

Minutes for BikeCNY meeting, held evening of Sept. 15, 2015 at Beauchamp Library.

Attending:

John Allen, Steve Reiter, Melissa Fierke, Bob Dougherty, Kathy Downing, Pete King.

Agenda: Group circulated two agendas compiled from emails, Kathy's and Steve's.

We worked from Kathy's agenda (see attached).

Westcott Street Festival

>> Group members pledged contributing bicycle maps & safety brochures; including route 11 & the SMTC suitability map.

>> Members committed for tabling times at the Westcott Fair.

Email listserv issues

a) Pete announced, he'd messed up this year on 'moderating' the emails. Pete had not remembered he had to non-member approve emails for posting, so missed approving 11 emails pending for the list. On understanding this, Pete added Steve as a second 'moderator'. Any non-member messages still require approving for being posted on the list, for preventing spam. If anyone wants to read these 11 'missed' emails, ask Pete.

Group decided on limiting 'inner-circle' email distribution to members attending meetings.

Group discussed ***our organizational identity and related funding issues***, including incorporating as a not-for-profit in New York State. Some local groups like Onondaga County Health Dept's 'Cycle in the City' have not formally incorporated, simply operating as a coalition of agencies. Group expressed concerns, if something happens on a ride, we could get sued. This is why BikeCNY we are not 'owning' any rides at this point. Upon incorporating, board insurance offers some legal protection.

+ Incorporation is different than becoming a Federal non-profit (501c3).

We could do the former without doing the latter.

+ All the legal options we discussed require some funding, even if just for application fees.

We discussed funding, from donations and / or simply dues. We made no decisions on funding.

Euclid report:

WENA's leadership said they are pitching for WENA supporting bike lanes on Euclid. SEUNA has supported Euclid bike lanes for over 2 yrs. BikeCNY recently presented on Euclid bike lanes at Eastside TNT. The last ESF Bike Safety meeting included discussion about a bike light at Comstock and Euclid. WENA is inquiring about getting a ped light at Westcott & Euclid.

Group discussed ***the City's current direction in bicycle planning.***

Our former planner was perceived as too scattered, but the City placed many demands on one guy. The city is currently spreading these responsibilities on several people. We've yet

to hear if they will hire a new bicycle planner. The City might shift bicycle planning towards Planning and Engineering Dept's, possibly as they make more planning-level decisions than DPW. City planner Owen Kerney is beginning a comprehensive re-zoning for densifying the city.

Group discussed setting our mission, objectives and priorities,

as proposed by group members on our agenda.

- +) Many of us suggest one of our objectives should be involving more and different people actively. We've seen interest in bicycle advocacy, though not many attending our meetings yet.
- +) One suggestion: we could become, or advocate the city / county forming a bike-pedestrian advisory committee for policymakers, as in the example of Durham, NH. A bike-pedestrian advisory committee would allow participants input on bike-pedestrian infrastructure issues. However, at least in Durham's case, their city and county choose advisory committee members.
- +) One response on this suggestion, we might want to retain our citizen identity, not beholden to city and county. We could still suggest city and county form an advisory committee.

Discussion: SMTC's Bicycle-Pedestrian Interest Group (B/PIG) fizzled after much interest. One useful takeaway from the B/PIG meetings: our bicycle planners prefer and suggest citizen groups create demand for local infrastructure changes, on several bases, including making any required grant-seeking easier.

- +) Observation: we can't be both a) formal governance 'advisory' group AND
b) an independent citizen bicycling advocacy.

We discussed political background, for helping us decide our role.

+) Several Common Councilors are not necessarily friendly towards bicycle infrastructure, though they want more walking infrastructure.

+) Some city residents may currently feel less friendly about bicycle-infra.

Q: Is this animosity directed on cycling advocacy in general, or specific projects?

A: City Council were upset the bike plan being complete & comprehensive, but no pedestrian plan. The administrative plan is still being worked on. Some perceive the bike plan isn't as fleshed out as it should be, and so bashed the bike plan and Paul.

So maybe the university plan raised these concerns in negative ways.

+) We have to be gradual, no way to be sudden here.

+) We don't like how the overall city planning approach so far, seems so divisive.

+) Nationally, protected bike lanes have nearly quadrupled since 2010.

(<http://www.peopleforbikes.org/green-lane-project/pages/inventory-of-protected-bike-lanes>)

Q: What does the group think about the issues around Protected vs. integrated bike lanes? (responses)

+ What is good for progressive bicyclists, not necessarily what everyone wants.

+) Some people clearly don't know how to use the bike infra going in, e.g. West St.

Group decided on our number one goal:

'To be the independent voice advocating for bicycle safety and infrastructure.'

Group debated our second goal, advocating for bike infrastructure.

- +) We could specify this goal, as talking with a transportation planner at the city.
- +) E.g. intersection issues downtown, recommending bike-boxes.

Group discussed the University bike lanes, which the city shrunk down from two to one lanes, after last winter. Ironically, the city planned the new university lanes and floating parking as an experiment. Maybe this was a missed opportunity for upgrading city's public relations process, which we could mention in advocating for more progressive planning: inclusive, improvisational co-design.

- +) Concerns about our being spread too thin.

Goal proposed a third goal: increasing and more diverse membership?

- +) We could tap a growing interest in bicycling, among those without the means for car ownership.

Other ideas we discussed:

- +) Bike Month
- +) Bike planning workshops

>> Bike Coalition of NY (BCNY) did a workshop at SUNY-ESF, in ~2005, part of motivating the city on putting in more lanes. Peter will send out BCNY materials.

+) We could advocate for 'Bicycle-friendly city' status, through the League of American Bicyclists.

- +) We must beware of doing too many meetings & studies, with no results.
 - >> e.g. SMTC tends to study things a lot, not so many results.

Peter asked for, and received signatures on the ***Urban Jobs Task Force proposed 'Resident Employment Ordinance'***, being considered by the Common Council. If implemented, this ordinance would require city residents be hired for every city project > \$100,000, esp. those from disadvantaged neighborhoods. So this could affect who will work on large bicycle projects. Initial reception among Council members has been positive.

Our Next meeting: Tuesday, October 20th from 6:30 to 8pm at the Southwest Community Center, 401 South Ave. in Syracuse.