

## **West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**Monday April 10, 2023, 7:00 PM**

**Room 400, Town Hall**

1. **Call to Order** 7:05, Attendance taken and Quorum Achieved – Ed Pawlak, Colin Gillespie, Jen Bowan, Tristan Sokul, Ed Perzanowski, Jill Morawski.
2. **Introductions.** Guests: Jack Daugherty. Ethan Frankel. Jay Stange. Alan Puzarne (Bike Walk CT Board).
3. **Approval of previous meeting’s minutes.** Motion - Tristan Sokul. 2nd - J Bowman. Approved.
4. **Old Business**
  - a. **Boulevard bicycle facility final design** - Boulevard will be repaved in May. Commission had recommended a solution with bike lanes on both sides and parking on one side. Discussed the shifting center line that will be created by the design, because the cross-section is not symmetrical beyond the curb extensions. This may calm traffic, which is a positive.
    - o Others asked about the hard push for parking in WH (driveways very long on Boulevard). Discussed how questions of parking vs. bike lanes are not based upon engineering principles, but seem to depend upon surveys of a small subset of residents who live on the road to be repaved. Despite this, the decision is made by the Town Engineer. Many in the meeting said that town leaders need to be involved in this decision. Some conversation on how to get mindset changed on parking. Suggestions: 1) Analyze parking demand on the road in question 2) More forceful commission note/emails/letters(s) to town leaders 3) share compelling data on benefits of protected bike lanes (tabled these ideas for now)
    - o Also discussed vertical delineators within the buffer lane at the south side of Boulevard. Commissioners had strong support for these vertical indicators, which would be the first in town. Discussion about how this would affect delivery trucks and snow removal. Letter will be written supporting these delineators (and green paint treatments on Boulevard) to Town Manager, Mayor, and Town Engineer. Will send also to Chair of Public Works Committee. Motion to send letter by J Morawski, J Bowman 2nd. Passed unanimously.
    - o Discussion also repeated on green street level paint in key areas to carry the bike lanes prominently across intersections and to allow the bike lane symbols to stand out better. These items will be included in the above-referenced letter. It was noted that New Britain uses these type of green paint treatments on their bike facilities.
    - o Raised crosswalk on Boulevard also brought up...and this will be addressed post-repaving this month. Town Engineer said the town will await FHI Studio’s analysis.
  - b. **Vision Zero Task Force**
    - **Summary of April 17 meeting**
      - o FHI Studio attended. Representative asked for a slowdown (pause button) on any quick build installations. FHI Studio will take more of a lead (so good news).

They will meet with individual subcommittees to provide them guidance including quick build.

- **“Gentle Driving” committee report**

- o Ed had asked Town Engineer for FHI Studio to analyze speed limits town-wide, and recommend changes based upon Safe Streets principles, rather than the traditional and flawed 85% percentile methodology. Ed will pursue this as speed limits are key and standardization and moderate decreases can help immediately. Proposed to the Vision Zero Task Force a pledge for citizens - a critical mass of drivers to pledge to follow rules of road. Similar to what was done in Hoboken, NJ. Important to brand this initiative and all suggestions taken.

c. **Road Safety Audit/Bike Facility Plan Revision Project update**

- o Rolled in with Vision Zero work.
- o FHI Studio will be coming to commission meeting in June or July

5. **New Business**

a. **Engineering update**

- o Heavy rains slowed down progress on Phase 6 of Trout Brook Trail but work continues
- o July repaving 1) Berkshire Road (west of Conard HS) will be repaved and has good bike safety opportunity to mall, Wolcott Park and for HS students 2) Braeburn Road will be repaved (short section)

b. **2022 Complete Streets Annual Report finalized**

- o Crash data added (first time data added at request of PBC) with 2022 lowest in 5 years in number of vulnerable user crashes, but 3 were fatalities in 2022.

c. **P&Z updates**

- o Ed spoke with Todd Dumais (Town Planner) ... will bring subjects to later commission meeting (free parking, minimum parking requirements in town, etc.)

d. **In the News**

- a. Substitute Bill No. 5917 – “An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Vision Zero Council” (Among other things, legalizes the use of automated traffic safety cameras)
  - o Bill introduced by transportation committee.
  - o Opposed by ACLU and NAACP because it is argued that this may be a tax on certain populations. Going to Judiciary next. Urged residents to contact representatives in support of this important legislation.

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<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2023/TOB/H/PDF/2023HB-05917-R01-HB.PDF>

6. **Year-to-date crashes and traffic stops update**

- Assistant Chief of Police sent Ed WH data - some positive nature to Jan to March 2023 data vs 2022. Total crashes down to 470 in 2023 vs 551 in 2022. Also more enforcement car stops (2-3X jump v 2022) and selective enforcement also increased.

7. **Around Town**

**Three safety issues Ed brought to the attention of Town Engineer recently (all are being addressed):**

- Farmington Avenue and Newport Avenue - in need of some “daylight”
- Boulevard and Quaker Lane - in need of a pedestrian signal

- North Main Street - flashing beacon pedestrian signal is blocked by signage on the northbound lane

- Citizen request made to see where the 15 crosswalk light systems in 2023 will be installed (already grant funded)...so Ed will get details of locations and share with commission.

**8. Announcements**

- Bike West Hartford communicated: walk audit is being planned in June on New Britain Avenue.

9. 6/12/2023 PBC meeting - email items you would like included on the agenda to Ed Pawlak

10. Adjourn 8:38. Motion: J Morawski. Jen Bowman 2nd. Approved