

Minutes of the Fairfax County Trails & Sidewalks Committee

Meeting on April 8, 2009 – meeting minutes by Dan Iglhaut

Members Present- Paul Johnson (NVBIA), Lisa Willey (Springfield), Rob Airaghi (Sully), Liz Cronauer (FCPA), Roger Diedrich (Providence), Doug Pew (Hunter Mill), Wade Smith (Dranesville), Dan Iglhaut (NVRPA), Dennis Frew (WABA), Peter Christensen (Mount Vernon), Jan Reitman (Mason), Mark Tipton (FCFCA), Ann Pimley (FADSB)

Staff Present- Chris Wells (FCDOT), Chris DeManche (FCDPZ), Sheng Leu (FCDPZ)

Call to Order- Wade Smith called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Approval of March 11, 2009 Meeting Minutes- minutes were approved unanimously as submitted by Jenny Pate. Liz Cronauer noted that the PHNST design charrette noted under staff reports has been postponed from mid April to fall.

Staff Reports-

Chris Wells reported on MWCOG's annual Street Smart campaign for bicycle and pedestrian safety, which includes police enforcement activity in Reston, advertizing on buses, bus shelters, and on radio.

Chris also reported on the 2007 transportation bond and the need for input on priority projects from district representatives. The County is seeking community support through public meetings, including neighborhood meetings. The bond projects are included in DPW's project status report and Chris will provide the committee with a plan status list for bond projects. Chris will also send the committee a list of priority projects he already has from committee members.

There was discussion regarding the use of federal stimulus funds for trail projects that may qualify under the category of energy efficiency and the deletion of \$200,000 from the County's draft budget for trails and sidewalk maintenance. A general discussion followed on the maintenance fund and the purposes of the fund and it was agreed that district representatives would contact their supervisors to request that the funds be restored in their entirety in the final budget. Chris noted that the marked-up budget will be reviewed by the BOS on April 20, 2009 and action on the budget should follow one week later.

Sheng Leu reported on the updated Trails and Sidewalks Committee website (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/trails) and requested that members provide him with any ideas for improvement. Wade Smith requested that members review the website. The committee will discuss the website at the May meeting. Sheng also reported that he is updating the existing trails and sidewalks map and has found erroneous information. Sheng will provide more detailed information on the existing trails and sidewalks map at the May meeting.

Old Business- there was no old business.

New Business-

Centerville United Methodist Church Special Exception

Chris DeManche of FCDPZ, Zoning Evaluation Division, reported on the pending Special Exception application by Centerville United Methodist Church located at the southeast quadrant of New Braddock Road and Centerwood Drive in the Sully District. In 1986, the previous developer of the site proffered a trail along the south side of New Braddock Road; however, the trail was not built and the bond was released prior to fulfillment of the proffer. The current applicant is requesting a development condition modification to address timing of trail construction. The trail would be 10 feet wide, approximately 400 feet in length, and within VDOT right of way. The trail would connect to existing pedestrian facilities at both ends. Chris requested the committee's input on modifying the timing of trail construction. A potential development condition would be to require trail construction with any future site modifications that require County approval. There was discussion by the committee about reducing the width or surface material requirements, but the consensus was that the trail should be built as part of the current SPEX application. Rob Airaghi will discuss the issue with the Sully district supervisor. The SPEX application is scheduled for Planning Commission public hearing on May 14, 2009 and a BOS hearing in late May or early June. The committee briefly discussed the issue of developers being released from bonds prematurely and Wade will invite a County staff member to discuss the issue.

Sidewalk Costs and Complexity- Supervisor Gross Concerns

Jan Reitman reported on a meeting he had with Supervisor Gross regarding the costs and the timing of construction of a sidewalk adjacent to the Mason district government center on Columbia Pike. The 500-foot length of sidewalk is believed to have cost \$580,000 and is currently under construction. The sidewalk was not constructed at the time of development of the adjacent subdivision and Jan believes this may have increased the costs, which include a large retaining wall along the length of the sidewalk. The committee discussed factors that increase construction costs and subsequently limit funds for trail/sidewalk development elsewhere, including: the County's and VDOT's engineering requirements, construction standards and permitting; land acquisition costs; constructing facilities in already developed areas; and utility relocations. The committee discussed pros and cons of modifying County standards and policies and the impact that may have on development costs and establishing a group to study cost drivers in a comprehensive manner. Jan plans to have further discussions with Supervisor Gross on this subject and convey the committee's input.

Bicycle Facilities and Safety

Jan Reitman discussed Supervisor Gross's concerns regarding bicycle safety and her observations on the increase in the number of bicyclists in the Mason district. A general discussion followed regarding inadequate facilities and increased demand for facilities in the district and countywide. The committee will invite representatives from Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling and Washington Area Bicyclist Association to discuss bicycle routes and provide committee input on the same. The committee will also focus on bicycle facilities at a future committee meeting.

Neighborhood Connectivity

Peter Christensen reported on VDOT's draft modifications to their secondary acceptance requirements. The modifications will include requirements to ensure the connectivity of road and pedestrian networks with the existing and future transportation network. VDOT will hold

several public meetings to collect feedback on the proposed regulations. A Fairfax meeting is scheduled for May 14 at 5:30 p.m. at Northern Virginia Community College Ernst Cultural Center Forum Area, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA, 22003

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.