



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

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

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NAME	REPRESENTATION
James Allen (JA)	Orange County
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
Ashley Ownbey (AO)	Development Director
Rachel Gaffney (RG)	City Planner
Kelly Hunter (KH)	Public Information Officer
Barbara Hollerand (BH)	Executive Director, Downtown Mebane Dev. Corp.

*Rebecca Brouwer and Aaron Davis had an excused absence.*

## **APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 27, 2023, MEETING SUMMARY**

KJ moved to approve the meeting summary from the February 27 meeting. JA seconded the motion.

A unanimous vote (5-0) supported approval of the meeting summary. JS arrived after the approval of the Summary.

## **DISCUSSION WITH KELLY HUNTER, CITY OF MEBANE PIO**

KJ introduced KH to the BPAC and explained that she is very excited to have her here as the BPAC has been wanting to do more public engagement, especially for National Bike Month in May. KH asked what BPAC already has scheduled. KJ stated that BPAC members are planning to have a booth at the Dogwood Festival. AO interjected that there are no booths left and staff is working on finding an organization that BPAC can share a booth with. KJ responded that sharing a booth would work fine and NW agreed. KJ continued to say that the biggest event coming up is a bike rodeo and skills fair for kids. It is planned for May 20<sup>th</sup> but a location still needs to be discussed with the Mebane Police Department. The tentative time is 10am to 1pm. KJ also explained that last year there was an activity challenge. Participants had to complete 4 of the 5 listed challenges and take pictures of themselves participating. Those who completed all of the challenges received Mebane branded towels and sunglasses. The activity challenge was launched at the end of April and it ended October 1<sup>st</sup>. KJ asked if the BPAC wants to launch the activity challenge again and there was general agreement. KH asked if they would want to do it for the same three month period or for a shorter time. It was agreed that doing it for the same period as last year would work well. KJ explained that you would need some time to complete all of the challenges and JS agreed that the challenge should last at least a couple of months. KH added that if the BPAC has kept any of the pictures from



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

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

---

last year then those would be really useful for promoting this year's challenge. KH explained that once the dates for the challenge are chosen, the BPAC should plan to begin promotion and social media engagement at least two weeks before it will start.

KH asked how the bike rodeo has been promoted in the past. KJ said mostly through social media and there may have been some flyers. NW said that most of the promotion was done by the Police Department. AO added that planning staff did draft flyers. KJ clarified that there was not a bike rodeo last year, but there was one in 2021. KH suggested drafting a press release and sending it to major news outlets the week of the rodeo. News organizations will only take press releases 2-3 days before the event. KH suggested also reaching out to local newspapers and purchasing ad space if it is in the BPAC's budget. She said that she would advertise the rodeo on the City's social media as well. KH said that they could also put together a short featurette video and that some of the BPAC members could participate in the video and encourage viewers to come out to the rodeo. KJ indicated that she would be interested in doing that. KH added that she would reach out to her contacts in the local news media and reporters and encourage them to cover the event. AO asked if the police could be included in the video and KH agreed that was a good idea. KH suggested that they work on the video in May and release it as a featurette, not a regular weekly video. If the video is released too early then it may get lost in other content. The featurette should be released 10 days before the event, which means it needs to be filmed in the beginning of May or late April. KH suggested reaching out to local newspapers 2-3 weeks before the rodeo, however, the BPAC will need to decide if they want to pay for ad space as it can be costly. AO confirmed that the BPAC has adequate funds if they want to pursue purchasing ad space. KH estimated that it would be about \$300 per ad. JS asked about purchasing a boosted post on Facebook or Instagram instead. KH agreed that they could do that but explained that it can be difficult to accurately measure engagement with boosted social media posts, as the number of impressions recorded can be misleading. KH asked if BPAC gets a lot of interaction on their social media pages. KJ explained that BPAC does not have their own social media and has always depended on the City or Recreation and Parks pages. KH explained that she recommends reaching out to the newspaper or local news because a number of Mebane residents do not use social media at all. JS agreed but suggested that the demographic they are trying to reach with this event (families with young children) may be more likely to use social media than the population as a whole. It was discussed if information could be sent through the CivicRec system as well. AO asked if the City has a presence on Nextdoor and KH said that she doesn't think so. KH said that for social media, she suggests posting about the bike rodeo twice a week starting at the beginning of May. As it gets closer to the event, start increasing the number of posts. They can also try a boosted post and see what the results are.

KJ said that those are the main events for the next two quarters. BPAC hasn't talked about Autumnfest yet, but they can return to it at a later date. She said that she has the communications plan that was used for bike month last year and can share that. KH explained that people tend to interact more with videos than with posts and suggested that the photos from last year's activity challenge can be organized into a short video. KJ said that she is also planning to take pictures of



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

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

---

the new green sharrows on Clay Street to help share and promote what BPAC has been working on. KH said that once we know the dates for the activity challenge to let her know and she will start putting together social media posts. KJ asked if there was anything the BPAC wants to change for this year's challenge. KH added that if there are any pictures of BPAC members completing the challenges, that would be good promotion as well. KJ said that she would need to check her pictures but she thinks she has some that would work well. KJ read out the five challenges from last year. JS suggested adding "Walk or bike to a pocket park" as a new challenge. KJ agreed and added that Franz Holt had recently made a video promoting the new 1<sup>st</sup> St. Pocket Park. She asked if people would know what the pocket parks are. JS said that we could name them or provide a map. NW suggested that there could be a link to a map on the website and asked how many pocket parks there are. KH said that there are four: downtown, N 1<sup>st</sup> St, S 5<sup>th</sup> St, and Giles Street. AO asked if Giles Street had been completed and KH said that they are just putting in the wifi for it now, nearly everything else has been completed. AO mentioned that KH had put together a news article about Mebane Pocket Parks recently. KH said that the Giles Street and N 1<sup>st</sup> St Pocket Parks have corn hole available, so that could also be included in the challenge. Players just need to bring their own sandbags. BPAC members reviewed the Mebane Activity Challenge webpage and AO suggested that BPAC have funds that could be used to acquire some better prizes for challenge participants. NW noticed that the 2022 challenge ended on October 1<sup>st</sup> and asked if BPAC wanted to have the same time frame this year. AO explained that last year the challenge was launched at the Dogwood Festival and it was set to end at the Autumnfest, although that event was cancelled due to weather. There was general agreement to keep the same timeframe and that completion of the challenge would require just 4 of the 6 activities. JS added that he was not sure if this would be done in time, but he had heard that the signs for the Mountains to Sea Trail were almost ready to be installed and asked if anyone had heard anything further. KH suggested that one way to increase participation would be to make "bringing a friend" part of one of the challenges.

## **DOGWOOD FESTIVAL**

KJ asked what they could do to get a booth and if there were any organization they could partner with. BH said that she had reached out to Grace at the Alamance County Visitor's Bureau and she was going to see if there was an organization that BPAC could partner with. KJ explained that it is coming up soon, and before the next meeting, and asked who would be available to volunteer. KJ said she would be available in the morning to help set up. RG said that RB had sent her an email saying that she would be available for part of the day, but she had not indicated specific times. NW said that he could help out in the afternoon and AO said she could help if needed as well. KJ said it would be great if we could have handouts of the activity challenge for Dogwood. AO agreed and said that last year there were flyers and a sandwich board sign. KJ said that she would work on getting that together. NW asked what BPAC would have at the booth and asked about helmets. KJ answered that they normally give out helmets at the bike rodeo and they might want to save them for that. NW suggested holding a raffle for bike helmets. JS added that building an email list would be useful, but that entering handwritten email addresses into a email program can be really time



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

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

---

consuming. KJ asked if it would be possible to set up some kind of BPAC listserv. AO said that they could set up an email contact group easily, but new members would have to be added by staff, they couldn't add themselves. KJ responded that she was thinking of a system where people who were interested could add themselves to the contact list. JS suggested using a QR code that goes to a Google form and collecting contact information that way. KJ agreed that could be a good solution. JA asked if we could get it done by the Dogwood Festival.

## **2023 SPRING BIKE CAMPAIGN / BIKE SAFETY FAIR**

KJ explained that the Rodeo is all set for Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup> but we need to work with the Mebane PD on a good location. The Police Department would set up the obstacle course. JA said that he could help with the maintenance workshop. KJ said that Sarah's significant other has helped in the past and may be available this year as well. KJ added that having a tent would be a good idea as well. JS said he may be able to provide one or he thought AD may have one. KJ said that they had also used and given away bike month yard signs in the past and asked if those were in Recreation and Parks storage. AO confirmed that they were. JA said that his neighbor had asked for one. NW added that he thought BPAC had handed them out at Dogwood last year. KJ confirmed that they could plan to do that again. NW added that most people won't want to carry a sign while they are walking around the festival, so they probably only need a few. KJ said that she would work with RB on the location and we would finalize plans at the next BPAC meeting.

KJ asked if we needed to discuss what to call the event, as there were some concerns that people wouldn't be familiar with what a bike rodeo is. NW said that he wished he knew another term for it, but he can't think of what else to call the event. JS added that bike rodeo does sound more interesting than something like "Bike Safety Fair". NW agreed that Bike Safety Fair is more accurate but no one would want to go to that. KJ explained that if they want to promote the event at the Dogwood Festival then they need to agree on the name. RB had also discussed with the Mebane PD whether they had any thoughts on another name for the event and Sergeant Ward had responded that it had always been called a bike rodeo and he didn't know if any other term for it. KJ wanted to respond to the PD soon and move the conversation forward. JS suggested using a subtitle, "Bike Rodeo: Skills and Safety Event". There was general agreement that something like that would work.

AO asked BH what event we were coordinating the rodeo with. BH responded that it was just a food truck that was going to be on Clay Street. JS asked about putting together a prize or a giveaway to try to encourage participation. JA asked if there is a Mebane Gift Certificate that could be used at local businesses. BH said that is something that they are working on, but there isn't one available yet. KJ said that she thought a fancy bike light or something would be interesting. JA thought that was doable, but AO questioned whether that would appeal to children. AT suggested maybe a fun bell and AO added that maybe a nice bike basket would work. JS agreed that something like a bell or a basket could work as an inexpensive participation gift for everyone. KJ asked what the remaining budget allocation is for this type of project. AO answered that she had



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

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

---

spoken with the Public Works Director and he had some additional funding in his budget, so some of the work, such as the crosswalks in Ashbury, had been completed with Public Works funds instead of BPAC funds. As a result, the BPAC has more funds than anticipated, although the planned bike racks are probably going to be more expensive than the initial estimate. JA added that we haven't confirmed the bike rack expenditures yet. KJ agreed and said that we may need to hold plans for giveaway prizes until we have a better idea of available funds. KJ added that it would be helpful if one of the BPAC members that bikes often picks out the prizes for the rodeo. JS suggested putting together a maintenance package. KJ suggested that we discuss it more at the next meeting. She added that it would be really great if over time they could add vendors to the rodeo and make it into a bigger event in the future.

## **2023 BPAC RETREAT**

RG explained that they need to pick a date for BPAC's retreat. There were a few dates discussed and eventually it was decided that Sunday June 11<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 works for everyone. RG said that she would reach out to RB to make sure it works for her as well. RG said she would also reach out to the potential guest speakers she had been in contact with and see if any of them would be available. She explained that she was thinking that one guest speaker could come to the Retreat and the other two could come to the regular meetings in September and October.

RG also asked for some more specific ideas of what they would like the guest speakers to talk about, especially the new BPAC members that had not been involved in previous discussions. RG explained that they had previously talked about lessons learned from other projects and ideas for promotion and engagement. JA said he would be curious to know how the surrounding cities are able to secure land for greenways and how they are able to coordinate regional greenways. Yesterday he rode from Olmstead Park to Hillsborough and 75-80% of the ride was through greenways. There were greenways through Cary to the Tobacco Trail, which went through Durham. From Durham he took the Ellerbe Creek trail. Mebane has a lot of watershed and drainage areas that could be used for trails. Once a trail is established and people see the possibility of establishing more trails in those areas, there may be more support for those types of projects. RG asked if we wanted to ask the guest speakers how other cities were able to acquire easements for trails? JA confirmed that he wanted to know how other areas were able to secure easements and get buy in from neighboring residents. KJ said they wanted to speak with people that had had specific experience with establishing greenways and building public engagement, also safety, visibility, and how to launch the initial greenway. Successfully launching the first project will be really integral to being able to expand it long term. RG clarified if launching meant advertising and making sure people know about the new trail. NW agreed and said that it would include some kind of ribbon cutting, promotion, etc. RG agreed that some kind of inaugural event would be a good idea. JS asked what the timeline is and if we are still waiting for one final easement. AO and KJ confirmed that the easement still needs to be finalized. KJ added that getting information from guest speakers about projects or efforts that did not go well would be equally important. RG asked KJ to clarify what she meant by safety earlier. KJ said that seems to be a





# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

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

---

significant concern from neighboring property owners. There have been concerns that trail users would trespass onto their property or make them feel unsafe. AO added that the East/West route for the Holt Street Greenway was moving forward but there had also been plans for a north/south route. The ideal location for that route was impossible due to environmental features so the alternative route brought the proposed trail through more property owners' backyards. There was significant opposition from those residents so the project did not move forward. JA explained that he understands the concerns but being an adjacent resident to a greenway can also be a good thing. He said that many property owners on the American Tobacco Trails have built their own gates from their backyards onto the trail. AO added that the BPAC members were also planning to discuss the new bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan at the retreat. AO said that she believed the plan would be ready by then but by scheduling the retreat for early June, it may be a little close and she would need to keep BPAC updated on that. RG and AO clarified that there should at least be projects to review, even if the final draft of the plan is not yet ready.

## **BIKE RACK OPTIONS UPDATE AND DISCUSSION**

RG explained that AD had reached out to the supplier that he has worked with in the past, but they didn't have the type of bike rack that the BPAC was interested in. They had 5' and 7.5' wave bike racks which might work for the basketball courts, but the only grid style bike racks were 10' long. AD had asked that the bike rack for the MACC be smaller and portable. RG got a quote from an online supplier for the types of bike racks that had previously been discussed: a 4-bike portable grid rack, a 5-bike wave style, and a 7-bike wave style. All of them would be blue powder-coated steel and the total would be \$2,200.58, including shipping. RG suggested that they could get quotes from other suppliers to compare. They could also get the two wave style bike racks from the supplier AD recommended and then get the portable grid style from the online supplier RG had received the quote from or from Amazon. There was general agreement that the quote RG had presented seemed reasonable and that purchasing from multiple sources would just increase shipping costs. KJ motioned to approve the expenditure of \$2,200 from the BPAC discretionary funds for the purchase of three bike racks. NW seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0). RG asked the BPAC members to clarify which color they would prefer. Sky blue was chosen for the two wave style racks. NW asked if the portable grid style should be steel or a more neutral color. RG said that she would confirm with AD but he was the one that originally suggested blue or green. Patriot blue is the lightest blue available for the grid style rack.

RG asked the BPAC members how they want to proceed for the downtown bike rack. Did they want to get a portable rack from Amazon so that they can test locations, such as the gravel lot? KJ explained that she thought that idea couldn't move forward because of negative reactions from local businesses. RG said that she thought that a portable rack was fine, she just wanted the BPAC to be cautious about committing to a permanent installation until there was more support and buy in from the community. KJ said that she would definitely like to move forward with getting a portable bike rack then. RG said she would research options and follow up. RG asked if there were



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

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

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any further ideas regarding a design contest for a downtown bike rack. She added that AD had planned to reach out to Alamance Arts for some ideas or support and she should follow up with him on that. JA said that would be another good thing to promote at the Dogwood Festival and KJ agreed. RG agreed but said it could be difficult to get everything together in time for the Festival. She said that staff could put together something just asking the community for their ideas, but putting together a contest and a budget for that kind of project would take more time. JA said that he thought it would be good to just get the word out at this point and tease a contest for later in the spring. JA suggested that the design contest could run the same length as the activity challenge. KJ asked if we were waiting to connect with Alamance Arts to see if they would partner with us to promote it and also to see if they could connect BPAC with an artist who could actually build the chosen design. RG added that she thought they could also benefit from Alamance Arts' expertise with this kind of project and they might have some additional ideas for how to structure or promote the contest. RG asked if they should ask for Mebane-themed bike rack ideas or just for train-themed ideas. NW said that he thought they should open it up to all bike rack ideas and see what they get. MC asked if it should be limited to a certain envelope or size. There was general agreement that that would be a good idea and that there should be an emphasis on feasibility. KJ said that they should see what AD is able to get from Alamance Arts and go from there. She added that the biggest issue is going to find someone to construct the actual design and hopefully Alamance Arts can help with that.

JA asked if they were still looking at the corner of Clay Street and Third Street. RG explained that the location still needed to be discussed. For that location, there hadn't been any discussions with the property owner yet, it was not clear how large the right-of-way was or if it would need to be placed on private property, and it was also not clear if that was the most practical location, as it is a little removed from the busiest part of downtown. RG stated that the BPAC needed to discuss it more and maybe test out some locations with a portable rack. KJ asked if there was any property downtown that the City owns that would be feasible. RG responded that the City just owns the parking lot. JA asked if it was the parking lot next to Dollar General. RG agreed and said it's where the farmer's market is located. KJ said that they really need to confirm the location before moving forward with this project. JA said that the south side of Clay is wider and there might be room for a bike rack on the sidewalk. KJ asked about 4<sup>th</sup> Street and wondered if it would be possible to replace a parking spot with a bike rack. NW and JS agreed that they like that idea. JS suggested the first spot on the east side of 4<sup>th</sup> street at the intersection with Clay Street. RG agreed that she like that location but those spots are always full in the afternoon. AO suggested that BH could maybe help BPAC determine a location that would be acceptable to local businesses. KJ and JA said that there had been previous plans to close 4<sup>th</sup> Street to all vehicle traffic, but they hadn't moved forward. There was some discussion about the gravel lot next to Muffins being a good location, but it might be a little difficult to bike there. KJ asked BH if she had any connections to the owners of the building where the Wooden Nickel would be opening. BH said she hasn't had any contact with them yet. AO said that she has an email address for them but they are leasing the space, they don't own the property. JA explained that the Wooden Nickel owner in Hillsborough had had to



# Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

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

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fight with the Town to get them to remove the on-street parking on Churton Street and widen the sidewalk so that they could have an outdoor patio. JA added that one of the reasons that change was able to go through is that Hillsborough has a really nice parking garage, so they could afford to remove some of the on-street parking. KJ stated that she thinks the gravel lot behind the downtown businesses in Mebane is underutilized and if it was paved and striped it could probably fit a lot more parking.

## **NEW AND ONGOING BUSINESS**

RG shared that she had been working on a trail map with the recreation and parks department. Staff hopes to maybe hire a consultant to put together a more professional looking map in the future, but this map will be a good resource in the meantime. JA said that the maps at least provide enough detail to help someone orient themselves. RG agreed and added that the trails at Cates Farm and Lake Michael are not very complex so a lot of detail may not be needed. She also explained that the trails at Cate's Farm are being completely redone to accommodate the new playground so that is one reason staff is waiting to hire someone to draft new maps. The Mebane Trail Rangers asked for these maps for their Junior Trail Ranger program. JA asked about the Trail Town Certified sticker on the map. RG responded that she wasn't sure what that signified but she thought that AD had added that to the map. She said that she would ask AD about it after the meeting. KJ said that the map would be a good resource for informing people about the different trail networks in Mebane and there was general agreement. RG added that staff had wanted to ask if the BPAC might be willing to use some of their funds to hire someone to draft new trail maps in the future. JA said that he would be interested in that but he would want to make sure that bike route maps are included. The current City trails are mainly for walking and don't show cyclists the best route to get to downtown or other areas. KJ asked if that would essentially be identifying the existing bike boulevards on the map and JA agreed that would help a lot. KJ asked AO to confirm that RPAC does not have discretionary funds and AO agreed that they do not. KJ said that BPAC would want to be involved in a new mapping project and could help with funding. She said though that if BPAC is going to be funding it, she would want to make sure that staff receives everything in an editable format and the source files so that staff can make changes and edits as time goes on. There was general agreement that that could be made a requirement of the contract. RG said that they could discuss this further with Aaron at the next meeting. KJ asked if there was anything else. AO said that the City is in budget season. The Planning Department presented to Council last week and there will be further presentations in the coming week if any of the BPAC members are interested. JS asked if those are public meetings and AO confirmed that they are. JA added that he had attended the US 70 Corridor public meeting. It was very informational and it seemed like they were receptive to public input. JA suggested some possible areas for protected bike lanes on US 70 through the project's mapping tool.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

*Meeting summary prepared by Rachel Gaffney, City Planner.*