

**City of Takoma Park Safe Roadways Committee  
Monthly Meeting, January 20, 2015**

**MINUTES**

1. Meeting convened at 7:30pm with the following committee members in attendance: Joe Edgell, Mike McCabe, and Kacy Kostiuk. Wren Rogers arrived at 7:36pm, and the committee had a quorum at that time. Liz Cattaneo arrived at 7:45pm and Ryan Morden at 8pm.
2. The members introduced themselves to the visiting member of the public. The member of the public – Debra Evans – introduced herself. She is a long-term resident of Takoma Park and lives in Ward 4. She recently retired and is sitting in on meetings around the city to find out more about getting involved. She was active with the discussions related to the closing of Ritchie Ave and concerned about it due to her own commuting route.
3. Mike motioned to approve the meeting agenda. Wren seconded the motion. All voted in favor of approving the agenda.
4. It was decided that the committee would wait until the next meeting to approve the meeting minutes from December, as not all members had reviewed them yet.
5. Residential streetscape taskforce – Joe reported about the draft report that he had emailed around. Some residents have approached the city council to request certain visual standards regarding street features, and this Takoma Streetscapes Task Force was designed out of that request. Items include:
  - a. Road signs, striping of speed bumps, painting of curbs
  - b. They are concerned that there isn't a "theme" for the community at large.
  - c. Joe believes that many of the recommendations make sense, and others may not. Some of the recommendations are also related to traffic calming. For example, they have requested that all speed bumps are uniform. Joe said this seems inconsistent based on the goal of speed bumps to address specific situations in different locations. They want to eliminate no-parking painting so that the yellow paint would be removed.
  - d. Joe asked committee members not to share the draft report that he emailed, as the other committee has requested that it not be shared until it is fine.
  - e. Joe recommended that committee members look at the report and the comments Joe made on it.
  - f. The group was developed in spring 2013. Joe expressed concern that some of their aesthetic concerns may reduce capacity of features to function well. One example is removing the bright yellow curb markings for people with vision impairments and replacing it with red ones. This would cost a lot of money that cannot be used for other things. Joe noted that the committee may have some concerns related to this. Mike and Kacy suggested that it would be better to make changes to future improvements, rather than spend money to retrograde improvements that function properly but might not be uniform in appearance.
  - g. There is also a recommendation to use a specific kind of concrete because the tone is a different color. Joe noted that the city uses this concrete because it pours faster and dries faster. The report suggested that it might be more brittle.
  - h. Liz noted that the report mentioned that the way concrete is being poured around tree routes can lead to cracking. Joe said that the city has done some investigation. Joe said that the report does not oppose concrete of a different type near trees, if needed for root problems.
  - i. The report also calls for removing the house numbers on street signs – Joe notes that this is not safe for the fire department.

- j. For the guidelines on street signs, the report suggests that the city comply with all SHA requirements. Joe noted that the city has already fought with SHA to not have huge SHA signs on 410, so this may not be a good recommendation.
  - k. Other issues include:
    - i. Visibility of speed bumps – they suggest a minimal number of evenly spaced lines.
    - ii. Minimal number of crosswalks.
    - iii. Low traffic areas not defined – what does that mean?
    - iv. Notification of residents’ issues – “The city should consult with residents potentially effected by a public works development.”
  - l. Joe made comments on the report and sent back to the chair of the taskforce. The taskforce has a meeting on Thursday, and Mike plans to attend to represent the Safe Roadways Committee.
  - m. Liz asked if there are any recommendations the SRC wants to support. The beginning seemed not inconsistent with the SRC’s goals. Joe pointed out that a goal for MOUs with state and contracting agencies is a good one – utility patches are an example. Joe added that repair standards should be written into contracts and enforced.
  - n. Kacy and Wren noted that it might be good to support the notion of pleasant walking experiences and that consistent signage could be useful.
  - o. Joe is concerned that this report could be used to not build more sidewalks – as a complaint that sidewalks are not “historical.” Joe is afraid that this might be used as a way to stop SRC improvements that we have been tasked to do.
  - p. Kacy wondered if there are research-based suggestions for things that can be done aesthetically to increase walking and biking. Mike is going to look into this. Wren noted that she is reading a book called Bikenomics and will send Mike some notes.
6. Annual report
- a. Joe thanked everyone for presenting at the city council meeting and working on the annual report.
  - b. Joe noted that this coming year will be more of a challenge in terms of achieving things because there are so many things to work on.
  - c. Joe said that he thinks there is still more work on snow clearing recommendations.
    - i. Mike asked who is responsible for clearing spaces on New Hampshire Ave where there does not appear to be a house or business. Joe noted that the city actually owns where the sidewalk is – not just an easement. In the areas with a “service road,” Joe thinks perhaps it is SHA. Mike asked about the intersection of Erskine and New Hampshire, heading south on the eastern side – a planted area. Joe suggested looking at the plat maps.
7. Carroll Ave master plan
- a. Joe reported that Sheryl, Joe, and Joe’s partner and parents measured on Carroll Ave to consider the plan proposed by architect Eric Saul. The measurements showed that the plan would work and would actually provide more parking than currently exists. There would be enough room for a sidewalk, parking, three lanes of traffic, and bike lanes on both sides, plus a 75-foot plaza.
  - b. Joe suggested that the committee could work on the “Carroll Ave Master Plan,” looking at the entirety of the stretch of Carroll within Takoma Park – including crosswalks, the Takoma Junction changes, and other things.
  - c. The group measured from the Junction to Flower Ave. Joe noted that there is room if removing the grass strips (undergrounding the utility wires) for sidewalks, bike lanes, and two lanes of traffic (wider sidewalks, two-lane separated cycle track, and narrower car lanes for slower traffic).

- d. Joe thinks that a four-way stop at Lincoln/Carroll intersection would help with many of the issues that have been discussed there. Joe thinks there is enough space for a line-of-sight for cars on Carroll but suggested looking for the numbers on this. Kacy will research this and measure.
  - e. Wren mentioned that there is discussion of moving a cross-guard to the crosswalk on Boyd.
  - f. Wren and Kacy will work on writing a report related to the Carroll Bridge closure and will form a subcommittee related to the Carroll Ave Master Plan.
    - i. There are two separate projects – longer-range (vision) and immediate bridge issue.
  - g. Ryan asked about a bill in the legislature to force a change from SHA to city. Joe noted that this would mean a maintenance responsibility for the city without anything in exchange. The city would want money to accompany any exchange.
  - h. Liz noted that an impartial study would be great. Kacy said that she feels any short-term changes related to the bridge should be holistic (not disadvantage any one group) and be research-based.
  - i. Joe suggested not waiting for SHA engineers to look at things – the committee can also do its own research.
  - j. Wren noted that Daryl Braithwaite mentioned at the Lincoln Ave neighborhood meeting related to the bridge closure that about 7,500 cars use it per day.
  - k. Joe suggested a license-plate reader. Kacy will reach out to police department to find out if there are any limits in the law to prohibit that use. If not, the committee could approach city council one-on-one to suggest this.
  - l. Wren suggested trying to get the hospital involved in increasing bike and walking.
  - m. Kacy will chair the subcommittee that works on this project and will plan a meeting for the subcommittee in the next week or so. A report on the bridge closure should be ready for the next SRC meeting.
8. Mike left at 8:36pm due to another commitment.
9. Walking summit proposal:
- a. Sheryl was not present to discussion this, but Liz talked briefly on it.
  - b. Liz suggested encouraging someone from the city to present. Joe noted that Erkin would be a good option.
  - c. Joe said that if Sheryl or Liz wanted to go, it might be possible to get authorization. Liz will investigate what the cost would be.
  - d. Joe asked Debra what would increase her walking in the city. She mentioned the perception that walking after dark is not comfortable. If we could change perceptions, that might help. This would be discussed at the walking summit, and the committee could get some new ideas.
10. Schedule for committee priorities:
- a. Look at priorities at the end of the agenda. Add Takoma Park Junction and Carroll Ave Bridge. Make a schedule to work on for dates the committee wants certain things to go to the city council – to avoid getting to the end of the year and not having done anything.
  - b. Committee members should look at these things and toss out possible deadlines for submitting, plus tasks that need to be done for each project.
11. Next meeting:
- a. Streetscapes
  - b. Carroll Ave
12. Kacy asked about utility patches. The roads and sidewalks are torn up for utility-line work, but the patches are very poorly done. Joe suggested adding a note to the code that requires the patch doesn't vary by a certain amount of height or other requirement. He said that the plan is to fix the

entire roadway after all repairs are finished, but this results in poorly done patches being present for a long time – months.

- a. Debra noted a court case in Pennsylvania that related to this. She said she would look for more information about this and would share it with the committee.
  - b. This topic of utility patches could be included in the report on intersection improvements or could be a separate report entirely.
13. The meeting adjourned at 8:59pm.