

**City of Takoma Park Safe Roadways Committee
Monthly Meeting, December 10, 2013**

MINUTES

1. Meeting convened at 7:30pm with the following committee members in attendance: Sheryl Gross-Glaser; Kacy Kostiuk; Jason Cheek; Sylvia Borenstein; Liz Cattaneo; Scott Williams; Joe Edgell; and Ryan Morden.
2. The meeting was held at the home of Sheryl Gross-Glaser rather than at the Community Center because City offices and facilities were closed due to bad weather earlier in the day. Ryan posted notices on the Community Center doors so that any interested members of the public could come to our meeting at this alternate location.
3. The committee reviewed the proposed meeting agenda. No changes were suggested. Scott moved to approve the agenda. Sheryl seconded the motion. All members of the committee voted to approve the agenda.
4. The committee reviewed the meeting minutes from the November meeting. No changes were suggested. Scott moved to approve the minutes. Sheryl seconded the motion. All members of the committee voted to approve the minutes. Kacy will make them into a PDF file and send them to Jessie Carpenter for the public record.
5. Next on the agenda was a time for comments from the public. No members of the public were in attendance. Joe explained that we will always have this time available on the agenda in case someone attends and wants to speak.
6. Joe asked if any committee members had introductory comments.
 - a. Sheryl mentioned that the Community Transportation Association of America has a report coming out regarding bike routes. She will send a link to the report to the committee listserv when it is released.
 - b. There was a brief discussion of the committee listserv. All committee members agreed that it was working well as a communication tool. Joe noted that there is a list of contact information for all the committee members in the binder we received at the last meeting.
7. The committee had a long discussion about its priorities for the coming year. As decided at the previous meeting, Joe circulated an online priorities survey prior to this meeting, and all committee members voted on what they felt should be the committee's top priorities.
 - a. Joe reviewed the results of the survey. Improving bike and pedestrian access on high-traffic streets was the priority that received the most votes on the survey. The committee agreed we might make this a top priority.
 - b. Sylvia suggested that some of the priorities listed separately could be combined. For example, maybe creating traffic-calming solutions would be a way to improve pedestrian access on busy streets. Joe noted that speed bumps are problematic for bikers but said they can be made more bike-friendly. He has talked with the City about this, and there are plans to create more bike-friendly bumps on Flower Avenue.
 - c. Scott suggested that creating a bike and pedestrian master plan might be a way to achieve the goal of improving bike and pedestrian access on the roads. Since one of the priorities on the survey was to create a master plan, Scott asked the committee for input on why they prioritized improving access rather than creating a master plan. Joe said that he voted from improving access because most of the major roads are controlled by the state, and the state is not working well with the City. He thinks it might be beneficial for the City to focus on working with the state to do something like get the "share roads" signs painted on the state highways that go through Takoma Park. He noted that this was part of the state's bike master plan but that he was told the road isn't wide enough. Joe also mentioned that the secretary of the State Highway Administration (Melinda Peters) is

very receptive to improving bike access and safety on roads but that some of her staff is not as receptive.

- d. Kacy suggested that since everyone agreed to focus on bike and pedestrian access on busy streets, maybe we should focus on that and pick only one priority, since it was a rather large one.
- e. Scott suggested building a plan with the City Council and then seeing if we could use that as leverage with the state might be an approach to take. Liz said she was hesitant to focus on a master plan due to desire to make tangible results and not overreach.
- f. Joe asked what the committee wants to accomplish and what would each person would consider success after a year. He noted that the committee will draft a report for the City Council after a year. He added that he would also like to check in with the Council quarterly. He asked if producing some type of document is a goal of the group, and/or if we want to produce something more.
 - i. Sylvia supported the idea of producing something tangible but thought it might be nice to have a document or information we could pass down to future committees. Perhaps our yearly report could be a sort-of agenda of that this community could use to set priorities for the future.
 - ii. Scott supported the idea of doing more data collection in order to get more support for our initiatives. He suggested gathering opinions and/or data on traffic flow, since it might be useful to know where incidents are happening but also what opinions people have. Joe noted that his experience reaching out is that the same vocal community members are usually the ones to respond and that sometimes it gives a skewed view as a result, with the general population perhaps being content and not responding. He mentioned that one of the reasons this committee was created was for us to serve as representatives of the community.
 - iii. Kacy supported doing more data collection because she felt it was hard to know what to focus on without having more information.
 - iv. Sheryl mentioned that a City planning office would usually be the one to create a master plan. She supported focusing on two or three specific areas of the city that have issues and trying to enact a positive change in those places. She felt this would help establish the committee as effective and useful. Joe noted that the Takoma Park offices are small and that as a result, it might be difficult to find the manpower and time to create a master plan.
 - v. Joe said that there is likely money available to us if we want to do traffic surveys and that we could ask for traffic studies to be set up in certain areas.
 - vi. Sylvia noted that our focus might change as we work more and learn more, so she cautioned against too much specificity in our planning of priorities.
 - vii. Joe suggested that our yearly report could be the start of a master plan.
- g. Going back to the results of the priorities survey, Joe noted that most committee members supported recommending law changes to make them more bike and pedestrian friendly (7 of 8 committee members thought this priority should be toward the top of those voted on). Jason mentioned the "Idaho Stop" law for bicycles, and there was a brief discussion of the difficulties of enacting a law like this when neighboring jurisdictions have very different laws. Joe noted that it is not legal to bike on the sidewalk anywhere in Takoma Park, whereas DC has a law that you can bike on the sidewalk except in the city core.
- h. Joe suggested that if we have ideas we want to pursue but aren't certain about doing on a large scale, we could make recommendations for pilot projects that could be enacted and researched for further information.
- i. Ryan said he liked the idea of enacting law changes because it seems tangible. He suggested looking at reports to see where incidents have happened and maybe look at the codes and suggest revisions.

- j. Sheryl said that she is interested in improving roadway design so that people naturally do what's safer and that we work with people's natural patterns rather than try to create a law that might not be consistent with human nature.
 - k. Joe said we could try to ask for data from places like Google and phone app companies that collect data on where people are driving, walking, and biking. Liz wondered if we could get data from surveys done by WMATA regarding where people live compared to where buses go.
 - l. Liz said maybe a subcommittee or adhoc group could be formed to focus on citizen input related to transportation issues. She suggested open sourcing more information so that we could gather more data and could also build more support for the committee from the community and City Council.
 - i. Sheryl noted that there is an easy way to register complaints or problems online in New York City. There is also an online map where you can view all recent complaints. She felt it might be helpful to have a service like this for easy, fast reporting of issues and for us to collect more data.
 - ii. Jason said that Montgomery County and DC have 311 numbers you can call to report a pothole or other problems.
 - iii. Joe noted that many people say they don't know how to get involved or feel cut out of the process, but very few of those people seem to actually try to learn how to do so, or actually exercise those opportunities when they do know how. However, there are some people who work multiple jobs or have other responsibilities and simply can't attend City Council meetings.
 - iv. Liz suggested working with CASA on transportation issues of interest to Latino residents.
 - v. Joe suggested a having a booth at the Folk Festival and/or other events as a way for us to reach out to the community.
 - m. Another priority on the survey was to promote the new Bikeshare program. This did not receive many high votes. Ryan supported this priority because it's a brand new system and could have a positive effect on community biking. He suggested that the committee could look at data on bike usage and could have a tangible goal of increasing ridership on the BikeShare.
 - n. Joe noted that the committee had been talking for 45 minutes and had not yet settled on its priorities. He suggested possibly creating a series of subcommittees related to our top interests and then letting each committee focus on its particular areas of interest. All other committee members agreed. The following subcommittees were created, and the people listed below agreed to be a part of these subcommittees:
 - i. Outreach Subcommittee: Scott, Kacy, and Liz
 - ii. Data Gathering Subcommittee: Sylvia, Kacy, and Joe
 - iii. Bike and Pedestrian Subcommittee: Scott, Ryan, Sheryl, Liz, and Jason
 - iv. Law and Regulation Subcommittee: Ryan, Sylvia, and Joe
 - o. The committee members agreed that these subcommittees would communicate with each other and do work between our committee meetings and report to the larger committee at our meetings.
8. There was a period for committee members to comment on any issues since the last meeting.
- a. Liz gave feedback on the listserv, which she felt was working well. She suggested that if committee members want feedback or are sharing something that requires action, we should make that clear in the subject or body of the post.
 - b. There was a brief discussion regarding the possibility that the bikeshare location in front of the gazebo downtown would be moved. Joe has asked for a list of possible new locations for the current station located at the Gazebo from Seth Grimes. He was told he would get the list but that it is not available right now. No one on the committee felt the

location of the bikeshare station by the gazebo was problematic. Sheryl said she would talk with Seth about this, since he is her ward's representative.

- c. Joe had shared on the committee listserv a link to a bike video meant for police. There was a brief discussion of the view. Joe noted that cyclists in the community have complained about interactions with the police and that there has been debate about requiring officers to live in Takoma Park, which is not currently the case. Jason felt that the video was useful and that it might be beneficial for police officers to see. Joe said that he e-mailed Cathy Plevy to ask if the police chief had seen the video, but he hasn't heard back. Joe asked if the committee would support sending a link to the video directly to the police chief. The committee members unanimously agreed that Joe should do this. Sheryl suggested copying the mayor and City Council on the e-mail, but it was decided not to copy them because we did not want to appear to be trying to pressure the police chief. Ryan noted that the video said a car needs three feet between it and a bike in order to safely pass the bike. The video included signs specifically pointing this out, which might be useful on a street like Ethan Allen Ave, where there isn't room for a bike lane.
9. Sheryl attended the Open Meetings Act training and reported on what she learned. She said that the committee meetings must be open to the public and the public has a right to observe the meetings. The committee can give the public an opportunity to participate/comment but is not required to do so. The public has a right to be notified of meetings ahead of time in a "reasonable" and "customary" manner (i.e. we should not unexpectedly/suddenly change how to notify the public of the meetings if we have been doing it a certain way in the past). The public should have access to meeting minutes following the meetings. The committee can create subcommittees, which are also subject to the rules of the Open Meetings Act but only if the subcommittee consists of a quorum and is making decisions. The definition of a "meeting" is a quorum of committee members and discussion of public business. The committee should be sure that the meeting space includes enough space for the public to attend. The committee cannot ban recording of its meetings but does not need to tolerate disruptions. It is possible for the committee to have closed meetings, but certain special procedures need to be followed. The committee must produce written minutes after each meeting; included in the minutes should be: all items considered, any actions taken, and any formal votes. The minutes must be approved promptly and must be available to the public. The committee should retain records for at least one year. If anyone feels that the committee is not following the Open Meeting Act procedures, there is a Compliance Board they can report to.
10. The committee discussed plans for its next meeting.
 - a. The agenda at the next meeting will include housekeeping items, a moment for public comments, introductory comments by committee members, reports from the subcommittees, committee responses to issues that arise between meetings, and a discussion of the next meeting and agenda. Additional items may be added to the agenda prior to the next meeting.
 - b. The committee discussed changing the meetings from the second Tuesday to the second Thursday of each month because of time conflicts for some members on Tuesdays. Ryan made a motion to change from the second Tuesday to the second Thursday of each month. Jason seconded the motion. All committee members voted in favor of the change. The next meeting will be at the Takoma Park Community Center on January 9, 2014, at 7:30 p.m.
11. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.