

MINUTES
WEST HARTFORD PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, January 13, 2020
WEST HARTFORD TOWN HALL, ROOM 400
Next Meeting Monday February 10, 2020 @ 7:00PM ROOM 217

Board Members in attendance: Ken Livingston, Sandy Fry, Daniel Johnson, Colin Gillespie, Ryan Nobrega, Daniel Firestone

Town Staff in attendance: Marc Blanchard, West Hartford Leisure Services

1. Quorum was determined to be present. Call to order 7:05 PM
2. Approval of previous meeting minutes on a motion by Colin Gillespie, seconded by Daniel Johnson, the Minutes were approved with correction unanimously.
3. Old Business
 - a. Commission Annual Report review, the commission members reviewed the final draft and made comments. A motion was made by to approve the report with the corrections and subject to one final review of the revised report via email. Dan Firestone made the motion, seconded by Daniel Johnson, the annual report was approved unanimously with corrections
 - b. Status of Roadway and trail projects:
 - i. Sandy Fry spoke with Duane Martin, they are in the process of building out the scope for the North Main Street road diet project, it will be shared with the Commission before it is finalized. The North Main Street bridge project will likely start March 2020. There's concern among the commission regarding the transition to a limited 2 lanes that re-open to 4 lanes than down to 3 lanes for the diet trial. There is a public meeting regarding the construction project this Wednesday.
 - ii. Reaction has been mixed for the Four Mile/Boulevard project. The town continues to monitor whether traffic is rerouting creating problems elsewhere, and whether crash experience is improving.
 - iii. Section 5 and 6 of the Trout Brook trail is held up at DEP, it's possible phase 3 will move forward in 2020.
 - iv. New Park Ave., project is still with DOT.
 - c. Status of Bike Share update was provided by Marc Blanchard from Leisure services. CROCG has not finalized agreement between CROCG and Zagster, the selected Bike Share provider. After that agreement is approved, Zagster will work with the individual towns on Town/Zagster agreements.
 - d. Bike education program –
 - i. Resident Alyssa Norwood has spearheaded discussions with the assistant superintendent of WH schools to discuss the 4th grade education program, meeting is scheduled for January 30 2020.
 - ii. Sandy Fry shared with the commission a draft letter regarding bike education in 4th grade curriculum. It was recommended to add in information about how this program can improve the Town's ranking with various livability and bikeability recognition programs. A motion was made by Dan Firestone, seconded by Colin Gillespie to approve the revised letter to superintendent and BOE, with cc to town council, with a final review by the Commission via email of the revised letter. Motion was approved unanimously.
 - e. Planning department matters, Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), the transportation chapter was discussed. Sandy will send a copy of the Transportation chapter,

with initial comments, to the entire Commission. We will need to approve any comments at our Feb. meeting and then send them immediately to Todd Dumais.

- f. Ed Pawlak presented on speeding on local roads in West Hartford, with data retrieved from the Connecticut Crash Data Repository. This information is attached to these minutes. Because of the increase in crashes, Ed recommends that the Town appoint a Road Safety Committee. The Commission was not ready to make this recommendation, but thought that it would include in its comments on the POCD a recommendation for a study that does the following: identifies what has caused the increases, proposes solutions, and monitors results. Sandy will include this when she sends out the Transportation Chapter of the POCD.
4. New Business: Daniel Johnson discussed permanent bike safety installations/rodeo courses in parks. It was recommended that the Commission first identify just what is contemplated and size requirements. There might be space for this in several parks or on school play areas. The basketball court at Fern Park, which does not see a lot of use, might be a candidate site.
5. Reports:
 - a. Update from Town Staff – nothing additional
 - b. Sustainability grant application: Ed Pawlak on Bike West Hartford Inc, they will be asking for \$1000 grant for a bicycle safety program as part of Center Streets.
 - c. Update from Cycling Without Age – no report

Meeting adjourned 8:37PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Johnson, Secretary and Board Member
West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission

The Case for a Town “Road Safety Committee”

1. West Hartford has an epidemic of vehicle crashes that is getting worse with time (see attached).

2. West Hartford has an epidemic of vehicle speeding on local streets and “major arterials”.

- Ex: West Hartford Road Diet and Safety Study (2016): “*Vehicular speeding is a major concern on North Main Street. Speed observations revealed that traffic routinely exceeds 35 miles per hour (MPH), and 45 MPH over significant sections of the corridor.*”

3. Vehicle speed is directly related to crash likelihood and severity

(https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/saferroadsnsw/speeding_and_crashes.pdf)

As a vehicle’s speed increases, so does:

- the distance travelled during the driver’s reaction time (reaction distance) and the distance needed to stop (braking distance)
- risk of losing vehicle control
- the amount of kinetic energy that is absorbed in a collision (Ex: a 30% increase in speed results in a 69% increase in the kinetic energy of a vehicle)

4. While the new Engineering Department “neighborhood streets traffic calming” initiative is encouraging, it does not address the epidemic of speeding (and crashes) on “major arterials”.

5. Many of these “major arterials” plagued by excessive speeding are in residential neighborhoods (e.g., North Main Street, Mountain Road, Trout Brook Drive, etc.), impacting their livability.

6. What to do?

I recommend the creation of a Town “Road Safety Committee” to study the dual epidemics of excessive speeding and crashes, propose solutions, and monitor progress. Members would be drawn from Town Council, Town Departments (Engineering, Planning, Public Works, Police, etc.), and stakeholder citizen groups (PBC, BWH, Neighborhood Associations, etc.).

7. I request that the PBC support this initiative.

Data Compiled from the Connecticut Crash Data Repository by Ed Pawlak

Local Roads in the Town of West Hartford only

Crash Report Date Range:1/1/2015-12/2/2019

Total Crashes: 4,846

Total People Involved: 12,497

Total Vehicles Involved: 9,483

Vehicle Type: 93% were Passenger Car, SUV, Pickup or Passenger Van

Injury Status

- Fatal: 3
 - Suspected Serious Injury: 23
 - Suspected Minor Injury: 526
 - Suspected Possible Injury: 933
-

Traffic Surface Conditions

- Dry: 80% of Crashes
-

Collisions with non-Motor Vehicles

- Pedestrians: 69
- Cycle is: 37

Year	# of Crashes	Average # of Crashes per Day
2015	888	2.43
2016	991	2.72
2017	1,081	2.96
2018	1,084	2.97

(2019 data set incomplete)

Top 10 Roads for Crashes

Farmington Avenue: 450

Trout Brook Drive: 384

North Main Street: 369

New Park Avenue: 332

Park Road: 300

Boulevard: 292

South Main Street No. 2: 282

Prospect Avenue: 232

Mountain Road No. 1: 223

Quaker Lane South: 213