



Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee

Town of Watertown
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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ETHAN DAVIS, CHAIR
SHEILA FAY
ANDY COMPAGNA
JANET JAMESON
MARIA SAIZ
NATALIE TRUESDELL
ETHAN DAVIS
NICK CUTIA

MAY 2014 MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Committee Members: Ethan Davis (chair), Andre Compagna, Shiela Fay, Michael Izzo, Janet Jameson, Maria Saiz;
Guests: Gideon Schrieber (Community Development and Planning), Carolyn Reckman (Athena Health), Steve Engler

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of previous meeting were approved.
2. DESIGNATE SECRETARY TO FILL IN FOR NATALIE: Andy Compagna filled in as Secretary.
3. UPDOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:
 - a. COMMUNITY PATH CLEANUP: is scheduled for this Saturday from 1 to 3 pm. The web site indicated a full registration but volunteers are still encouraged to show up.
 - b. NATIONAL BRAIN TUMOR SOCIETY RIDE: is scheduled for May 18 and all attendees are encouraged to participate.
 - c. HELMET GIVE-AWAY: is sponsored through a local law firm. The committee considered a number of options for distributing helmets to children in Watertown:
 - i. Faire on the Square was suggested as a good opportunity, though it occurs late in the year, past prime cycling season.
 - ii. In conjunction with the safe riding program that is offered locally.
 - iii. In years past, police have been involved in helmet distribution to children
 - iv. At the Community Tent that is part of the Farmers Market at the Arsenal – this option seemed to elicit the most enthusiasm.
4. POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS:
 - a. ADULT BIKE RIDING CLASS: Sheila is planning to follow up with Mass Bike on this. Possible locations were discussed, including the possibility of the one of the parking lots in the proximity of Harvard Publishing's office.
 - b. CITY RIDING CLASSES: Athena currently is sponsoring classes in how to safely traverse city streets on a bike. There was discussion around how this could integrate into activities sponsored by the Bike and Ped committee.
 - c. BIKE COUNTS: Bike Boston (or maybe Walk Boston) was soliciting volunteers to do bicycle and pedestrian counts in selected locations around Watertown. Unfortunately, this count was scheduled for the next Thursday (May 8) and due to the short notice did not elicit participation from attendees.

- d. POSSIBLE WATERTOWN EVENT IDEAS: a number of possibilities were discussed, including (and not limited to):
 - i. Pre-scheduled Bike Counts – volunteers could be solicited during the Bike and Pedestrian committee's participation at the Faire on the square.
 - ii. Annual Bike Rides in Watertown: there was discussion about instituting an annual(?) bike ride in Watertown. Sign up could take place during Faire in the Square. Various themes for the ride were discussed, including:
 - 1. Architectural
 - 2. Historic
 - 3. Charles River (loop)
 - 4. Development Ride (featuring all development sites in Watertown)
 - 5. Economic
 - 6. Nature (partner with Friends of Watertown Riverfront?)
 - 7. Garden Tour (tie in with existing spring Gardent Tour program)
 - iii. Bike Maintenance: tie in with local Bike shop(s)?
- 5. 202-204 ARSENAL STREET DEVELOPMENT UPDATE: this involved into a broader discussion of development sites in Watertown, including the Hanover development and the Perolli (sp?) property.
 - a. Hanover Development:
 - i. Sustainable Watertown is still seeking viable alternatives for access thru the property site.
 - ii. The Planning Department Staff report includes guidance for providing access around the back of the property for the safety of pedestrians on the site.
 - b. Perrolli (sp?) site: Review process has begun. Initial feedback appears to indicate that the current design does not provide for optimal integration with the surrounding neighborhoods.
- 6. SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY PATH: this segment evolved to include discussion of the extension of the existing Watertown bike path to Fresh Pond and the extension of the bike path through the Arsenal property to the Charles River:
 - a. Bike Path to Watertown: funding for the build-out is in place, the start of the project is pending completion of the Design phase, which is scheduled to begin in June.
 - b. Bike Path to Charles River (through Arsenal): Carolyn Reckman established that the existing Athena development plans include provisions for this bike path connector. She also described options for the connection of the existing Bike Path to the Charles River through the Arsenal property:
 - i. From the Target-area spur through what is currently the existing parking lot, through Arsenal Park. This option would require a formal partnership among the related parties (Athena Health, Boylston Properties, Watertown, Bike and Ped Com, etc).
 - ii. A second option involves siting the extension though the Arts Center area (Kingston Road).
- 7. GREENOUGH BOULEVARD UPDATE: initiatives (such as developing a related video) are still on-going to drum up support for this project.
- 8. BIKE PARKING INTIATIVE:
 - a. There was discussion on the benefits and possible drawbacks to replacing a parking space with bike racks at Coolidge Square and Watertown Square. The consensus is that there is a lack or bike parking in these two locations and this effort could serve as a precursor to any possible arrival of Hub Bike.
- 9. TROUBLE SPOTS FOR CYCLISTS/PEDESTRIANS IN WATERTOWN: there was minimal discussion on this topic, having been addressed in the late part of the meeting.

10. NEW BUSINESS: topics raised in this segment:

- a. Funding has been approved for the training of police in promoting, enforcing and tracking bicycle and pedestrian safety issues selected communities including Watertown. There was discussion around the possibility of tying this into other efforts discussed earlier, such as Athena's bike safety classes.
- b. This week is Bike Week, and a related event is Bike Friday that begins in Newton on Friday morning and rides through Watertown, 'picking up' riders at by the pedestrian bridge on California Street.
- c. AAA: now apparently has road service for bicyclists.