

Whatcom County Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2019

Attendees

Eileen Kadesh, Chair

Kyle Morris, Gary Malick, Sunny Beaver, Patrick Alysse, Stephen Zylstra, Tara Satushek

Jason Ardt – Public Works; Harrison Winkel – Intern

Absent

Matt Paskus, Alan McConchie, Mark Owings

The meeting convened at 5:35 pm.

Eileen welcomed Sonja Max, who has applied to join the Committee and served on several local commissions, including the City of Bellingham Parks Advisory Board.

Roundtable Introductions were given.

The minutes of the April 17, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously.

Airport Trail Update

Eileen talked with Greg McHenry from the Port of Bellingham Planning office, and he said the Airport Master Plan is still under review by FAA. The existing road would be open to pedestrians and cyclists if the new road is approved for construction. Eileen said she would stay in touch with the Port's Planning Division to stay on top of the status of the trail. The timeline is unknown since funding for the new road has not yet been secured.

The existing road is outside of the airport fence, and the proposed new road is within airport fence area. The new road, once built, would open up existing road for a trail. Next weekend the trail will be open May 25th as part of the test run for the cyclocross leg of Ski to Sea. Eileen will keep the Committee posted on the trail.

BPAC Plan Update

Tara provided the proposed outline that she and Sunny drafted. This included the existing plan framework, but consolidated. Tara asked the Committee what they thought the vision and purpose of the Plan should be. It was recommended the plan should be dynamic and usable for elected officials and that it should clearly identify the need for non-motorized transportation planning, the benefits to the individual and the region, along with identifying realistic project

ranking criteria and high need projects. It was agreed by the Committee that once the Plan is finalized, it needs to be formally adopted by resolution. The last formal approval of the Plan was done in 2011. Kyle suggested that the Plan promote a vision of how it is integrated into the overall vision of the community and the importance of identifying a champion of the Plan. Kyle mentioned a presentation he saw about Vancouver's Net Zero policies. Policies need to be added to the plan update. For example, transportation mitigation measures should be required for new development. Other policy suggestions are funding for infrastructure required when new developments are permitted, a Greenways levy or transportation benefit district.

Climate Change Meeting

Stephen and Kyle provided an update. Initiated by Chris Elder, County Planner, the meeting was held at the Bellingham City Hall Council Board Room. Among agencies represented were WTA, a couple of non-profit organizations, and the County Planning Dept. Representative Sharon Shewmake also participated. The purpose of the meeting was to see what local groups are doing in regards to climate change. Currently there is a Climate Action Taskforce for the City. The takeaway from the meeting was if we don't do something now it's game over. It was unclear if next steps were identified or if there was going to be a follow-up on information discussed.

Eileen met with Carol Frazey, to give the County Council presentation that Sunny and Eileen presented last year before Carol was on Council when the presentation was made. Carol Frazey mentioned that BPAC might want to be represented at North Sound Transportation Alliance meetings. Carol also likes the idea of small grant opportunities provided by BPAC.

Eileen, Stephen, and Sonja did Happy Hour with Barb Chamberlain, WSDOT Active Transportation Manager. Sonja asked about funding along state corridors and what projects are located along state corridors. Are State Routes 9 and 542 on the WSDOT Plan? How do we get on this plan? Eileen and Jason will follow up.

BPAC is hosting a station on Bike to Work Day. Eileen, Sunny, and Stephen will be there. Donations are from Peace Health, Great Harvest Bakery, Black Drop Coffeehouse and Old Town Cafe. The station will be staffed from 7-9 a.m. on the south side of the County Court House on Central.

John Hutchings, County Public Works Director, requested a separate project list with small projects or spot improvements from the Committee. An example of an area where spot improvements might be effective is Northshore Road, where a climbing lane on the curvy portion out to Agate Heights Road could help. Spot improvements are typically safety issues. This list should include low cost bike and pedestrian improvements that are low cost, but which can provide a big impact. Eileen asked the Committee why was Lake Whatcom Blvd to Sudden Valley route not on the priority list? Another suggestion was to designate bike routes on existing roads with wide shoulders. This would be an easy project to sign roadways and have

them sweep the roadways more often. Jason will research what criteria is needed to designate a bike route. This would change the maintenance schedule.

Nooksack Valley High School Improvements

Lonnie Bauman from the County Sheriff's Department Traffic Unit reached out to Eileen about this project. Eileen told Lonnie that the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program might be a good fit, but the SRTS funding cycle just closed. Jason recommended that that NVH still proceed with writing a grant proposal for submission during the next cycle since there is a long lead time.

Birch Bay Trail Work Party

Eileen reminded the group about the Birch Bay Trail work party on June 2nd. The group coordinating the implementation of this trail is hoping to get a lot of volunteers.

County Council Tour of BPAC Priority Projects.

Eileen recommended that this be delayed until Mark Owings is present since Mark had volunteered to take this on. The intent is to take County Councilmembers on a tour in July.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.