



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Meeting Summary

May 22, 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
Allison Tate (AT)	City
Rachel Gaffney	City Planner
Ashley Ownbey (AO)	Development Director
Aaron Davis (AD)	Recreation and Parks Director
Barbara Hollerand (BH)	Executive Director, Downtown Mebane Dev. Corp.

Jason Smith and Nate Wood had an excused absence.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 24, 2023, MEETING SUMMARY

JA moved to approve the meeting summary from the April 24 meeting. RB seconded the motion.

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

REPORT FROM BIKE RODEO

KJ summarized what worked well at the bike rodeo and what could be improved for next year. She said that the location was perfect and the bank's drive thru cover provided a nice shaded area for the participants. The organization of the different stations also created a good flow. Participants went first to JA for maintenance, then to get a helmet (if needed), then to the bike registration area, and then finally to the obstacle course. KJ said that they didn't count the number of participants and in the future it would be good to keep track of that. AO said that 18 people registered bikes and there were a few that declined. Based on that, there were about 20-25 attendees. KJ felt that it was a more steady flow of people than the event from 2 years ago, but possibly not as many people as the rodeo held in 2019 at the MACC. JA added that there was a lot more engagement with people passing by than at the last rodeo. AT asked where the rodeo had been held previously. It was explained that it had been held at the MACC in 2019 and at the American Legion the other two years. RB said that she thought it would be helpful to pair next year's rodeo with another small event. People stayed an average of 30 minutes and having an additional event, maybe something art related, might encourage people to stay longer. It would be good for people to feel like they could come downtown to do a few different things rather than coming for just the one event. The food truck was far enough away that it wasn't pulling people in the way that they had hoped. AD said that one request that Recreation and Parks had gotten many times but hadn't been able to organize is an art festival. Maybe the BPAC could hold a smaller version of that? AD said that Chicago did a community art event where there were canvases put



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up around the City that residents could complete as a kind of paint-by-number type activity. AD said that maybe Mebane could do something similar to that on a smaller scale. KJ said that she went to a Lego event recently that was a community build. Participants were given a pattern to build a small section and then the individual sections were put together to make the full structure. JA suggested that maybe they could design the obstacle course with street chalk or have a Mebane Logo that could be filled in. AD said that if they use canvases then they could be displayed at the MACC, they would just need to determine how many canvases would fit in the space. RB said that she thought the age group of the bike rodeo participants was about 3-12 years old. RB said that she really liked that idea, it would give people more reasons to come to the event. She also said that she thought the event should be earlier, maybe 9am-12pm. There were not many participants after 12-12:15. KJ asked if JA needed more help with the maintenance portion of the rodeo. JA said that at previous events there have been two people doing maintenance, but the work that needs to be done is usually pretty simple and doesn't take much time. Usually it's just straightening brakes or straightening tubes. KJ said that it did seem like a lot of the bikes needed maintenance. JA said that there always is with kids' bikes, parents often don't have time/capacity to identify those kinds of issues. RB summarized the notes that had been discussed so far (good location, additional activities, earlier time, etc.) and JA added that it would be better if the food truck could be located closer to the rodeo. MC suggested that they also put a sign out on Hwy 70 (Center Street) to help attract more interest. KJ added that there was a sign out on Clay Street but another one on Center Street would probably be seen by more people. RB suggested getting a feather flag that says "Bike Rodeo". KJ added that they gave out a lot of helmets at this event, but they have enough for another event or they could give them out at Autumnfest this year.

MEBANE ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

KJ said that no entries have been submitted yet. She had sent out information earlier for the first wave of social media promotion, based on what was done last year, but she would work with Kelly (Mebane PIO) on further social media content and promotion. AD asked if the Recreation and Parks accounts had posted anything for the activity challenge yet. KJ answered that she didn't think so. There had been posts for the bike rodeo, but now that that is over, it would be good to refocus on the activity challenge. AD said there are some items on this week's schedule that aren't going to happen, so there are some openings where the activity challenge could be added to the social media schedule. AD asked KJ to resend the schedule of social media content and said he would get that going ASAP. AD said that they need content for this week and the activity challenge would work well. RB asked if the activity challenge ends at the end of October and AO answered that it would be the beginning of October at Autumnfest. RB said she had been wondering if it would be possible to advertise it through the local schools. She knows that the schools have an online platform and she was wondering if the City ever advertises anything through the schools. AD said that they haven't needed to in recent years because there has been high numbers of attendance at City events, but they used to send flyers to the schools. Now everything is done digitally. AD thinks that the City could ask the schools to help advertise but he doesn't know



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exactly what the process would be now that everything is digital. JA asked if the schools send out any information to parents over summer break or if it would just be at the beginning of the school year. RB said they might, but she wasn't sure. JA said that if it was digital it might be easier for schools to put it out on their social media or email lists. RB asked if the City PIO would coordinate that and AD answered that it would be good to discuss it with her. The BPAC member discussed if there were any other ways to promote the challenge to families with children. RG added that there are flyers currently up at the library, the MACC, and on Solgarden's notice board downtown. RB asked if there is a notice board at the Community Park. AD said there is, but its small. He added that there is a tv at the Community Park now that will be displaying advertisements, but its not ready yet. RB asked when it would be ready and AD answered that it should be soon, but he wasn't sure exactly. AO asked AD if they run ads before the movies in the park and AD answered that they do. AD added that all of the movies in the park for this year had happened already. JA asked if the downtown musical chairs events were still happening and AD said that they were. JA suggested that they could put up a sandwich board for the activity challenge at those events. KJ suggested that she could promote the activity challenge before the concerts. RB said that if there is a QR code on the sandwich board signs then it would be simple to direct people there for more information. JA added that Cates Farm has a notice board and AD added that Lake Michael Park has one now too. RG agreed that it would be good to put flyers there as well.

RG explained that at the last meeting, the BPAC members had discussed having a participation prize and then 1 or 2 higher value prizes that could be raffled/awarded randomly to participants. KJ added that last year everyone that completed the challenge received athletic towels and sunglasses. The plan is that everyone that earned a prize would pick them up at Autumnfest, if possible. Last year Autumnfest was canceled, so KJ had to request everyone's addresses and mail the prizes to them. RB said that Solgarden has been very willing to help Mebane on the Move with this type of thing, such as allowing race participants to pick up prizes there. It would be worth asking if they would be willing to help with this as well. RB said there may be other downtown businesses that could help as well. JA said that he thought Trakside might be a possibility. RB asked if the BPAC was planning to use the same prizes as last year. KJ said that she does have some leftover. AD said that the sunglasses would probably be handed out at the 4th of July festival. They also recently got a new shipment of athletic towels, although the design is slightly different now. KJ added that it would be good for the prizes to be related to the challenge and other athletic activities. AD added that they also had sticky notes and color changing straws that say "Positively Charming". KJ added that there are some extra funds in the discretionary fund so maybe they could purchase some items as well. AO explained that at the last meeting the BPAC had discussed getting some more enticing prizes to help promote the challenge. She said that she had spoken briefly with the finance director and she was not sure if it was a good idea for the BPAC to purchase items that would be given away. The finance director is going to look into the relevant laws. However if a business were to donate items to be given as prizes, that would definitely be okay, and the BPAC could promote their contribution to the challenge. JA said that he could talk to local bike shops and see if they would be willing to donate some items. KJ asked JA to do so and let



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the BPAC members know if they would be interested. RB added that gift certificates would be a great prize. KJ added that there is a small REI-type store that just opened in Graham and they might be interested in participating in something like this as well.

KJ said that at the last meeting they had also discussed possibly running an ad in the local newspapers for the activity challenge. The flyer would just need to be resized. KJ asked if that would come out of the BPAC discretionary funds and AO answered that there were probably extra funds in the Planning Department's advertising budget that could be used. AO suggested running an ad through the month of June. KJ added that they didn't get a lot of submissions at the front end last year either. They were all submitted at the end of the summer or beginning of fall. AO suggested that they do still have the photos submitted by participants last year and asked if the BPAC would like to use those to promote the challenge as well. KJ said that she had sent the social media schedule to AD and that she would add more content soon. Once the BPAC determines if there will be higher value prizes, and what those will be, those can be added to the social media posts as well. KJ said that Kelly had posted some content for the activity challenge but she wasn't sure about bike to work day and some other items. She added that she also needed to revise the social media schedule to include the pocket parks as one of the challenges. RG added that all of the pocket parks, except for the downtown one, now have "Mebanites on Bikes" signs posted. RB asked the BPAC members to confirm if they did want to advertise at the Musical Chairs downtown event. RB and KJ discussed putting together a list of the next Musical Chairs dates and seeing if BPAC members could volunteer for different days. AD said that the next dates are June 16th, July 21st, and August 18th. KJ said she would be available July 21st and RB said she could do June 16th. AD added that the events start at 7pm. It was discussed if the sandwich board signs were needed or if smaller signs or handouts could be used. AD suggested getting small fans made for people to use at the concert with the Mebane activity challenge information printed on them. AD said they could probably get them by the July concert.

BPAC RETREAT

RG explained that this is the last regular meeting scheduled before the retreat, which will be held on June 11th from 1-4pm. RG said that everything is mostly in place, although food for lunch will need to be ordered. The retreat will be held at the back conference room of City Hall, where the BPAC meetings are normally held. RG explained that they probably will not have a guest speaker for the retreat as she has not been able to get a positive response. One speaker is confirmed for the regular September meeting, which will Andrew Meeker with the East Coast Greenway. He will be speaking to the BPAC virtually. KJ asked if any prep still needs to be done. AO said that at least meeting they had discussed whether they wanted maps available, like those that were provided last year. If the BPAC members want to see any specific features on the maps they should provide that information to RG within the next couple of weeks. RB asked if staff knows which streets have sharrows or have been designated as bike boulevards. AO said that very few streets have sharrows so it should be simple to just put a list together. RG added that she could put that information on a map as well. AO said that there should be another mapping tool as well as the consultant working



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on the bicycle and pedestrians transportation plan is supposed to provide a map for the project prioritization. AO explained that the project prioritization information will probably be emailed to the BPAC members and they will be given a deadline to complete it on their own. AO said that could be discussed at the retreat as well and RG agreed saying it would be good to have some group discussion of the potential projects even if they have already completed their individual prioritization.

AO said that the BPAC had also been discussing developing a bike map and asked if the BPAC members want to work on that together during the retreat. KJ said that she definitely wants to do it, but questioned what data they would need. She mentioned that JA had wanted to gather information about usage and what routes bicyclists are currently using. JA said that there are publicly available heat maps and that more detailed information may be available to municipalities that partner with those companies. KJ said that they need to determine where cyclists are currently riding in Mebane and see where the BPAC wants to encourage people to ride. JA added that heat map data could also help the BPAC identify future bike boulevards. KJ asked if they can get that information before the retreat. AO said staff would try and asked JA to send links to the publicly available maps he knows of. KJ said it would be good to see what kind of overlap there is between areas with a lot of bicycle traffic and where the BPAC members would deem the safest areas to ride. AO asked what factors they would consider to be contributing to the safety of a street (width, speed limit, traffic volume, etc.). JA added that riders of different skill levels will make those assessments very differently, so that is something to be aware of. AO asked if JA considers the number of intersections when assessing safety and JA said no, not really, it's mostly traffic volume, the type of traffic, and average speeds. RB asked if this map would include outlying areas or if they would focus on routes closer to downtown. JA added that RB made a great point earlier about kids always riding their bikes around the library. It may be good to plan a route around that area. RB said that the biggest need that people expressed at the Dogwood Festival is that they wanted somewhere to ride with their kids so it would be good to focus on that. KJ said that she thought the general idea of what they wanted to do was to take the trails map and make a more bike-oriented version. RB said that they could plan to put it at the end of the agenda and do as much as they could during the retreat and depending on what data they were able to collect. JA agreed that it would be good to start with mapping routes around downtown and then they could work on expanding those routes to the more outlying areas. RG added that for NCDOT maintained roads there are traffic counts available and other information so staff could see if that data would be helpful in determining routes to avoid. RG said she didn't think they had that data for city-maintained roads and AO agreed that the City would only have that if there had been a recent traffic study. RB asked if the NCDOT information is organized by road segment and RG said she wasn't sure if there was a different segment for every intersection but they did break the data into road segments. KJ added that the BPAC members could also look at organizing a bikeability audit in the future. JA said that People Provides, a massive advocacy organization, conducts studies on whether cities are bike-friendly and it is possible to submit cities for potential study. JA said he doesn't know how cities are chosen, but it may be worth looking into. KJ agreed and said



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that in addition to adding it to the end of the retreat agenda, they should also add it to a future meeting agenda for further discussion. RB agreed and said it would be great to have a bike route map ready for Autumnfest. The date of Autumnfest was confirmed to be October 7th.

RG said that staff had also been wondering if they should cancel the regular June BPAC meeting if the BPAC members do not feel like they need to meet twice that month. It is currently scheduled for June 26th. KJ said she would be in favor, as there are no major events coming up and there are at least two more meetings before the end of the activity challenge. KJ made a motion to cancel the meeting on June 26th and JA seconded the motion. A unanimous vote (5-0) supported approval of the motion.

NEW AND ONGOING BUSINESS

GUEST SPEAKERS

KJ said that they had already discussed guest speakers a little but asked if there were any other updates. RG said no, there is one speaker confirmed for September, one will hopefully be available in October or later in the year, and staff is still waiting for a response from the third. JA asked if he should reach out to anyone that he knows in the Triangle area that work in bicycle and pedestrian planning to see if they would be interested. RG said that she would be happy to reach out to anyone that he would suggest, if he can send their information.

BIKE RACKS

RG explained that a purchase order has been completed for the bike racks for the basketball courts and the MACC and AO added that the new portable rack has shipped and staff should receive it soon. AO said that they had also invited BH to the meeting to discuss thoughts on a downtown bike rack. RG reviewed the summary from the April meeting and explained that the BPAC members had discussed potentially taking over one of the street parking spaces with a bike rack. They had also discussed how there is a gap in the parking spaces near the midblock crosswalk on Clay Street. That area is going to become a concrete bump out with the new improvements on Clay Street and the BPAC members had discussed whether that area would be large enough for a bike rack. RB added that would especially be a good place for a more artistic bike rack. BH asked if the BPAC would be testing the location with a portable bike rack before placing a permanent one and there was general agreement on that. RG added that they were interested in getting input from BH and the Downtown Development Corp. on the design of a more artistic bike rack. The BPAC is also interested in organizing some sort of design contest and wondered if BH had any thoughts. KJ clarified that the plan, at least at this point, is to hold a design contest and then to commission an artist, maybe from Alamance Arts, to actually construct the chosen design. KJ added that when the BPAC constructed a temporary parklet in one of the street parking spots downtown they received a lot of feedback and a lot of concerns about reducing the available parking. The BPAC doesn't want a repeat of that negative reaction but wants to try to move



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forward to more of an understanding that encouraging cyclists to come downtown should increase traffic to local businesses. After all, a bike rack that is the size of a single parking space could potentially hold 12 or more bikes. KJ concluded that the BPAC wants to make sure that they are not making decisions in isolation but that they are getting feedback from the downtown businesses and others. BH said that there have been some changes to the situation that may help with this type of project, although she can't guarantee that there won't be any negative pushback. The Downtown Development Corporation currently meets monthly with downtown business owners. BH thinks that if there is discussion with the downtown business owners about this project in advance then the BPAC can address any concerns early on and make sure they are aware of the potential positive benefits of the project. MC suggested that maybe one of the businesses would be interested in having a bike rack in front of their location as a way of attracting more business. BH agreed and said that might be a good place to start. RB suggested that the owner of Lou's Bakery, which just recently opened downtown, might be interested in supporting a bike rack. The owner's mother runs MebFit and is involved in Mebane Walks. BH agreed and suggested that having a bike rack, particularly an artistic one, might help attract more people to a business than just having a car in front of it all day. KJ asked if BH could start bringing up this idea to downtown businesses and see if there is any interest and BH agreed.

JA said that he has a question for AO about parking. He listened to a podcast recently about how cities regulate parking and it said that most cities have requirements that if a business expands, or if a new business comes in, they must have a minimum amount of parking. Historically that language and parking requirement has only addressed motor vehicles, so most cities don't have any requirement for bicycle parking. JA asked if Mebane has considered putting a bicycle parking requirement in the UDO. AO answered that before Cy Stober left, there were a number of amendments made to the UDO. Staff is still involved with that process and hopefully the last few amendments will be finalized soon. One of the amendments that has been passed is a minimum requirement for bicycle spaces. They are tied to the number of ADA spaces, one bicycle space for every ADA space provided. This requirement is enforced for all new commercial and industrial developments. Most businesses have no issue meeting that requirement. KJ asked AO to confirm that as new businesses established they will be providing bicycle parking. AO explained that downtown is a little tricky because there is language in the UDO that for certain downtown developments, such as in the existing Clay Street area, they are not required to provide additional parking (which would include not being required to provide a bike rack). New commercial and industrial developments elsewhere in the City will be required to provide bicycle parking. RB added that having a bicycle parking requirement is a little like the complete streets policy, it ensures that infrastructure will be provided for alternate modes of transportation. AO clarified that the complete streets policy states that if a new road is being created then it should include a sidewalk and/or other facilities to support pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles. RG added that there are a few communities in the area that have minimum bicycle parking requirements. As part of the research for the UDO updates, staff has been researching the zoning regulations used by other peer communities within North Carolina. RG explained that they have a list of about 20 peer



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communities that they regularly review and she thought about half of them have minimum bicycle parking requirements. JA agreed that he would expect that Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Durham, and similar communities would have those types of policies.

KJ added that she had a question for AO about the greenway. She explained that it seems like the City has been waiting for a very long time for that last easement to be granted and she wondered if there were any other alternatives to moving the process forward. AO explained that this had been discussed briefly at the last meeting, but, due to the difficulties with attaining this last easement, the City is looking at pursuing an slightly altered route for the greenway. The plan now is for the greenway to run through an existing right-of-way on Roosevelt St. Engineering is currently working on those revised plans. They will need to be approved by staff and then they will need to go out to bid. The acceptance of one of the bids will need to be approved by City Council. KJ asked if the bid will be just for the plan and not for the actual construction. AO clarified that it would be and that staff is expecting that construction costs will have significantly increased in the 3 or so years since the greenway was originally planned. RB thanked staff for the update and added that the BPAC members get asked all the time by Mebane residents if the greenway is ever going to be constructed. JA added that the location of the greenway will also significantly affect where the BPAC will want to plan and advocate for future bike routes. JA asked what a realistic timeframe would be once the plan is approved and a bid is accepted. AD said it would probably be about a year, but it's hard to say. For Cate's Farm Park it was about 6 months to a year between when it was put out to bid and when construction started. AD explained that there is money for the project identified in the City's budget, but if the cost has increased then there will need to be a budget amendment.

RB asked if the Planning Department has any tools for development forecasting. AO said that the City does have a development map that shows where developments have been proposed or approved. The map has information about what stage of the approval or construction process the project is in, but staff is not able to provide estimates on when projects are likely to be completed. RB said it would be nice to be able to see what the City will look like in 2025, 2026 etc. as that affects many of the issues that the BPAC works on. For example, the Kingsdown project is going to increase traffic in several areas and likely affect downtown development in a number of ways, but the BPAC doesn't know when the project will be completed and actually start creating those effects. AO added that the City does have some population projections and some documents have estimated that the population of Mebane will hit 40,000 by 2042. AO concluded by saying that the City Council will be holding a public hearing on the budget on June 5th and BPAC members that are interested in that should try to attend.

MC added that he had heard that Mebane is going to be a stop on this year's Mountains to Coast ride and he was wondering if the BPAC was planning to do anything for that. They will be here from the evening of October 3rd to the morning of October 4th. AD explained that the Recreation and Parks Department has events planned and he encourages the BPAC members to volunteer. There will be an outdoor concert that night at the MACC and there will be shuttles to take the



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bicyclists to downtown and other locations in Mebane. JA asked if we could place “Mebanites on bikes” signs along the route into and out of the City and AD said that was a good idea.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Meeting summary prepared by Rachel Gaffney, City Planner.