

Fairfax County Sidewalk and Trail Committee
Minutes of the May 9, 2007 Meeting

Members Attending: Deborah Leser (Sully District), Brent Reynolds (Braddock District), Wade Smith (Dranesville District), Roy Brooks (Mason District), Gene Bartlow (Springfield District), Mary Flowers (Clifton Horse Society), Dennis Frew (WABA), Dan Iglhaut (NVRPA), Paul Johnson (NVBIA), Jenny Pate (FCPA),

Staff Attending: Chris Wells (DOT) and Sheng-Jieh Leu (DPZ).

Guests Attending: Philip Latasa (Friends of the Accotink).

The meeting was called to order at 0736 by B. Reynolds.

Minutes of the April meeting were approved unanimously with two changes. On page 4, "buses" was misspelled. On page 4, the note that bicycles are now available at the Herrity Building is incorrect. There is a proposal to put bicycles at the Herrity for staff to use to travel among the buildings and to lunch.

Vice Chair

Wade Smith (Dranesville District) was appointed Vice Chair by Chairman Brent Reynolds.

Beltway Construction and Trail Access

As private developers are planning construction for new lanes on the Beltway, the developers are not planning to provide either pedestrian or bicycle access on the overpasses nor to construct the trail paralleling the Beltway that is on the comprehensive plan. The loss of the overpasses is the most significant loss since the bridges involved will not be rebuilt for many years and the lack of trails will create a permanent barrier to pedestrians and cyclists at the Beltway. There are 26 overpasses involved.

Currently there are plans in place to replace pedestrian overpasses at Wakefield Park and the W & OD Trail.

Both Fairfax County and VDOT have requested that the construction comply with the comprehensive plan and the current VDOT multimodal policy that would require the trails and sidewalks. However the unique nature of the private public partnership does not require the developers to comply with these requests.

The issue is very time sensitive since these decisions are being made now.

Several aspects of the construction were discussed:

- It is possible that the overpasses could be prioritized.

- Exclusively pedestrian or bicycle facilities might be easier to build than adding lanes to the overpasses for vehicles.
- This construction will likely be in place for 50 years.
- The Route 7 overpass is essential to the current redevelopment plan for Tyson's Corner.

The committee made the decision by consensus to send letters to the Secretary for Transportation, Pierce Homer, the governor, and Dennis Morrison the VDOT District Administrator. Committee members are encouraged to contact state representatives in an effort to place these facilities back on the table in the discussion of these projects. C. Wells will send a matrix and other pertinent information to the secretary and chairman for inclusion in the letter.

Open Mike Sessions

B. Reynolds suggested that the committee provide an open mike session each month for ten minutes to citizens who would like to make a statement to the committee. The members of the committee by consensus did not support this suggestion at this time. Issues discussed included the amount of time involved and the tendency for discussion to expand beyond the time limits. The committee meeting is also not a public forum but is a working meeting designed to advise the BOS. Individuals who would like to have input into the committee's discussions can ask their individual district representatives to bring issues to the table and can be asked to make a presentation by the committee.

Annual Committee Goals – Subcommittee Assignments

Members present volunteered for specific subcommittees. Members not present were assigned to a committee by the chair with the understanding that they can request other assignments if desired. Subcommittees are as follows:

Metro Station Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

- Dennis Frew
- Wade Smith
- Bruce Wright
- Roger Diedrich

Integration of Non-motorized Transportation Projects into all County Construction Projects.

- Paul Johnson
- Deb Leser
- Rebeca Cate
- Peter Christensen

Special Maintenance and Snow Removal for Specific Trails

- Gene Bartlow
- Robert Michie

Quick Take Authority for Trail Projects

- Paul Johnson
- Greg Galligan

Best Practices for Pedestrians

- Deb Leser
- Ann Pimley
- Mary Flowers

Best Practices for Bicycles

- Roy Brooks
- Dan Iglhaut
- Bruce Wright

Web Site

- Dennis Frew
- Wade Smith
- Bruce Wright

Committee members are encouraged to begin work in subcommittee as soon as possible.

Trail Making Standards

B. Reynolds asked for discussion of trail construction standards and asked if the committee desired to establish a subcommittee to discuss the topic. A major topic of concern is the amount of area that must be cleared to build a trail. After much discussion, the committee did not make a motion to establish a subcommittee for this topic. Many issues were discussed including the variable nature of construction requirements for trails. Factors that influenced construction standards were topography, cost, time constraints and setting.

B. Reynolds asked what the county policy on tree replacement is. That is variable. The FCPA replaces trees removed in some projects but is constrained by the site or other elements such as the Sewer Authority from replacing trees lost in all projects. They have an arborist on staff. Fairfax DOT does not usually provide landscaping as a part of road construction projects which are the projects that include trails. NVRPA replaced Trees for a trail project at Upton Hill Regional Park as required by Arlington County which has a policy in place requiring tree replacement.

Bike to Work Day

B. Reynolds asked if staff or individual members of the committee could identify the appropriate route for the supervisors to take to bike to work. There is too little time now for staff to do this but individual members can contact supervisors and suggest a route. This is a good idea for Bike to Work Day next year.

Staff Report – S. Leu

A new member list was distributed as well as the Trail Waiver Request Report. Some changes have been made to the web site but more are forthcoming after permission has been received to add specific links and recommendations have been made by the Web Site Subcommittee.

Staff Report – C. Wells

The first sidewalk section of Route 1 is going to construction this summer. This is indicative of the fruits of the focus on pedestrian access and safety.

Old Business

D. Leser asked if the letter went out to the school board and if copies could be distributed to the members of the committee. B. Reynolds said he had received an email from Dan Storck about the letter. He was asked to forward this to the committee members and agreed to do so.

New Business

G. Bartlow showed the committee members a copy of his response to a request for a trail waiver. It is organized and may provide a template for other committee members in responding to waiver requests. It is attached as an Addendum to these minutes.

P. Johnson reported on the 5 Burrough Bicycle Tour in New York last weekend. 32,000 people participated.

The meeting was adjourned at 0920.

Submitted by Deborah Rimmer Leser, Secretary