



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

April 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

NAME	REPRESENTATION
James Allen (JA)	Orange County
Rebecca Brouwer (RB)	City
Matt Cummings (MC)	City
Jason Smith (JS)	Alamance County ETJ
Nate Wood (NW)	Vice-Chair, City
Ashley Ownbey (AO)	Development Director
Aaron Davis (AD)	Recreation and Parks Director

Katy Jones, Allison Tate, and Rachel Gaffney had an excused absence.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A written comment was received from Colin Cannell, a Mebane resident. It was read aloud by AO. In his comment, Mr. Cannell suggested that a bike rack of the size and shape of a car be placed in one of the parking spaces downtown. There was general agreement from the BPAC members that they were interested in the idea. RB mentioned the BPAC's previous experience with placing a parklet in a downtown parking space and explained that placing a large bike rack in a parking space would be a strong statement advocating for bicycling. JA explained that there are visual models showing the amount of space that individual drivers take up on a street as opposed to a bus or bicyclists. NW said that he would like to hear from the Downtown Development Corporation on their reaction to potentially removing a parking space. He asked further if anyone knows how many parking spaces are available downtown. It may make the BPAC's argument stronger if they can say that there are, for example, 300 spaces downtown, and the BPAC just wants to reduce that by 1. RB added that they would not be taking a spot, but would really be creating more opportunities for people to come downtown using alternative transportation.

RB asked if there are any spots on the street that are too small for a full parking space that could be utilized by a bike rack. AD said that there is a spot near Crafted that looks like a parking spot but isn't actually large enough and wondered if that could work. MC added that if the BPAC was in an artistic form then taking over a parking space to prominently display it downtown makes more sense. NW added that if they start with a temporary bike rack then they might be able to win people over by saying that they are just going to try it out for 1-2 weeks to see if it works. If there aren't issues with the temporary rack then the BPAC can move forward with investing in a more artistic design. BPAC viewed aerial imagery and confirmed that there are areas on either side of the midblock crosswalk on Clay Street where a bike rack could potentially be located. AO brought up plans for the planned resurfacing of Clay Street which showed that those areas were going to become a concrete bump-out on either side of the crosswalk. It was difficult to tell from the plans whether a bike rack could be placed on the concrete bump-out.



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AO said that BH was not able to attend this meeting but she can talk to her about their ideas for a downtown bike rack. She said that she can also work with BH on working with the community on the design and having some sort of design contest. NW agreed that's the direction they want to move in and asked if staff could make a note to discuss those topics at the next BPAC meeting that BH can attend. JS asked what the timeline is for the Clay Street improvements. AO said that the utility work is beginning imminently. It is not yet certain when the resurfacing will occur because it is dependent on how long the utility work will take. JS asked if waiting until next month is too long. AO said that she didn't think so and that the resurfacing probably would not begin until the next fiscal year, which starts in July. It may be delayed beyond that. NW explained that there seem to be 3 options for BPAC to consider: a) placing a bike rack in a downtown parking space, b) placing a bike rack on the concrete bump-out next to the crosswalk, or c) finding another location downtown or close to downtown that is more feasible if the previous two options are not successful. MC argued that the first two options should be considered as equally good projects, the bump-out location should not just be a back up if the parking space doesn't work out. NW agreed but said that it will depend a lot on what the downtown development corporation thinks.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 27, 2023, MEETING SUMMARY

NW asked if all were in favor of approving the March 27, 2023 Meeting Summary.

A unanimous vote (5-0) supported approval of the meeting summary.

REPORT FROM DOGWOOD FESTIVAL

AO reported that the BPAC's participation in the Dogwood Festival went well. They brought 9 kids bike helmets to give away and all but 1 were taken. RB added that it might be good to have more helmets or bike lights and other accessories available to give away at future Dogwood Festivals. She added that she was shocked at the number of people that wanted to talk to her about walking, biking, and hiking in Mebane. AD asked if the location was good. RB said that she was initially concerned because they were all the way at the end, but they actually ended up getting a lot of foot traffic. She said that there was a lot of interest in the bike rodeo and a fair bit of interest in the activity challenge. Everyone wanted to talk about the City trails and many people want RB to show them good places to go biking with their kids. RB said that last request was difficult as Mebane does not have very many protected bike routes. She said that creating a map with suggested paths for biking with families could be a good project for the BPAC to complete before the next Dogwood Festival. AD asked how long of a route they were looking for. RB said that everyone seemed to have 6-9 year old kids so a 3 mile route would probably be a good distance. JA added that an hour-long trip would probably be a good length for that age. RB agreed and said that something that starts and ends in downtown would be good. She added that she wasn't sure if that was feasible because it would need to be a route that feels safe. Most people are nervous to bicycle in Mebane with their kids because of the lack of protected bike routes. JA suggested going from Downtown on Clay Street to the Community Park. RB agreed and said that was what



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she suggested to those that asked but it would be good to develop more options. RB added that the experience was good but really tiring and suggested that in the future they should try to just have 2 hour shifts.

AO said that she asked KJ for a report before the meeting and that she mentioned having some discussions about E-bikes at the festival. AO said that she hadn't done much research on them yet and that she might need to talk to Mebane PD about how they are regulated. JS said that they tend to be identified as peddle-assist or non-peddle-assist and some trail systems allow them, but others do not. JA added that there are three categories of E-bikes. Class 1 is peddle-assist, there is no throttle, the max speed is 20mph, and you must peddle for the motor to stay on. Class 2 is the same as peddle-assist but goes up to 28 mph. Class 3 goes up to 28 mph but there is a throttle and peddling is not required. There are also a large number of unclassified and unregulated E-bikes. JA said that there have been a number of issues with batteries from unregulated bikes catching on fire and that cities like New York have had to institute their own regulations and safety standards for those issues. RB asked if E-bikes could cause issues with Mebane's ordinance that allows bicycles to ride on the sidewalks. Does the ordinance need to be changed to limit speed or the types of bicycles allowed? JA said that E-bikes are the fastest growing segment of the bicycle industry. Part of that is because they are very cheap to produce, in large part because of the lack of regulation. It is possible to get an E-bike for less than \$2000 that can reach 30 mph with little effort. AD asked if the bikes need to be charged. JA answered that they can be charged at home just like any other electronic device. Some of them have replaceable batteries as well. RB asked if KJ said what the context of the conversation was. AO said that she wasn't sure of the context, but it may have just been questions about if E-bikes could be used in Mebane and where. JA and JS said that most E-bikes should be able to be ridden wherever bikes are allowed unless they are traveling at high speeds. RB asked if you were riding an E-bike to Walgreens should you be riding it on 5th Street or on the sidewalk. Both JS and JA agreed that an E-bike should be ridden on the street in that case. NW agreed that is an issue that the BPAC should look into and consider further.

MEBANE ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

AO explained that the Activity Challenge has officially launched. RB added that a new challenge had been added. AO said that it has been posted on social media and people at Dogwood took flyers and pictures of the poster showing the challenges. AO said that it continues until October 1st and hopefully there will be more participation than last year. RB suggested that they post flyers at the notice board at Solgarden and at the library. AO agreed. RB said that one person at Dogwood asked what kind of swag would be available. AO said that was a good question and they should dedicate some of the discretionary funds towards that. JA said that there was a really nice bike light that could be a good prize. AD asked how many items the BPAC needs. AO answered that last year there were just over a dozen participants. AD suggested maybe offering a medal. AO suggested discussing ideas over email and maybe having an online vote before the next meeting. RB suggested that maybe everyone could get a medal, but then there would be higher value prizes that participants would be entered to win. NW suggested having a top prize and a runner up prize



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and then a participation prize for everyone that completes the challenge. NW asked if a company donates a prize or gives the BPAC a discount on purchasing a prize, what would be the rules for acknowledging that company's contribution. AO answered that she would need to check with other City departments on that.

PROMOTION FOR BIKE MONTH / BIKE RODEO

AO explained that at the last meeting Kelly, the City's PIO, had recommended creating a featurette video to promote the Bike Rodeo. The video needs to be filmed within the next two weeks in order to be released in time. AD asked if the video would be more teleprompter and speaking or if it would be more action-oriented. RB indicated that she would like it to be action-oriented. AO suggested that they could start with Katy speaking and biking somewhere in town. It was discussed if there were any children that could participate and JS volunteered that his children could probably be filmed riding their bikes. RB asked if it was just to promote the Bike Rodeo or all of bike month. AO said that it would be focused on the Bike Rodeo but would definitely include more general information about bike month. RB asked if the new green sharrows could be featured and maybe some of the Mebane bike racks. JA mentioned that he volunteered at Open Streets Carborro recently and there was an obstacle course set up there for very young kids on strider bikes. He suggested setting up something similar for the bike rodeo. There was discussion of when the video could be filmed. AO volunteered to draft a short script for the video and to send it to everyone. RB asked if the Bike Month signs could be incorporated into the video. JS asked what the expected length of the video was. AO answered that about 3-5 minutes is what she was thinking. RB said that May 19th is bike to work day and it would be good to incorporate that into the script. AD added that May 3rd is bike to school day. RB said that she thought national bike to school day is May 17th.

For the bike rodeo, RB summarized that the event will be held on Saturday, May 20th from 10-1 at Truist. AO added that there would be a food truck downtown. RB asked which BPAC members would be available. JA said that he would be there and he would bring some basic maintenance supplies. JS said that he could donate some supplies as well. RB asked how many people they needed for maintenance and JA answered that 2 would be good. MC said that he would be there and could help in any capacity. RB said that she could get there at 9:30 although she doesn't know if she can be there the whole day. She added that Mebane PD usually has 3 people to help with the rodeo, maybe 4. NW said he would be there as well. NW asked about infrastructure and if the BPAC needs to bring anything. AO answered that the PD would bring their own tent and table. AO suggested that BPAC could bring another tent and table for helmets and other supplies.

The BPAC also discussed the social media schedule for promoting bike month and the activity challenge. KJ had put together a schedule based on what was done last year. Placing an ad for the bike rodeo in the local newspaper was also discussed. RB suggested adding participating in National Bike to School or Bike to Work Day as an activity challenge next year.



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BIKE RACK UPDATE

AO explained that RG had done some further research and determined that the bike racks placed at the basketball court needed to be in-ground mounted rather than surface-mounted. She had reached out to the supplier for a new quote and also reached out to Public Works to make sure they would be able to assist with installation. NW asked if switching to in-ground would increase the cost and AO responded that it looked like the cost would actually decrease. The BPAC had discussed purchasing 1 portable bike rack but they probably have funds to purchase 2 of different sizes if they want to.

DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC CALMING METHODS

RB shared a photo of an interesting traffic calming method using paint that she had noticed while traveling in Hawaii. There are yellow flags that pedestrians can use as they cross the street. The design of the street paint is very eye-catching and makes it clear to drivers that a major intersection is coming up. RB thought it was very effective and wanted to share it. There was general agreement that it seemed like a very cost effective method. JA added that he had read an article recently that argued that more cities should adopt speed limits of less than 30 mph for their busiest areas. Just a reduction of 10mph can significantly lower the number of injuries to pedestrians and bicyclists.

NEW AND ONGOING BUSINESS

BPAC RETREAT

NW confirmed that the retreat is scheduled for June 11th. AO explained that RG had been reaching out to potential guest speakers. One speaker that staff had hoped could attend the retreat is taking the summer off, so he will hopefully be available for one of the regular BPAC meetings in the fall. RG is still waiting to hear back from the others. One will hopefully be able to speak at the retreat or staff could potentially reach out to other possible speakers. AO added that they will need to reserve a room at the Arts and Community Center. RB asked about the time and AO responded that 1-4pm, with lunch, had been discussed. AO added that City staff has seen a list of potential projects for the bike and pedestrian plan and those should be ready for the BPAC to prioritize by mid May. A more refined project list and prioritization schedule should be ready for BPAC to discuss by the date of the retreat. AO added that last year the director had given a presentation on the difference between capital projects and discretionary funding. She asked if the BPAC members would like to review that again, especially for the new members. They agreed but asked that the topic be more briefly summarized than last time. NW suggested that the retreat would be a good time to discuss a family friendly bike route through Mebane. RB added that last year staff provided large scale maps of the City and those were helpful for discussion. AO confirmed that those could be provided again. AO added that the consultant for the bike and ped plan should be providing a map to accompany the project prioritization. That map should show



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existing sidewalk networks and could be helpful for various discussions. AD said that, after looking at the schedule, there will not be any rooms available on June 11th. AO said that they would find another location. AD asked if it could be held in the back conference room that BPAC usually meets in and AO confirmed that was a possibility. RB said that they could look for other locations but the conference room is a good backup. The other members agreed that they don't mind meeting in the conference room. RB asked if maybe they could maybe meet in the front conference room. AO said that the front conference room and council chambers are somewhat out of order right now due to a plumbing issue, so she would have to see if they will be usable by then.

JA asked if there had been any progress on the greenway. AO explained that because of the amount of time that has been spent trying to secure one easement, staff has planned an alternative route that would avoid that area and that new route is being considered. RB asked if the attempts to secure the easement had gone on for 3 years and AO confirmed that they had been going on for as long as she had worked for the City. RB said that the BPAC is very interested in having the greenway move forward and asked what the next steps would be in considering the alternate route. JS said that he thought that the original route had been chosen because of an issue with bridges and cost. Potential routes for a greenway were discussed. If the greenway can be extended to Oakwood Street, then development in that area will provide a multi-use path connection to Mattress Factory Road. RB added that it might be possible to develop a bike lane on Oakwood Street and create a short bike route for families in that area. RB asked what the next step for the new proposed route is. AO said that the City Manager was presenting on the budget to City Council the following Monday and that the greenway will likely be part of the conversation. AD noted that the cost for construction projects have increased significantly due to inflation and other issues. JS added that a building had been constructed recently at his workplace and the cost increased 40% over 12 months and a large part of that was due to labor shortage and increased labor costs.

CITY TRAILS MAP AND FUTURE MAPPING

AO explained that since AD wasn't at the last meeting, staff wanted to take some time to discuss the possibility in the future of the BPAC contributing funds to help improve the City's trail maps and to maybe hire someone to design better maps. AD explained that currently they are working on the Lake Michael trail map that will go on the kiosk and the site. The map is similar to the one at Cate's Farm and is not very detailed. An additional issue is that the yellow trail at Lake Michael appears to be leaving the park and going onto an adjacent property. Staff is not sure if the trail needs to be shutdown or relocated or how to address that issue. AD explained that Nature Trails is helping with the mapping issue and they are also going to produce quarter mile markers like the ones at Cate's Farm. NW asked when Lake Michael will be closed completely. AD said it would be Spring 2024 through Spring 2025. RB asked if it was just because of the boathouse and AD said no, it was because of the spillway and the dam. JA asked if they would have to drain the lake and AD explained that they would be taking it down 10 feet to start and see if that's enough. AD said they



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were already discussing contingencies such as what they could do with the fish in the lake. The other concern with draining the lake is that the docks are floating but attached to poles. Lowering the water level too much will cause structural issues. One positive result from the project is that a bridge will be constructed over the spillway. This will help improve future trail connections. RB asked about the boathouse and AD said that the new one probably won't be built until next year. They will look into removing the current one when the water level is lowered for the spillway work.

NW asked if there was any other business. JS noted that he went down Lebanon Road recently and noticed that the Havenstone multi-use paths are open and they look very nice. AD added that the new Mountains-to-Sea trail signs are up too. RB said that part of her thinks that if the City continues having issues securing rights for the greenway that they should direct their attention to other parts of the City where there are already multi-use paths and more possible network connections. She explained that will be something to discuss with the new bike and pedestrian transportation plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Meeting summary prepared by Rachel Gaffney, City Planner.