

West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission Monthly Meeting Minutes

Monday December 11, 2023, 7:00 PM

Room 400, Town Hall

1. Call to Order 7:01 pm

Attendance (quorum achieved)

Ed Pawlak

Ed Perzanowski

Colin Gillespie

Jon Wenz

Tristan Sokul

2. Introductions

Non-commissioner attendance included 13+ local citizens including excellent Bike West Hartford representation

3. Approval of previous meeting's minutes 1st John Wenz. 2nd Tristan Sokul. Approved unanimously.

4. Old Business

a. Vision Zero (VZ) Task Force update

- Ed Pawlak reviewed Dec 6 VZ meeting.
- Anyone can review draft Vision Zero Action Plan through Dec 18 to give feedback via website.
- Many shared concerns that feedback is not being aggregated and taken seriously...Ed Pawlak will ask VZ team to make available to the public all of the feedback it receives on the Action Plan
- Commission recommended that feedback should go to visionzero@westhartfordct.gov and copy BikeWestHartford@gmail.com.
- Some concerns raised on lack of initiatives in plan that included pedestrian and bike facilities in areas where 1500 new residential units are being built.
- Since this is a 10 year plan, concerns raised about the plan being successfully implemented...especially as town departments are overworked and understaffed.

- Ed Pawlak explained that he has advocated for pedestrian and cyclist safety throughout the year-long VZ process.
- Concerns raised again that pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is not being given same effort/focus in VZ as traffic infrastructure — and that Commission and Bike West Hartford feedback is not being considered enough.
- FHI consultants will complete the Vision Zero Action Plan component of their contract with the town in January 2024, and will then turn their attention to revising the town Bicycle Facility Plan, which includes the Bicycle Network Map.
- Ed Pawlak reminded everyone that Rick Ledwith has announced plans to form a VZ advisory committee that will monitor and review that the plan is being executed with fidelity next year (2024) and in years to come.
- Concern raised in closing that full report is not complete yet so much could change.

b. Bicycle Network Map revision project

- Ed Pawlak shared the map and prioritization ranking prepared through input from the Commission.
- Ed Pawlak shared methodology for ranking state and town roads on the map.
- Ed Pawlak will write an email to Town of West Hartford to share the results of the road ranking project.
- Motion raised for Ed Pawlak to submit letter with map and prioritization to Town. 1st John Wenz. 2nd Ed Perzanowski. Motion passed unanimously.
- Bike West Hartford will publicize this ranking and encourage January 2024 Commission meeting participation.

c. Enhanced crosswalk project

- Ed Pawlak will bring this project to forefront of 2024 efforts for Commission.

5. New Business

a. Engineering update

Results of phone conversation between Ed Pawlak and Greg Sommer December 7:

- Park Road renovation project
 - \$1.5 mill state bond funding is set - Resurfacing and repaving will be lion's share of budget - but also repairing sidewalks as well as new benches and trees.

- FHI recommendations will be considered based on road safety audit report.
- Ed will confirm if CT transit stops and locations will be included in improvement.
- Bike West Hartford stated that Town has shared the scope of project included traffic calming measures like raised crosswalks.
- Comment: question on bond - was \$1.5 mill the entire budget? Ed Pawlak confirmed it was.
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- Update: Duffield to Asylum Trout Brook Trail Phase 7 is now open.
- Ed Pawlak gave update on grant program to upgrade and install more accessible sidewalk ramps across town. Question if this can be combined with a request for raised crosswalks? Ed Pawlak will send a letter asking Town for more clarification on possibilities on scope including both ramps and raised crosswalks.
- Other: Commercial business owners have given feedback on plans for West Hartford Center renovation project... they have pushed back on 1) reducing amount of on-street parking AND 2) potential downtime during construction. So, the town and its consultant are looking at plans again to accommodate these requests. This created lots of discussion in the meeting on how to help drivers make better use of current parking. Concern raised that not enough stakeholders were consulted. Motion: Ed Pawlak will draft a letter to Stantec and Town officials voicing a desire to be a significant stakeholder in any review or discussion of master plan for West Hartford Center. 1st John Wenz and 2nd Ed Perzanowski. Motion approved unanimously.

b. P&Z update

- Wetlands application 1700 and 1800 Asylum Avenue wetland application review is ongoing, with public hearings. Application for development has not yet been submitted to Town Planning and Zoning. When it has been submitted, then Commission will be involved.

c. Park Road Road Safety Audit: Cycle Track Schematic

- Discussed a two way cycle track solution (image shared on screen and as a print out) that FHI consultants will take into consideration
- Bike West Hartford asked that Town engineers consider 1) getting in and out of 2 way cycle track and 2) physical protections for track.

6. Around Town

a. Michael Walsh 2023 pedestrian and cyclist crash map

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1e1NVdC17859K-eb17bTVJHLCMCVcq1k&hl=en&ll=41.7423631954267%2C-72.69186707918904&z=12>

- Ed Pawlak shared crash map with descriptions including diagrams. he indicated quick build solutions could be considered based on these illustrations. He asked commission to take a look at crash map and how info can be used (link in Dec 2023 agenda already shared).

b. A semi-diverter for Woodrow Street

- Woodrow semi diverter discussed ... at the right time in 2024, can Commission ask Town what the strategy is for diverters?

7. From the Library

- NY Times article - why are pedestrian deaths occurring at night increasing (but not in the daytime). Trend states visibility is the key and other trends are distracted driving, automatic vehicles, and more since 2005. Ed Pawlak suggested that all road safety audits should include a review of conditions in the evening, when visibility is limited, and to determine whether lighting improvements are required.

8. Announcements

Jan 8 2024 meeting will be important for attendees and Commissioners. FHI consultants and Greg Sommer will attend the meeting to discuss plans for revising the town's Bicycle Facility Plan and Bicycle Network Map.

9. 12/11/2024 PBC meeting - email items you would like included on the agenda to Ed Pawlak (ecosys88@gmail.com)

10. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn. 1st Ed Perzanowski. 2nd John Wenz. Approved unanimously.