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Baltimore County Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
Sheldon S. Epstein, Chair

--APPROVED November 10, 2015--

MEETING NOTES
Tuesday, September 8, 2015
4:00 p.m.

Attendees: Chair Sheldon Epstein, Harry Bhandari, Jim Kelly, Ted Levin, Allysha Lorber, Charlie Murphy, Francis Taylor, Mike Filsinger, Pat McDougall

Absent: Nate Evans, Myron Williams, Linda Grossman, Robert Barrett

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

1. Introduction of Members and Announcements

Mr. Sheldon Epstein opened the meeting at 4:05 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 April 14, 2015 Meeting

Mr. Epstein called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the April 14, 2015 meeting. Mr. Fran Taylor made the motion and Mr. Harry Bhandari seconded. The approval was unanimous.

4. Item for Discussion: Staff Report on Comparison of Bicycle Facility Funding in the Baltimore Region

Ms. Jessie Bialek gave a brief presentation on the staff report table showing the surrounding jurisdictions' funding sources for bicycle improvements for the last fiscal year. All jurisdictions except for Baltimore City and the City of Annapolis reported back.

During the discussion committee members made the following points:

Mr. Jim Kelly asked why the study was done and what conclusions were drawn from it. Ms. Allysha Lorber replied that the study was done to see how much money was in the capital budgets for the surrounding jurisdictions and how they were funding their bicycle improvements. Mr. Pat McDougall explained that the funding source for offroad trails in the capital budget for Baltimore County comes out of Recreation and Parks budget and it mostly used for trail projects that are located within County parks.

Ms. Lorber asked Ms. Kathy Schlabach when the next fiscal year begins and what would be the best way to come up with a budget to be placed in the capital budget for bike and pedestrian improvements. Ms. Schlabach replied that the process always begins with a Citizen Input Meeting (CIM), which will be held in the third week of October. Ms. Lorber replied that she didn't think that was enough time to get a budget prepared, but would like to submit comments and get an update on the CIM at the next committee meeting to see if any citizens asked for any bicycle or pedestrian improvements to be included in the capital budget.

5. Other Business

Mr. Epstein asked Ms. Lorber to give a summary of the June 9, 2015 subcommittee meeting. Ms. Lorber stated that Ms. Schlabach gave the group a briefing on the process used to develop the Eastern and Western Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Plans, and then explained the county process for addressing striping of bike lanes as a result of road repaving. The meeting resulted in three future action items to address:

- Ms. Schlabach will review the Northeast Trail plans to see if a design solution could be found to eliminate the need to acquire right-of-way for the Northeast Trail.
 - Update: Ms. Schlabach stated that she reviewed the above mentioned section of the Northeast Trail plans and concluded that it would not be feasible to fit a path through that section while conforming to AASHTO standards without obtaining some right-of-way. She added that there is still no source of funding available for trail construction.
- The District 5 Committee will work with Towson University to get sidepaths on York Rd. and Towsontown Blvd.
 - Update: Ms. Lorber stated that it would be difficult to build any on-road facilities on York and Towsontown Blvd. and that they would like to coordinate with Towson University to look further into having a sidepath built along both of those roads.

- Ms. Lorber will be responsible for measuring Stevenson Road for bike improvements.
 - Update: Ms. Lorber stated that the section that she would like to focus on for potential bike lanes is between Charles St. and York Rd., and that a local Girl Scout will be assisting in the measurement and design of the project as part of a service award.

Mr. Epstein then asked Ms. Schlabach to give an update on the status of the county's Maryland Bikeways projects. Ms. Schlabach explained that the county applied for 3 projects. Two were for bike safe storm drain grates in Dundalk and the Southwest Area, the third was for Winters Lane as a minor retrofit project. Ms. Schlabach noted that the Towson Spokes project already has bike safe storm drain grates. Ms. Schlabach stated that as of the meeting she has yet to hear if the projects will be awarded the funding. Ms. Schlabach also stated that there was a public input meeting held for the Towson Spokes project in July and that both Bikemore and Bike Maryland opposed the project. Since the grant period for Towson Spokes has ended, an extension was applied for, but it is not yet known if that has been approved.

During the discussion, committee members made the following points:

Mr. Fran Taylor inquired as to why the committee does not review plans before they are disseminated to the public and how that might be changed. Ms. Schlabach replied that staff had presented the preliminary design and list of the types of improvements to the committee prior to applying for the grant. She also stated that the committee's duties are outlined very specifically in the bill that was adopted to create the committee. Mr. Charlie Murphy stated that they have been having problems with the islands that were installed in Catonsville and that the islands were not on the original plans that they reviewed. Ms. Lorber stated that she thinks that the opposition to the Towson Spokes plan is due a design which makes only minimal improvements. She stated that she would like to see Baltimore County become a regional leader for installing bicycle infrastructure but that the Towson Spokes plan is better than nothing at all.

Mr. Epstein asked if there was anyone signed up to speak and then asked if any members have any other business to bring to the attention of the committee.

6. Adjournment

The chair called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Taylor made the motion and Mr. Bhandari seconded. The approval was unanimous and the meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.