

Fairfax County Sidewalk and Trail Committee
Minutes of the September 12, 2007 Meeting

Members Attending: Deborah Leser (Sully District), Brent Reynolds (Braddock District), Bruce Wright (Hunter Mill District), Robert Michie (Lee District), Peter Christensen (Mount Vernon District), Roger Diedrich (Providence District), Roy Brooks (Mason District), Dennis Frew (WABA), Jenny Pate (FCPA), and Ann Pimley (Fairfax Area Disability Services Board).

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 PM.

Minutes of the July Meeting: The minutes were approved unanimously with two changes. On page 1, the word meeting was inserted between “July 3” and “concerning HOT”. On Page 2 in the third item of Mr. Leu’s staff report needs clarification. For the Vastu project, Mr. Leu is asking for the width of the bicycle lane without striping until sufficient right of way is available for the full bicycle lane.

Old Business:

Jenny Pate reported that she sent a letter to Transportation Secretary Pierce Homer in support of the proposed changes to laws involving pedestrians in crosswalks. She received a positive response from his office. There was a brief review of the proposed changes which were discussed more fully during the July meeting. Chris Wells reported that the changes could go to the General Assembly as part of the governor’s package or VDOT package.

Deb Leser asked how the proposed changes to the web site were to be handled. Discussion about the changes, which are listed in the July minutes, focused on the need for a more easily manipulated series of maps for citizens that would be available on the web site. Mr. Leu reported that he is working to make the trail map part of My Neighborhood, an interactive map of the county for citizens. Jenny Pate reported that the FCPA trails will be in the GIS system. Brent Reynolds asked if the committee supported a request to the BOS for funding of better map software. After discussion, the committee members present voted unanimously (motion by Bruce Wright, seconded by Roy Brooks) to have Wade Smith coordinate with Mr. Leu on the proposed improvements to the web site.

Brent Reynolds asked the committee to consider whether we needed to send a letter to the BOS asking for creation of a Mapquest like search for county trails and sidewalks. Staff members stated that similar projects were already underway. The committee members agreed by consensus that this might be better addressed in our recommendation on the budget that will come later in the winter.

Bruce Wright reminded the committee members that the district representatives needed to review the existing trails maps of their respective districts and forward their report of any changes to Mr. Leu for the update of the trails map. He proposed a deadline of 60 days for completion. The accuracy of the trails map should be a priority for the committee. There was extensive discussion of the methods used in the past to gather the necessary data. Deb Leser stated that the 60 day deadline was not realistic. The committee members agreed that the update is a priority for the committee and that members should begin immediately to collect the necessary information. Jenny Pate explained that the FCPA trails were already being updated by FCPA, which greatly reduced the work involved. Members were encouraged to seek volunteers interested in helping. Mr. Leu will try to place a request for interested volunteers through the county web site or Volunteer Fairfax.

Staff Report: Sheng Leu

- Mr. Leu distributed the current Trail Waiver Summary. There were very few requests on this summary.
- September 18 is DC Car Free Day.
- September 22 is International Car Free Day. Chris Wells reported that Fairfax County had focused on Bike To Work Day and did not received the information about International Car Free Day to develop a plan for the county.
- Walk to School Day is October 3.
- Mr. Leu is trying to obtain information about the amounts of money in escrow for trail or sidewalk projects in the county at this time. Deb Leser may have a file with this information and will forward it to Mr. Leu.

Staff Report – Chris Wells

- No plans are available for the Beltway HOT Lanes Project. There is a verbal commitment from representatives of Fluor Transurban that crossings will exist – particularly on Route 7.
- The pedestrian bond projects lists has been finalized. The amount of the total bond is \$110 million. Pedestrian projects total \$15 million with an additional \$8 million for bus stops and \$500,000 for bicycle lanes.
- On Centreville Road, VDOT considered eliminating crosswalks to improve the speed of traffic flow. Chris Wells met with VDOT and discussed the safety implications of removing the crosswalks in such a highly traveled corridor. Other improvements were suggested to improve flow without compromising safety and the crosswalks have been retained in the project.
- Several funds are available for small projects and committee members are encouraged to contact Chris Wells with suggestions.

- A public hearing date has been set for the Route 1 improvements. It will be on September 25 at 5 PM at Walt Whitman Middle School. Information is available on the DPW web site.
- The groundbreaking for a pedestrian bridge over Route 50 will be before Election Day.
- Action on improving the most dangerous intersections in the county may be delayed by requests for information from VDOT including information about endangered species and hazardous materials involved in the affected areas.
- Roy Brooks asked about the bicycle racks that were to be installed on the connector buses. Chris Wells stated that the project was still underway but not complete yet.

Staff Report – Jenny Pate

- Ribbon cuttings are scheduled for completed trails at Danbury Forest, Pimmit Run and Holmes Run. Trail Committee members should have received invitations via email or the USPO.
- The Accotink Stream Valley CCT reroute is expected to be bid this fall.
- UOSA is installing a new water line in the Cub Run Stream Valley which may close areas of trail for up to two years.

New Business

The document “A Policy Lost Along the Trail” submitted to the committee members by Springfield District Representative Gene Bartlow was briefly discussed. The committee members were hesitant to come to a resolution on the policy in Gene Bartlow’s absence. Mr. Leu will ask a coordinator from DPW to attend the October meeting to present information on the waiver process to the committee and the committee members discuss the issue at that time. The presentation will include an explanation of the current formula for determining escrow amounts for trails that are waived.

Committee members are encouraged to inform the citizens of their districts about the lack of public and staff input into the planning of the HOT lanes.

Dennis Frew (WABA) told the members present that the study involving the extension of the Mount Vernon Trail from Rosslyn to the American Legion Bridge has been completed, however the George Washington Memorial Park Superintendent David Vela has not released the report with the GWMP’s recommendations. WABA is seeking support in their efforts to see the results of the study.

The next meeting will be on October 10.

The committee adjourned at 9:11 PM

Submitted by Deborah Rimmer Leser, Secretary