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**BALTIMORE COUNTY PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
*Sheldon S. Epstein, Chair*

--APPROVED September 8, 2015--

**MEETING NOTES**  
**Tuesday, April 14, 2015**  
**4:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Chair Sheldon Epstein, Harry Bhandari, Nate Evans, Jim Kelly, Ted Levin, Allysha Lorber, Charlie Murphy, Francis Taylor, Myron Williams, Mike Filsinger, Linda Grossman, Pat McDougall

**Absent:** Robert Barrett

Department of Planning staff present included Kathy Schlabach, Janice Graves, and Jessie Bialek.

**1. Introduction of Members and Announcements**

Mr. Sheldon Epstein opened the meeting at 4:03 p.m. and asked the members to introduce themselves. There were no announcements.

**2. Review of Today's Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda that was originally sent out to the members.

**3. Approval of Meeting Notes of the March 10, 2015 Meeting**

Mr. Epstein called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the March 10, 2015 meeting. Mr. Harry Bhandari made the motion and Mr. Fran Taylor seconded. The approval was unanimous.

#### **4. Items for Discussion and Vote: Staff Report on Potential Priority Projects**

Ms. Kathy Schlabach gave a brief presentation on potential priority projects. She noted that many comments were received for new bike projects at both the Community Input Meeting (CIM) and via e-mail but few can be pursued through the Maryland Bikeways grant because they will need a matching funds.

She also explained that existing projects currently being grant funded will need additional funding to be completed. Budget priorities within the Department of Public Works have changed, and it no longer has the funds to replace existing storm drain grates with bike safe ones.

The Department of Planning will need to submit supplemental applications to the Maryland Bikeways grant program for 2016 for additional funds to complete the storm grate replacements. Each project will have to stay under \$100,000 so that no matching funds will be required by the County. There are six projects listed and there could be more depending on how many grate replacements will be needed. DPW is developing a comprehensive list of grate replacements and associated costs.

The other project listed in the staff report as a potential project for funding through the Maryland Bikeways Program is the Short Line Trail with an in-kind match provided by the Catonsville Rails to Trails organization. Ms. Schlabach also noted that one of the storm drain projects would extend the Catonsville Park to Banneker Community Center route to include Winters Lane.

During the discussion committee members made the following points:

Ms. Allysha Lorber stated that the County should look into upgrading the grates via the storm water management fee and that the County should be doing system-wide upgrade of all of the storm drain grates. Ms. Schlabach replied that such work is already being done and that there is currently a backlog of repairs that need to be completed. Mr. Epstein also replied that the storm water management fees are to be used for the reduction of sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus loads and is not a viable funding source.

Mr. Charlie Murphy stated that the Catonsville Rails to Trails group had been trying to get a tunnel for the Bloomsbury Road crossing, but they are now considering a crossing at grade, which will be substantially cheaper.

Ms. Lorber said that she was disappointed that the Northeast Trail is not on the project list. Ms. Schlabach replied that all trail projects require a 20% match either cash or in-kind. Catonsville Rails to Trails does their own fundraising and that the Friends of the Northeast Trail might consider using them as a model. She noted that the project could be phased with the first effort being a feasibility study. Ms. Lorber replied that she was under the impression that design and construction cost estimates had already been completed. Ms. Schlabach agreed that the design work for the section from Rossville Boulevard to Silver Spring Road had been completed, but construction would entail a right-of-way acquisition that a grant would not pay for, and that there

will also be the need for two bridge crossings. Mr. Pat McDougall added that in his experience, an 8 foot wide trail costs about \$1 million per mile. Trail funding through the Department of Recreation & Parks is very low at the moment. However, some developers have constructed sections of the Northeast Trail as part of their open space requirements. Mr. McDougall also reminded the committee that development through the Planned Unit Development Process has a mandatory community benefit, which could include trail construction.

Ms. Schlabach mentioned that federal money through the Alternative Transportation Program might be a possibility if matching funds could be found. Mr. Murphy said Catonsville Rails to Trails is a non-profit that charges membership fees but most of their money comes from grants. They also do a lot of outreach, that includes setting up booths at community events and have gained political support, at the state as well as the local level. He also said he doesn't think that projects should not be on the list just because there isn't a current funding source.

Many members of the committee spoke of their concern about the cost of replacing the storm drain grates and how the need for additional grant funding will put a halt on any other new projects. Ms. Schlabach explained that if the Planning Department does not go after more Maryland Bikeways grant funding then the currently funded projects will not be completed.

In general the group concurred that they were disappointed that there was an additional need for funding to complete previous years' projects. Committee members indicated that they would like to review new projects that were submitted at the CIM and to add some projects to the list. They were uncertain that the staff's recommendations were the best use of grant funding, and that bike improvements were being implemented as part of the county's repaving operations.

There were several motions initiated. A motion to postpone the vote on approving the staff report was made by Mr. Nate Evans, and seconded by Mr. Harry Bhandari, but when put to a vote, none of the members voted in favor. Ultimately, Mr. Jim Kelly motioned to adopt the staff recommendations to replace the storm drain grates with Mr. Bhandari seconding. The motion passed unanimously. Then, Ms. Lorber motioned to add the Bloomsbury Road Crossing trail project. Mr. Murphy seconded and the vote passed unanimously.

## **5. Other Business**

Mr. Epstein asked if there was anyone signed up to speak. He then asked if any members have any other business to bring to the attention of the committee. Dr. Linda Grossman informed the committee that the Department of Health and Human Services is currently implementing a safety campaign in all of the high schools by displaying posters with a theme that changed monthly. They are placed in high traffic areas so they can be seen by most of the students. The latest poster is on cell phone safety which is a major cause of pedestrian and auto accidents. She said that they are always looking for new ideas.

Mr. Epstein asked the committee if there was interest in creating a subcommittee to prioritize projects recommended at the CIM. Ms. Lorber said that the District 5 committee has made a

wish list of projects, and suggested other committee members could do the same in their districts. Mr. Murphy indicated he would be following up on the suggestion for the crossing of Route 40. Mr. Evans noted a number of items he would like the committee to address including reviewing the county and state repaving lists, capital improvement program, the Department of Planning's work plan, the Unified Planning Work Program funding provided by the Metropolitan Council, and the county's bike rack placement policy.

Mr. Evans also explained that with the adoption of state bill Senate Bill 371, starting on October 1, MDOT will be charged with identifying bicycle priority areas. He suggested the county designate Towson, Catonsville, Dundalk and other areas.

Ms. Lorber made a motion to schedule a subcommittee meeting for the second Tuesday in June to review the requested CIM projects, identify potential funding opportunities and priorities, and review the state and county repaving schedule if available. Ted Levin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **6. Adjournment**

The chair called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Murphy made the motion and Mr. Bhandari seconded. The approval was unanimous and the meeting was adjourned at 5:33.