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

--APPROVED APRIL 12, 2016--

MEETING NOTES
Tuesday, November 10, 2015
4:00 p.m.

Attendees: Chair Sheldon Epstein, Nate Evans, Jim Kelly, Ted Levin, Charlie Murphy, Francis Taylor, Myron Williams, Mike Filsinger, Pat McDougall

Absent: Harry Bhandari, Allysha Lorber, Linda Grossman, 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 4:15 p.m. and asked the members to introduce themselves. There were two announcements:

- J Baltimore County received Maryland Bikeways Grants for the following projects: Dundalk Area Bicycle Safety, Southwest Area Bicycle Safety, Bloomsbury Crossing, and Winters Lane. All of the projects were fully funded except for the Southwest Area Bicycle Safety Project. The funding for that project was limited to replacement of storm drain grates in the Catonsville area.
- J The Department of Planning invites the committee members to attend its annual Holiday Event for Volunteer Boards and Commissions on Tuesday, December 8th at 5 pm.

2. Review of Today's Agenda

Mr. Epstein stated there was one change to the agenda that was originally sent to the members. Delegate Clarence Lam has requested to address the committee.

3. Approval of Meeting Notes of the September 8, 2015 Meeting

Mr. Epstein called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the September 8, 2015 meeting. Mr. Myron Williams made the motion and Mr. Charlie Murphy seconded. The approval was unanimous.

4. Remarks by Delegate Lam

Delegate Lam thanked the committee for allowing him to address them with one business item. He stated that he is the District 12 Representative, which covers parts of southwest Baltimore County and parts of Howard County. He wanted to inform the committee about a bill he is sponsoring that was brought to his attention by his biking constituents. The bill addresses the issue of “coal rolling”, which is when a diesel truck or car’s exhaust system has been modified allowing them to blow black soot out of their exhaust pipes at will. The drivers of these modified vehicles will then pull in front of or near bicyclists or pedestrians and essentially smoke them out with their exhaust fumes. The legislation would make this act a misdemeanor. Delegate Lam then asked the committee to share this information with other interested parties and people in the community. He is also looking for comments, supporters and co-sponsors.

During the discussion, committee members made the following points:

Mr. Murphy suggested that someone would have to get the vehicles tag number if they saw this happening or if it occurred to them. Delegate Lam replied that if this legislation was passed and law enforcement sees it, then they can write the culprit a citation.

Mr. Epstein wanted to know if this is a rampant problem. Delegate Lam replied that he has heard about it from cycling groups and that there are a lot of videos on the Internet showing it happening. He said that this bill and others being looked at this session will hopefully help raise awareness to share the road with bikes and be part of a new MVA awareness campaign.

Mr. Pat McDougall stated that he has seen this happen in road rage incidents, but didn’t know that it was an actual modification to the vehicle. Mr. Fran Taylor wanted to know if this could be addressed through the emissions process and Delegate Lam replied that he would like to speak to the MVA about checking the vehicles. Ms. Jessie Bialek mentioned that diesel vehicles are not required to undergo emissions testing in Maryland.

5. Staff Report Introduction and Vote: Proposed 2016 Meeting Schedule and Work Program

Mr. Epstein asked Ms. Kathy Schlabach to present staff’s recommendations on the 2016 meeting schedule and work program. Ms. Schlabach reviewed the draft, noting that the study of the waiver fee that the committee has asked staff to preform is scheduled to be completed in

September of 2016. She also said that traditionally at the first meeting of the year in March, the committee hears reports from the various other committees and then holds a Citizen Input Meeting (CIM). Ms. Schlabach stated that, as she mentioned last year, the county is running out of projects that can be funded by the Maryland Bikeways grants. She asked if the committee would still like to have a CIM, since the committee normally hears requests for the same projects every year, and these are mostly trail projects that the County does not have funding for.

Ms. Schlabach then suggested an alternative to the April meeting in addition to the discussion of proposed Maryland Bikeways projects. She stated that the committee has often discussed citizen advocacy groups such as Catonsville Rails to Trails and that it might behoove the group to have a work session to discuss how to form one of these groups focused on a trail project they are interested in pursuing, such as the Northeast Trail or an extension of the NCR Trail to York Road. The goal would be to organize interested citizens and help them gather community support and raise money to use as matching funds for grants. During the discussion, committee members made the following points:

Mr. Nate Evans asked if this would be a presentation or more of a networking event. Ms. Schlabach answered that it would be a presentation with a question and answer session with the possibility of breaking into smaller groups if warranted. Mr. Murphy stated that the committee members are going to have to touch base and bring people in from the districts, which might prove difficult. Ms. Schlabach replied that the committee would extend an invitation to the community leaders and any other interested parties. Mr. Jim Kelly and Mr. Taylor both expressed the concern of not knowing or having any active groups in which to contact in their respective districts. Mr. Evans replied that Bike Maryland can help spread the word if necessary.

Mr. Kelly wanted to know if asking the community to raise funds is due to a forecasting of the county's budget for the next year and if the county would provide the matching funds. Ms. Schlabach replied that there is no money in the budget for matching funds for trail projects. She noted that in the past, the Catonsville Rails to Trails met with the former County Executive and was able to get assistance from the Department of Public Works (DPW) on a project they were working on.

Mr. McDougall stated that the Department of Recreation and Parks does have one trail-centric project within their capital budget, but there is normally only about \$60,000-\$70,000 allocated. He also stated that any money raised by outside groups can also be used as leverage with an example being the Brady Tail at the Marshy Point Nature Center. Ms. Schlabach then asked if the committee would still like to have the CIM. Mr. Kelly stated that he feels that there still needs to be a forum for the citizens, with Mr. Murphy agreeing.

Mr. Epstein then called for a motion to approve the proposed 2016 meeting schedule and work program. Mr. Williams made the motion and Mr. Ted Levin seconded. The approval was unanimous.

6. Staff Report Introduction and Vote: Draft FY 2015 Annual Report

Mr. Epstein asked Ms. Kathy Schlabach to present staff's recommendations. Ms. Schlabach proceeded to go through a quick overview of the report speaking to the various sections, including development projects and physical improvements that the county has made.

During the discussion, committee members made the following points:

Mr. Kelly asked Ms. Schlabach if the complete street policy was written in the code. Ms. Schlabach stated that the complete street policy was adopted as a resolution. She said the only aspect of the policy that could not be implemented because it was not in the code was the option of having a waiver fee for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Mr. Kelly inquired as to whether or not the agencies were using the checklists. Ms. Schlabach replied that she is in contact with the other agencies and they are all aware of the complete streets policy. Now that she is in charge of development review she is able to make sure that the policy is being followed. Ms. Schlabach also stated that working with the forms has been difficult and that using a spreadsheet instead actually provided the committee with more information. Mr. Epstein then asked Ms. Schlabach to walk through Appendix D on page 19. Ms. Schlabach explained the information about the development projects noting the columns showing whether or not pedestrian, bicycle, or transit facilities were included. Mr. Kelly expressed concern that the decision to include bicycle facilities was based on the project being listed in the county's bike plan.

Mr. Epstein then called for a motion to approve the draft FY 2015 annual report. Mr. Levin made the motion and Mr. Williams seconded. The approval was unanimous, except for Mr. Kelly who abstained.

7. Other business

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.

Mr. Kelly wanted to thank the members of the committee who came to the Capital Improvement Program CIM, including Mr. Taylor, Mr. Evans, Mr. Murphy, and Ms. Allysha Lorber. He said that they are to be commended for their presentation and that it was most impressive.

Mr. McDougall stated that some trail projects are being constructed through alternate methods. An extension of the Northeast Trail along the right-of-way along Perry Hall Blvd. was constructed as part of a development project.

Mr. Taylor again inquired as to why the committee does not review project plans before they are disseminated to the public and suggested that the committee write a letter to the council asking that it be changed through legislation. Ms. Schlabach replied that staff always presents the

preliminary designs and list of the types of improvements to the committee prior to applying for the grant.

Mr. Murphy stated that he would like to know what the county ends up doing on these projects and why they made certain decisions. Mr. Evans stated that the community and the committee want more input into the plans, for example, the Towson Spokes plan, where they would have liked to have seen the engineered drawings ahead of time. Several members said they would like to have an advocate within the government structure to help the committee.

8. Adjournment

The chair called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kelly made the motion and Mr. Levin seconded. The approval was unanimous and the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.