

Minutes
Shelburne Bicycle and Pedestrian Paths Committee
Special Session with Village Safety Group and Others
August 13, 2018

BPPC Members Attending: Kevin Boehmke, Wendy Saville, Jeff Zweber, Kate Lalley (arrived 7:10), Hazel Civalier (student member, arrived 7:12)

BPPC Staff Attending: Dean Pierce

Others Attending: Tom Zenaty, Jane Zenaty, Jeff McBride and daughter, Chris Kent, Janet Nunziata, Lee Krohn, Paul Goodrich, Al Fortin

Informal Discussion Prior to Meeting (Prior to BPPC Quorum/Call to Order)

Lee Krohn started the informal session by briefly commenting on the current budget as it relates to bike/pedestrian/safety priorities. For example, he indicated that there is no specific line item pertaining to the creation of a gravel path along the north side of Bay Road between the fishing access and the terminus of the Ti Haul Path. However, other potential improvements (such as those that have been identified as priorities by members of the Village Safety Group) are provided with some funding in line items established for line striping, safety, etc. After briefly commenting on the recently announced grant award for the Irish Hill Road project, Lee also mentioned the potential for implementing relatively inexpensive but potentially effective features such as rumble strips. He added he seeks “simple, incremental, tangible ways” to make improvements.

Others in attendance also commented. For example, Jane Zenaty shared her positive opinion regarding fog line painting. She added she also supports rumble strips and asked if they might be installed along the entire Falls Road corridor. Al Fortin advised that rumble strips be tested on a more limited basis first, since they can generate noise that bothers those who live in close proximity. He also advised that the rumble strips be “less substantial” than the type installed on Interstate Highways. He previously was concerned that rumble strips might prove hazardous to cyclists, but he has been assured by people like Sai Sarepalli that they are not hazardous. Paul Goodrich noted that rumble strips have been tested by the Agency of Transportation, which feels they are effective. He acknowledged that may be so but added the noise they generate can be a problem. In Paul’s view, highways in the village are safe; highways outside the village are less so.

Attention then turned briefly to crosswalk signs. Lee indicated he values such signs but noted they can be “tough to keep in place” in some locations. He cited the cemetery entrance as one such location. This prompted a brief exchange relating to the impact of the sign on trucks turning in or out of the cemetery.

Redirecting the conversation somewhat, Kevin Boehmcke made a general statement concerning priorities and the respective roles of the Village Safety Group and the Bike and Pedestrian Paths Committee. He indicated that the two groups have been working cooperatively and successfully. The BPPC has been happy to allow the VSG to develop its ideas for the Falls Road and Marsett Road area and has not felt the need to “jump into Falls Road.” It would get involved, however, if the BPPC’s formal stamp of approval is desired.

Jeff Zweber reinforced Kevin's comments with his own. Jeff noted that the VSG is helping the town make progress by effecting change. One of those changes is the attention now being given to "driver perception" issues, which can be addressed through changes such as narrower striping of roadway lanes. He added that meanwhile the Paths Committee is taking a townwide perspective when it comes to looking at transportation issues.

[Around this point in the meeting Paul Goodrich commented on the many demands placed on the highway department, which others acknowledged. Paul made reference to '60 miles of roads' for which the department is responsible. It should be noted that although the total centerline mileage of highways in Shelburne approaches 60, the number of miles under Town jurisdiction is 52.7.]

As the discussion progressed, Jane Zenaty took the opportunity to extend an invitation for Paths Committee members to attend the next meeting of the Village Safety Group. On an expansive note, Kate Lalley suggested that as many people as possible read the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan. She described the proposed changes as setting a new direction for transportation policy in the community. Pivoting the conversation somewhat, Kevin Boehmcke noted that without sufficient funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements it can be 'hard to get things done.'

Building on her earlier comments, Kate identified what she called "bottlenecks" (on Falls Road and Bay Road, including the Bay Road bridge) and "key segment" that will need to be addressed if we are to create a safe and effective system for non motorized travel across the Town. 'We are also trying to change the culture' around cycling and walking, she noted, which will take time. Kate strongly encouraged those in attendance to make plans to attend the upcoming public input session for the draft Comprehensive Plan, which she described as "very exciting." Jane Zenaty offered to help publicize the session using her contact list.

Shifting gears a bit, Kevin Boehmcke then asked Lee for a more precise description of the funding that is available for various priority improvements. Lee responded by indicating as follows:

\$10,000 – is the amount available for sidewalk maintenance townwide, some of which may be used to repair sidewalks in conjunction with ongoing sewer line improvements;

\$20,000 – is the amount available for highway traffic safety improvements;

\$10,000 – is the amount available for line striping across the entire town.

As a follow up to earlier comments regarding the creation of a path between the fishing access and the terminus of the Ti Haul Path, Lee mentioned that the presence of wetlands could also frustrate attempts to complete the project. A wetlands consultant hired to examine a nearby site for the Town as part of the search for a new dog park location has been asked to determine whether the proposed path alignment is within a wetland. A report on the topic is expected in coming weeks. Lee remarked that his "goal is to look for an integrated approach to solve the problem."

Returning the focus to the village, Jane Zenaty posed a question about the potential cost and timing of the proposed crosswalk north of the Post office. Kevin Boehmcke asked if there will be

any line striping completed before the next school year starts. One area in need cited by Kevin is the intersection of Webster Road and US 7. [Answer provided by Paul Goodrich was not clear to the note taker.] Paul Goodrich went on to explain that the state of Vermont provides funding for centerline striping on certain roads but does not underwrite the cost of fog lines. When Lee Krohn asked Paul if he has a plan for painting foglines the answer provided was “no.” Paul added that he usually incorporates such painting into paving projects. The next such project would be along Spear Street.

Kate Lalley then asked if painting of fog lines (or sharrows, etc.) might somehow be a volunteer-driven activity. To which Jane Zenaty replied (after others commented on liability issues and impracticality) There’s already a budget for such work; what’s holding up the painting? According to Paul Goodrich, there are not a lot of companies in business to provide this service. Jeff Zweber interjected that he appreciates all that Paul does and appreciates the funding constraints. However, the status quo approach could well result in “getting things we might not want.” In other words, certain roads being striped do not need it while certain roads that need it are not getting striped. In his own defense, Paul noted that some line striping had been performed last year. Tom Zenaty recognized that effort. Tom also made clear that it is his understanding Paul is not a fan of restriping road lanes to a narrower (10’) width, and Paul confirmed this without hesitation. Following the exchange, Kate Lalley noted there has been extensive community discussion regarding the need for a ‘reset’ and ‘rebalancing’ when it comes to the management of the Town’s transportation infrastructure. Others concurred. When pressed by Tom Zenaty regarding whether or not he could implement such changes, Paul Goodrich responded he would “do what I’m told to do.”

On a consensus building note, Wendy Saville said she would like to invite Paul to come back to a future Paths Committee meeting so he could describe the places around Shelburne where he feels vehicle and bicycle-pedestrian conflicts are most significant. This in turn prompted discussion of ways to improve communication around bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. One such idea was to create a bicycle and pedestrian safety-themed Instagram account. Another related idea was to establish an appropriate bicycle and pedestrian safety-themed hashtag. Dean Pierce jested that responsibility for identifying the hashtag should be assigned to the Paths Committee’s youngest member. As discussion wound to a close, guests were thanked for their participation. (Lee Krohn, Paul Goodrich, and Al Fortin all departed the meeting at 8:10 pm.)

Before concluding the informal session representatives of the BPPC and VSG agreed to coordinate activities on Shelburne Day by sharing a booth. Members of VSG will prepare posters and handouts. Kevin Boehmcke explained that his objective for the day would be “talk and engage.” Wendy Saville suggested starting each conversation with a short series of questions to determine which Shelburne day visitors live or work in Shelburne. Meet up time on Saturday will be 7:30 am. (Tom Zenaty, Jane Zenaty, Jeff McBride and daughter, Chris Kent, and Janet Nunziata departed the meeting at 8:20.)

Formal Meeting (BPPC Quorum Achieved)

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Kevin Boehmcke following the departure of the members of village safety group.

Note taking: Dean Pierce will continue to take notes for the session.

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was consented to informally.

Approval of Minutes: Kevin Boehmcke noted that the draft minutes for June should be amended to include mention of the approval of the May minutes. He clarified that the May minutes were approved during the initial portion of the June meeting, which occurred before the group left the community gardens parking area. Kevin moved approval of the minutes as revised, with Wendy seconding. The minutes were approved.

Public Comment: No members of the public were present. Wendy Saville made note of two comments made by members of the public on Front Porch Forum. The comments pertained to a child cyclist who was forced off the road and berated by a vehicle driver. The comments resulted in an email exchange between Wendy and a local resident. The experience highlights the need for public education, according to Wendy. Kate noted it might also establish the need for separate vehicle and bike/ped systems, at least in some locations.

Update on Laplatte Suspension Bridge: Kevin Boehmcke provided an update on the status of the Laplatte suspension bridge project. The material for his update came from an email that had been written by Joplin James before he left on his trip.

Comprehensive Plan: The group next discussed the text of the draft Comprehensive Plan as well as the need for maps. Kevin Boehmcke offered praise for the design of the document, while Kate Lalley described opportunities to contribute photographs. Discussion of a new bicycle-pedestrian map consumed the remainder of the time set aside for this item. Dean Pierce noted that the current map is merely a placeholder based on a map included in the Open Space plan. Previously he has suggested that the map included in the Plan depict existing facilities well as three specific facility recommendations and three additional general recommendations. Consensus was reached that the first two specific recommendations might include the Irish Hill Road (bridge and sidewalk) project and a path alongside Bay road from Shelburne Farms to the Yacht Haven area. There was a brief discussion regarding how ambitious the map should be. Jeff Zweber made an argument in favor of the map "aiming high." In terms of other possible priorities to reflect on the map, Kevin identified the need to establish a connection between facilities in Shelburne and facilities in South Burlington. In his view and the view of others the most logical corridor for such a connection may be Spear Street. To address possible concerns from landowners who might be affected by a particular proposal, Jeff suggested the use of wide bands to convey the need for improvements/connections generally. Dean suggested that an alternative approach might be to include a sketch drawing along side the actual GIS map. The sketch could convey the basic concept of the plan in a way that might not raise as many concerns. Kate and Wendy Saville will take the lead on the development of the actual map proposal. Kevin will also contribute. Dean suggested that a version of the map be available in time for the next meeting.

Announcement Regarding Grant Award: The group briefly discussed the news that Shelburne's application for funding for the Irish Hill Road bridge and sidewalk had been funded.

The award is slightly less than the amount requested but nevertheless very substantial (\$579,000, plus 20 percent local match). Congratulations were extended to all. Dean Pierce mentioned that a newspaper article about the award is in the works.

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting date falls on September 17. Members confirmed the date.

Adjournment: Kate Lalley moved that the meeting adjourn, with Jeff Zweber seconding. The motion was approved. And the meeting ended at 9:35 PM.

DRAFT