart
Lisa Wolff (LW)	Project Manager, Berry Dunn

WELCOME NEW BPAC MEMBERS

KJ welcomed AT and MC to the BPAC and asked them to give a quick summary of their background and interest in BPAC. Everyone at the meeting introduced themselves and indicated if they were a BPAC member, City staff member, or representative of another organization.

PUBLIC COMMENT

RG explained that she had received an informal public comment that she was asked to convey to the BPAC. At a meeting of downtown business owners that was organized by BH, one of the business owners asked RG if anything could be done to improve the intersection of Fifth Street and Clay Street to make crossing Fifth Street safer. The business owner explained that crossing Fifth Street at that intersection was very dangerous and that cars do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk. RG asked that everyone just keep that crossing in mind as work continues on the Bike and Pedestrian Transportation Plan and as development of the downtown area continues to expand. RB asked if the City maintains that part of Fifth Street. AO confirmed that the City maintains north Fifth Street.

APPROVAL OF January 30, 2023, MEETING SUMMARY

RB moved to approve the meeting summary from the January 30 meeting. NW and JA both seconded the motion.



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A unanimous vote (6-0) supported approval of the meeting summary. JS arrived after the approval of the Summary.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

KJ asked what information had been provided to the new BPAC members regarding the Plan update. RG explained that the new members had been told during their orientation that there was an existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan and that the City was in the middle of a process to update the plan, but that they had not been provided with detailed information on the public engagement efforts that had been completed. JL said that an overview of that would be included in her presentation. JL asked if anyone had attended or watched online the public meeting that was held to discuss the survey results. She said that she would provide a high-level summary of that information but that she would recommend that anyone interested in more details watch the recording on the City's YouTube page. JL described the different types of public engagement that had been completed, including focus groups, stakeholder meetings, staff interviews, surveys, interactive online maps, and Social Pinpoint. She explained that the next step is to begin selecting and prioritizing streets and possible projects. Stewart has completed an inventory of the streets within the study area to begin this process.

RB asked for clarification on the study area. AO explained that it extends a little beyond the area of the Comprehensive Land Development Plan (CLP) to coincide with the area of the new long range utility plan. JL summarized the key findings of the public engagement efforts for the bicycle and pedestrian plan. She explained that Mebane has a lot of sidewalk infrastructure and much of it is tied to new development plans. As a result, some of these developments are isolated and do not have sidewalks to connect them to other parts of the community. This lack of continuity came up frequently in the surveys and other public engagement. Lack of crossings or dangerous crossings on busy roads were also a frequent comment. The survey also found that most Mebanites were walking or biking for recreation and not commuting or errands. Bicycle and pedestrian connections to recreational areas were identified as a priority. Connections to downtown, schools, Mebane Oaks Road, and other central commercial areas were also identified as important goals. There also seemed to be more of an interest in separated or off-road bicycle trails rather than on-road bicycle infrastructure.

JL explained that North Carolina has the second highest number of state-owned roads in the country (the first is Texas). This can limit the ability of Cities to make significant changes or improvements to roads as the State has its own transportation planning process. JA asked why it's such a challenge to get improvements to DOT maintained roads. JL explained that currently the State's planning process does not allow for bicycle and/or pedestrian projects to be standalone projects. They must be incorporated into a large roadway improvement project. The State did adopt a Complete Streets policy last year and bicycle and pedestrian projects can be incorporated into that. However, such projects must follow the Complete Streets matrix, which often includes widening the road. DT added that it is still important for the City to document projects that they



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want to see on DOT maintained streets in documents like the bicycle and pedestrian plan. If in the future, DOT is planning to improve any of those roads, they are more likely to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvements if the City has documented those needs in the Plan. DT explained that the plan can state that such projects are contingent on DOT initiating improvements so residents do not wonder why the City has not made progress on projects that are listed as a priority. JL explained that future planned DOT projects and other studies and plans being conducted by local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and other agencies will be incorporated into the bicycle and pedestrian plan update.

JL provided BPAC members with a workbook containing a list of streets or corridors selected for further study. JL and other Stewart staff members have completed an inventory of those streets and have compiled that information. The streets are sorted according to the priorities that were identified through the public engagement process. For example, areas near downtown are priority 1, areas near Lake Michael are priority 2, and so on. Streets that already have projects included in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) were also included in the workbook. A separate section of the workbook includes information that Stewart collected during their inventory, including speed limits, presence of curb and gutter, presence of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, etc. JL summarized findings from the inventory. These included potential constraints that would hinder the construction of new sidewalks and accessibility and maintenance issues related to existing sidewalks. JL then reviewed the criteria that would be used to help choose and prioritize projects. She explained that there will be a number of different prioritization processes and BPAC will not be involved in all of them. However, each BPAC member will be given a list of projects that they will rank numerically by priority. Those scores will then be combined and averaged and used as part of the prioritization process. JL then explained the prioritization categories in more detail. JL concluded by saying that as the planning process continues they will find that there are certain constraints in what projects the City will be feasibly able to accomplish. Engineers with Stewart will assist with project cutsheets but preliminary design of chosen projects is not a part of this long range planning process. AO added that some of the projects that were outlined in the current Bike and Pedestrian Transportation Plan are not feasible. With this new planning process, all projects that are being considered will be assessed for feasibility before being recommended to the BPAC. JL summarized the next steps in the planning process. She is hoping to bring projects to the BPAC for prioritization by March. Design standards and cut sheets for selected projects will be designed in April and a draft of the new bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan is expected to be ready by May. KJ asked if downtown business owners would be included in the stakeholder process. JL said they could be included if that is something the City is interested in. BH said she has a monthly meeting with downtown business owners so that would be a good opportunity to engage with them. KJ said that having support from those business owners for the new plan is important, especially since connections to downtown are identified as a priority. FH added that before they move to the next agenda item, he wanted to make it clear that the City has historically completed sidewalk improvement projects on DOT roads. It just involves encroachment agreements, easements, and other additional factors.



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BIKE RACK OPTIONS DISCUSSION

RG explained that at the January meeting the BPAC voted to purchase three bike racks: one for the Mebane Arts and Community Center (MACC), one for the new basketball courts, and one for downtown. She said that they would start with discussing the bike racks for the MACC and the basketball courts and then would discuss the downtown bike rack separately. KJ clarified that some of the existing bike racks in Mebane look more like sculptures and it has not been clear to cyclists that they are allowed to use them as bike racks. It's important to the BPAC that the new bike racks are functional while still having an attractive design.

RG explained that she had done some research on bike rack design types and that she had also asked AD for his recommendations as both of the locations belong to the Recreation and Parks Department. She stated that, based on AD's input, a smaller, portable bike rack would be best for the MACC while something larger and anchored would work well for the basketball courts. RG explained that she had not measured the MACC entrance yet but she thought they would have fairly limited space as the bike rack should not block the sidewalk or entry to the building. She stated that she had found good examples from two different websites but AD also has a recreation equipment supplier that he often works with in Pittsboro. RG said that she thought it would be good to get a quote from that company first and then decide where to go from there. She added that she was also looking for racks that come in blue or green to match Mebane's branding. RG showed the BPAC examples of single-sided and double-sided grid style bike racks and various sizes of wave style bike racks. RB said that she thought a single-sided grid style would work better for the MACC and AD agreed. RG asked if a 4-6 bike capacity single-sided grid bike rack sounded good for the MACC and there was general agreement. AD added that he thought it was a good size and that having it be movable was important. RG said that she would give AD a list of the types of bike racks that they decided on and asked if AD could reach out to the supplier that he's worked with for a quote. AD agreed.

RG explained that for the basketball courts they could get another grid style bike rack (with the option of anchoring it to the ground) or they could get a wave style bike racks. The wave style design is always double-sided so long as it is in a location where there is room on both sides. JA said that he thought a bike rack at the basketball courts would get a lot of use. RB agreed and said that she counted 41 kids playing there the other day. AD said he got a call the other day that there were 75 kids there. RB added that the City probably needs another basketball court, but she said that when she saw them there were three bikes that had been left on the ground. RB explained that she thought that the 7-bike wave style was a good size, but that she didn't think it should be portable. JA agreed. RG explained that the wave style racks can have in-ground mounting where the ends are placed fixed in the ground with concrete or they can have surface mounting where the ends are bolted into the ground. RB said that she likes the wave style and added that it might be good to place the rack on the side of the basketball court that is close to the new tennis courts. RB said that the bikes she saw were all laying on the Lee Street side of the basketball courts. RB and NW said that a 7-bike capacity should be the minimum for that area. KJ asked if they should



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consider a 9-bike rack. NW added that especially if the rack is going to be shared between the basketball court and the tennis courts and the baseball field across the street, they may need more capacity. RG explained that the 7-bike rack is about 5.5 feet long and the 9-bike rack is about 7.5 feet long. There was general agreement that 9 would be better. AD suggested that maybe instead of one large rack, they could place one 5-bike rack on one side of the court and a 7-bike rack on the other side. One side would be closer to the baseball field and the other would be closer to the old Recreation building. RG explained that it would cost more. There was some discussion of shipping costs. RG suggested that she thought the issue would be less the additional shipping cost and more that the per unit cost of buying two smaller racks would be more than the cost of one larger rack. She added that it might not be that much of a difference though and they should get a quote for the racks that they are interested in and then decide from there. It was agreed to get a quote for a 5-bike wave rack, a 7-bike wave rack, and a 4-6 bike grid rack.

RG explained that for the downtown bike rack, she went with BH to a meeting of downtown business owners to see if there were any strong feelings about the design or location of a new bike rack. The main questions she received were where is it going to be located and is it going to be artistic or like a sculpture. NW asked if they wanted it to look like a sculpture if they didn't want that. RG responded that she thought they were just concerned about what it would look like, sculptural or not. RG explained that she didn't get a lot of feedback since the only information she could provide was very preliminary. One idea that she wanted to suggest was to use a portable bike rack to test locations in downtown. They could talk to the Farm Bureau about having that be the first location to test. She thought it would be a good idea to see if a bike rack in that location would be used and see if there were any complaints or concerns before investing in a permanent structure. She explained that she wanted to make sure they were working cooperatively with the downtown area and that she didn't want to have the BPAC sink funds into a project that ended up being ineffective or disruptive. JA added that a group that he rides with bikes to downtown a few times a month on Saturday mornings and they are usually going to Filament. He said that they are not likely to park their bikes at the corner of Clay Street and Third Street and walk back to Filament. They are just going to lean their bikes against the walls of the businesses near Filament. He said they were chastised by one of the business owners for leaning bikes against their window. RB said there was a gravel lot across from Filament, where the Wooden Nickel is going, and she wondered if a bike rack could be placed on the edge of that lot. AO said she thought it was worth exploring if the BPAC is going to be reaching out to different property owners and testing different bike rack locations. RG added that at the meeting of downtown business owners that she attended, it was mentioned that a large number of cyclists come to downtown every Saturday morning and leave their bikes against the buildings near Filament. She explained that she thinks the owners really appreciate the business but they would probably prefer a more orderly location for the bikes. It's important that the new bike rack is placed in a location where it will be used. JA said that they are very cognizant of where they put their bikes and are careful to be respectful and to not to block any businesses or the sidewalk. RG agreed but added that the sidewalk there is narrow and there is only so much you could do to try to alleviate that issue in that space. She



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stated further that if they are going to place a bike rack in downtown they want to make sure that it will be used by the people that are already biking to downtown. JA asked if there were any alternative bike rack designs they could look at, like vertical bike racks that would be attached to a building wall. AO said that she had spoken to Sandi Bagby, who had worked on some of the existing bike rack installations. She said they had explored a vertical bike rack option for Veteran's Memorial Park, which was a type of hook attached to the wall where a bike could be secured. AO agreed that the BPAC could look into those types of options. RG agreed that those types of designs are available but it may raise some additional issues related to modifying the exterior of a historic building. JA wondered if maybe something could be attached to the trash cans or some other infrastructure instead of the business walls. RG agreed to look into that further. She added that there is a small bike rack at the midblock intersection on Clay Street, near Crafted. Another option the BPAC could consider is to add multiple small bike racks on Clay Street rather than one large bike rack. AO added that the BPAC may not have funds for a downtown bike rack this fiscal year, based on the cost of the racks that the BPAC is already considering. RG agreed and said that was an additional reason why it would be good to take some additional time to consider design options and test different locations.

BH asked if there was an available portable bike rack that wasn't currently in use. AO said that there was one that they had used for the parklet project that had been ordered from Amazon. KJ asked where it was now and AO said that she thought it was in storage with AD. AD responded that it was at the old Rec tennis courts. JA added that a stress test for potential bike racks will be when Cycle NC comes through. RB responded that she was pretty sure they would fail that stress test. KJ and JA agreed but JA said it would be good to see where those cyclists are congregating and where more bike racks are needed. RB said that the bike rack at the old Rec tennis courts is used frequently and shouldn't be moved and RG agreed. RB asked if they had enough funds to buy another, lower cost rack from Amazon. AO said she could check with Public Works to see what the cost of the Ashbury crossings and other projects had been and if there is any money left over. She added that BPAC also had additional funds that had been planned for promotional materials. JA asked about the shipping costs that RG had researched. RG explained that since she wasn't sure how many bike racks or what type they'd be purchasing she couldn't get an exact estimate but she tried to provide a ballpark figure. KJ asked if everyone was in agreement that they would focus on the bike racks for the MACC and the basketball courts now and continue to discuss ideas for the downtown bike rack as a longer term plan. RB suggested that it wasn't exactly that the MACC and the basketball courts were more of a priority than downtown but that they needed to test and further develop the idea for downtown. RG agreed and added that while it is important that the bike rack be functional, for downtown aesthetics matter especially if the bike rack is going to be prominently placed. She suggested that they might want to explore some artistic designs or at least Mebane branding. RB suggested that she knows a metalworker that might be able to add some decorative elements to a bike rack design. JA suggested a train design and RG said that she had actually found two examples of train shaped bike racks. She shared images of two bike rack designs. The locomotive bike rack from Dunedin, FL generated some interest from the BPAC



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members. RG shared that it had been built with a budget of \$1,800. The city put out a RFP and the artist had submitted a bid. AD suggested that he could reach out to Alamance Arts and see if they could help with this kind of project and maybe an artist could make a similar design to the one in Florida. JS suggested that the City could just ask for a bike rack that looks like a train and see what designs artists can come up with. NW suggested that they could frame it as a contest and ask Mebane residents to submit design ideas. JA added that a public contest could help to get more buy in from Mebane residents on the idea of a downtown bike rack. There was general agreement that a community driven effort to develop a design would generate excitement about the project and help to make sure that it is welcomed. RG suggested that they can start by getting a portable bike rack and testing locations while working to organize some sort of design contest. She said that if AD can reach out to Alamance Arts, they might have some good advice on how to move forward and help connect BPAC to local artists. KJ agreed that if Alamance Arts is willing to work with BPAC that would help a lot with outreach and promotion. KJ stated that the BPAC will need to determine the cost of the MACC and basketball court bike racks and decide from there if they can afford to purchase a new portable rack this fiscal year. She asked for that discussion to be added to the March agenda. JA added that he would mention to his cyclist friends to look for a new bike rack being added to downtown.

NEW AND ONGOING BUSINESS: 2023 SPRING BIKE CAMPAIGN / BIKE SAFETY FAIR

RG began the conversation by suggesting that they describe the event as a bike safety fair if they didn't want to use the term bike rodeo. RB said she thought bike rodeo was fine. KJ explained that the term can be confusing to people who are not familiar with bike safety programs. RB said that they could come up with a name for the event that makes the purpose clear. RB explained that she and BH had discussed dates and that she had forwarded some information to the Mebane Police Department but had not received a response yet. RB explained the purpose of a bike rodeo and the types of activities that have been held in the past, such as bike safety lessons, obstacle courses, bike maintenance tutorials, and more. She explained that they have also gotten bike helmets as part of a DOT grant in the past and have typically given free helmets to participants. At the January meeting, BPAC had discussed organizing the bike rodeo in concert with other events occurring downtown. RB said that she and BH had identified 4 dates that might work well. The event will be three hours and they will need at least 2-3 volunteers from BPAC. After some discussion, May 20th was chosen as the best date. RB said that she would email Sergeant Ward to see if that date works for the Mebane PD and go from there. There was some discussion of possible locations. BH suggested the Farm Bureau parking lot but said she wasn't sure if it would be too small. RB said she could ask Sergeant Ward for recommendations on locations that would be fairly close to downtown. AD suggested that if the BPAC requested to close the block between Ruffin and Clay Street then they might be able to use the Farm Bureau parking lot. RB said that they would need to talk to Mebane PD about closing a street anyway so she could mention that possibility as well. AO added that a street closure would have to be approved by City Council. JA suggested the Dollar General parking lot, but AD said he thought that would be really busy on a



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Farmer's Market Saturday. AO suggested one of the banks downtown, such as Truist might work. RB said that she would ask Sergeant Ward for recommendations on location. The rodeo will be from 10am-1pm on May 20th, as long as that time works for Mebane PD. RB added that previous BPAC members may be interested in volunteering as well.

NEW AND ONGOING BUSINESS: DOGWOOD FESTIVAL

RG asked what the BPAC wants to do for the Dogwood Festival and who would be interested in volunteering. The festival is Saturday, April 22nd. JA, RG, and JS indicated that they would not be available. KJ stated that if they are going to participate, they are going to have to have volunteers for the whole day. AO said that the BPAC had talked in the past about partnering with the Mebane Trail Rangers or another organization and asked if they would be interested in that. There was some uncertainty about wanting to do that and reluctance to be conflated with organizations that are not associated with the City government. RB asked if the City will have a presence at the festival. AO said that she could speak with Kelly, the Public Information Officer, about that. It was agreed that City staff would discuss if there will be City booth at Dogwood and continue the conversation at the March meeting.

NEW AND ONGOING BUSINESS: LOWE'S FOOD BIKE RACK

RG explained that at the last meeting BPAC had discussed reaching out to the Lowe's Food Corporate Office to see if they would be willing to add a bike rack to the Mebane location. KJ said that she had reached out but had not received a response.

NEW AND ONGOING BUSINESS: GUEST SPEAKERS/RETREAT

RG explained that she did not have much of an update. She told the speakers that they were still planning a June or July Retreat date and she also suggested the September or October regular meeting dates. The general response has been that the speakers are open to a number of dates and would prefer for BPAC to suggest a specific meeting time. NW suggested that selecting a date for the retreat should be on the March agenda. KJ explained that the primary purpose of the retreat would be to discuss the new bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan, but they would also discuss more of the project planning process. The retreat is typically about 3 hours with a lunch or dinner in the middle. KJ added that she would also like to discuss ways that the BPAC can organize more public engagement opportunities around bicycle and pedestrian issues and projects. RB agreed that past engagement efforts have been very successful and the BPAC should pursue doing more of that.

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

Meeting summary prepared by Rachel Gaffney, City Planner.