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

--APPROVED SEPTEMBER 13, 2016--

MEETING NOTES
Tuesday, April 12, 2016
4:00 p.m.

Attendees: Acting Chair Francis Taylor, Harry Bhandari, Nate Evans, Jim Kelly, Ted Levin, Allysha Lorber, Mike Filsinger

Absent: Chair Sheldon Epstein, Grace Bristol, Myron Williams, Robert Barrett, Linda Grossman, Pat McDougall

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

1. Introduction of Members and Announcements

Mr. Francis Taylor opened the meeting at 4:10 p.m. Mr. Taylor asked the members to introduce themselves. Mr. Taylor mentioned that there were no announcements.

2. Review of Today's Agenda

Mr. Taylor stated that there were no changes to the agenda that had been previously sent to the committee members.

3. Forum on Trail Advocacy

Mr. Taylor noted that the format for the meeting would be slightly different since the committee is holding a special forum on Trail Advocacy, followed by the remainder of the committee's business.

There were two presenters. The first was Ms. Maureen Sweeney-Smith, who is the co-founder and fundraising coordinator for Catonsville Rails to Trails (CRTT), a volunteer group that was founded in 1996. Ms. Sweeney-Smith stated that they convert abandoned railroad routes and street car lines into bike/hike trails. CRTT has 3 trails, the #9 Trolley Trail, the #8 Streetcar Path, and the Short Line Trail. She also said that the CRTT formula is to find volunteers to clear what

they can and then to find the money to bring in experts to build the trail. Ms. Sweeney-Smith stated that groups such as CRTT should look at all of the resources available in the area to see if someone else can pay for the improvements. Groups should most likely become a non-profit, which will enable them to apply for grants. Ms. Sweeney-Smith also mentioned that groups should build in money for maintenance and to be ready for illegal dumping on and around the trails.

The second presenter was Mr. David Greene, who is the president of the Board of Directors for the Friends of Anne Arundel County Trails. This organization was founded in 1990 as a functional entity to work closely with the County. Mr. Greene stated that some of the reasons for creating a Friends group are to apply and manage grants, simplify procurement, fund special projects, and have the ability to accept money from citizens for the trails. He also said that the Friends group raises funds using a variety of avenues such as the annual membership fees, gifts, boating classes, donations, and project specific grants. He mentioned the importance of using social media to get the word out and solicit volunteers. Mr. Greene, like Ms. Sweeney-Smith, said to be sure to plan for the future and for maintenance costs.

There was further discussion after each presentation, concluding with Mr. Taylor thanking the presenters for sharing their experiences and stating how helpful and informative they were.

4. Approval of Meeting Notes of November 10, 2015 Meeting

Mr. Taylor called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the November 10, 2015 meeting. Mr. Ted Levin made the motion and Mr. Charlie Murphy seconded. The approval was unanimous. After the vote Ms. Kathy Schlabach mentioned that there was no quorum [Editor's note¹].

5. Items for Discussion and Vote: Potential Priority Projects

Mr. Taylor then called on Ms. Schlabach. Ms. Schlabach noted that staff's time will be consumed with implementing existing bikeways grants, and she is not recommending that any additional grants be sought this year involving staff's time.

She suggested that the committee should decide if they would like to work with any existing "Friends of the Trail" groups, or work to establish one. None of the committee members spoke about wanting to pursue either course.

Mr. Taylor asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak, who didn't have the opportunity to sign up.

¹ Robert's Rules of Order state that if there was originally a quorum, then that quorum remains in effect even if member of the committee leave the meeting before adjournment.

Mr. Linwood Jackson addressed the committee about some problems that he is having in his community of Turner Station. One difficulty pertains to bicyclists riding to an area that was a former construction site, has a pier and is in need of a trail. Mr. Taylor mentioned the River, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service as a possibility, but that it requires community support.

Mr. Murphy provided an update on the Safe Routes to Schools sidewalk grant for the Westowne Elementary School community. He said that the community has contacted the State Highway Administration who will help them in writing a grant, but they will need county support.

Mr. Jack Lattimore, another audience member, then spoke. He said that he went to the last County Council hearing to advocate for more bicycle improvements and feels that if others were to do the same, they might be able to get some money allocated in the budget. There was discussion on the ability of state or county bond bills to fund projects. Ms. Schlabach then noted that the County's current priority is schools and basic infrastructure maintenance.

Mr. Linwood Jackson again addressed the committee. He stated that there is a lack of sidewalks on a stretch of road adjacent to Broening Highway, and that severe puddling requires people to walk in the street, which is a very dangerous situation. He said that it is a very active location with two churches, a bus stop and a laundromat and asked for advice. Members of the committee advised Mr. Jackson to contact his state delegates, or to hold a community meeting and invite his representatives on the county council and state legislature.

6. Other business

Mr. Taylor asked if any members have any other business to bring to the attention of the committee. There was none.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.