

City of Takoma Park Safe Roadways Committee
Monthly Meeting, August 12, 2014

MINUTES

1. The meeting convened at 7:30pm with the following members in attendance: Joe Edgell, Liz Cattaneo, Ryan Morden, Kacy Kostiuk, and Curt Seiss. Sylvia Borenstein and Sheryl Gross-Glaser joined the meeting at 7:35pm.
2. The new member in attendance, Curt Seiss, introduced himself. He lives in Ward 6 and has for the past two years. He recently worked with the city to install a flexi-pave sidewalk in his yard rather than a traditional one so that trees nearby would not need to be cut down. The neighborhood he lives in is called Hillwood Manor.
 - a. The existing committee members in attendance introduced themselves to Curt.
3. Housekeeping:
 - a. Sheryl moved to approve the draft agenda for this meeting; Liz seconded. All voted in favor.
 - b. Ryan moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting; Kacy seconded. All voted in favor.
4. There were no public comments and no members of the public in attendance.
5. Joe discussed the committee's annual report to the city council.
 - a. Volunteers were asked for to begin to draft an annual report. Sheryl, Ryan, and Liz volunteered to work on this project as a subcommittee.
 - b. Joe noted that there is no due-date for the report, but the committee started last November, so he would like to aim to submit a report to the city council this November. He added that the committee might be able to get on the agenda for a city council meeting in December to discuss the report if submitted in November.
 - c. Joe suggested using the report to discuss what the committee has done over the past year and discuss plans for future efforts.
 - d. Liz suggested dividing the report into two sections: a look back on the committee's activities over the past year, and what the committee plans for the future. Joe also suggested adding notes about the position papers the committee created and following up with the city council to ask about their progress on these issues.
 - e. Sheryl suggested that the report could have three parts: one part about what the committee learned through meetings with councilmembers and other community members; one part about what the committee has done, and one part about future plans, with meeting notes in the appendices.
 - f. Liz said she would like to get a clearer vision of what the committee wants to include in the report prior to writing. Joe suggested that the subcommittee meet before the next meeting to create a general outline and then bring the outline to the next committee meeting for discussion and suggestions. He suggested a timeline of:
 - i. September and October committee meetings: working on the report (with additional work via e-mail in between)

- ii. November meeting: take a final vote to approve the report and submit it to the city council
6. The committee discussed possible priorities and plans for the coming year.
- a. Joe suggested looking back on things the committee has done over the past year to consider what to follow up on, as well as what to focus on in the future.
 - b. Each committee member discussed a few issues of interest to them:

Ryan	<p>Bikeshare – ways to promote it and increase usage and ways for the city to increase the assets that exist already.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ryan suggested working with the city to set a goal to reach a certain percentage of the population that is registered with bikeshare. - Another possibility would be identifying locations for additional bikeshare stations. - Sheryl noted that the literature reports that low-income populations tend to be underrepresented in bikeshare systems. Liz said that Montgomery County has a program for providing free training and equipment and discounted membership for low-income populations but that it has not been very effective or highly utilized. She suggested that improved outreach/communication with these groups might increase their usage. - Ryan suggested working with Montgomery College and/or Washington Adventist University to provide discounts for their students. <p>Increasing the use of public transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ryan wondered what it would be like if Takoma Park had a bus system that ran on a loop, similar to the downtown DC circulator buses. - Kacy said that she thought it would increase ridership if there was a free-ride area for buses in Old Town Takoma. Joe noted that similar systems in cities such as Seattle have recently been stopped. - Joe suggested that the committee might work toward a goal of increasing public transportation overall. - Ryan suggested that the committee could work with RideOn in general to improve bus service in the city. - Sylvia added that it would be good to follow up on the issue of the bus stop on Ethan Allen Ave at Takoma Junction.
Curt	<p>Improving pedestrian crossings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curt noted that the intersection at Glenside/Erskine and New Hampshire Aves is dangerous for pedestrians crossing New Hampshire, particularly with the construction on the bridge nearby. He noted that there was poor signage prior to the construction, and the situation has gotten worse with the construction. - Joe suggested broadening this topic to a general goal of improving pedestrian crossings. - Sheryl suggested focusing on 3-5 specific locations with specific recommendations, rather than giving only general recommendations to the city council. A paper on this might focus on design elements that work, what needs to be changed, and a prioritization of locations that need attention. - Liz noted that many councilmembers mentioned pedestrian safety issues when they spoke to the committee but that it may be a challenge to find locations

	<p>where the city would have the capacity to make changes (i.e. SHA doesn't need to do it, etc.).</p> <p>Construction on the Carroll Ave bridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curt noted that the committee might want to keep an eye on this situation as the construction begins, as there may be issues that crop up as the year goes on. - Ryan added that the timetable for the construction seems to have increased from 1 year to 1.5 years. Joe said that the construction crew won't know how much they need to replace until they begin to work on it, so it may take longer or shorter depending on that outcome.
Kacy	<p>More crosswalks on major streets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building on the general goal of increasing pedestrian safety, Kacy suggested that the committee focus on trying to build more crosswalks on streets like Carroll Ave that have long stretches without crosswalks and are busy streets. <p>Coordinate with SHA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kacy noted that she liked some of the ideas that came out in the discussion with councilmember Kate Stewart at the previous meeting. She said that it seems like a lot of the issues that can't be easily resolved involve an issue with SHA. Although it would be a major undertaking, she said that it might be useful for the committee to focus on ways to improve this situation. - Joe noted that Erkin could come speak to the committee in the future. - Sheryl suggested that perhaps the county could speak with the committee. - Liz suggested that members of similar committees in nearby cities such as Silver Spring could speak with the committee about their experiences with SHA. - Liz also noted that the change in Maryland leadership might be a good opportunity to make changes to how things are working. <p>Master plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kacy said that this was discussed during the previous year's brainstorming about things to work on and that although it is a large undertaking, it might be worth considering again. <p>Improved communication/outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kacy said that she is interested in continuing to work on making improvements to the city website to make transportation information clearer and more accessible to residents. Changes she suggested included making it clearer which entity (city, county, SHA) was responsible for different locations (sidewalks, traffic lights, etc.), as well as working to translate the information into Spanish.
Liz	<p>Process for installing new sidewalks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liz noted that the process is very piecemeal and convoluted. The policy of asking neighbors to vote for or against sidewalks can create a huge hassle and roadblock.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liz added that communication with entities such as Pepco and SHA on this issue was difficult. - Joe suggested that the city consider setting goals regarding the number of feet of sidewalk installed or used – planning out to 5, 10, even 15 years in the future. - Curt asked whether funding from the speed cameras continues to be used to fund projects such as creating new sidewalks. Joe said that he just found out that this is no longer being done because it is not a steady source of revenue. The city has budgeted some monies for projects like this now, and the speed-camera revenue is being used to fund the police. <p>Recommendation/solidified approach for traffic calming and speed issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liz noted that this continues to be an issue in the city and has been discussed by the committee in the past. - Liz and Sheryl noted that input on traffic-calming measures should not only come from homeowners on that street, as these measures affect all residents who drive, use public transportation, bike, and walk in the area. - Kacy suggested reviewing and changing the policy regarding traffic-calming measures to help take the emotion out of these discussions and provide a consistent and cohesive plan for future development of traffic-calming measures. <p>Liz also noted that it would be helpful to review what the councilmembers said in their discussions with the committee and consider how to work with these and other goals.</p>
Sylvia	<p>Data-focused issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sylvia noted an interest in continuing to focus on data collection and use in making informed decisions for future changes or plans. <p>Legislative recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sylvia said she thought it would be interesting to consider ways to coordinate laws/regulations and/or make legal changes that would create better transportation safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. - Joe noted that this may be difficult but that it could be useful to consider coordainting laws/regulations in Maryland so that they are similar to those in DC so that things like biking in the bike lane or on the sidewalk are not different from one placed to the next. - Liz suggested possibly working with similar-minded organizations such as WABA.
Sheryl	<p>Focusing on a handful of pedestrian-focused projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheryl suggested identifying specific projects to work on rather than providing only general recommendations. - Sheryl noted that it might be helpful to have increased police patrols on foot and bike rather than primarily by car. This would give police officers a better sense of the issues for pedestrians and cyclists and might help promote these modes of transportation.

	<p>Sheryl suggested listing all of the committee members' interests and reviewing them over the coming months as the committee sets its goals for the future year.</p> <p>As Liz discussed, it might be worth exploring ways to work with the change of leadership.</p>
Joe	<p>Joe read the issues discussed by members at the planning meeting for the previous year and noted that many similar topics were on the list for this year.</p> <p>Joe suggested identifying four main activities to work on for the year and writing four recommendation papers to the city council (the committee did three during the past year). He noted that it would be possible to focus on other things as well but that these would be the committee's main focus.</p>

- c. Sylvia had to leave the meeting at 8:30pm. Before leaving, she noted that she is particularly interested in focusing on crosswalks and pedestrian issues that would improve safety, with a focus on specific recommendations and supporting data.
- d. The committee considered the list of possible topics to focus on and began to make a narrower list of goals to focus on. The following list was decided upon as a starting place. Joe said that he would e-mail this list to all the members of the committee and that they should review it and discuss any concerns.

Sidewalk policy
Intersection improvements
Traffic calming
Pedestrian improvements
Bikeshare

- e. Liz asked Kacy if she could compile all of the meeting minutes into a single document so that they could be searched easily. Kacy said that she would work on this.
7. The committee briefly discussed topics for the next meeting. These included:
 - a. Annual committee report – the subcommittee will create an outline and bring it to the next meeting for discussion
 - b. Introductions of the other new committee members who were not in attendance at this meeting
 - c. Priorities and goals for the upcoming year
 8. The meeting was adjourned at 9:01pm.