

2022.9.12 BPAC Minutes
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Virtual meeting

Attendees:

BPAC Members: Eldon Boes, Larry Huffman, Josephine Liu, Ken Notis, Mary-Jane Roth, Elizabeth Wright

Past Members/Guests: Beth Donahue, Kristin Donley, Serdar Jorayev, Rainbow Kirby

Meeting called to order – Ken Notis at 6:34 pm

Guest speaker: Beth Donahue, DMV Program Director of Girls in Gear

- Girls in Gear: nonprofit organization. Life skills through bike skills. Started in 2020 in New Jersey. Idea is to expose girls to safe but fun biking experiences from a young age. Is an inclusive environment. Biking can feel male-dominated, so trying to expose girls to biking from a young age. We talk about kindness, compassion, and inner strength. Trying to connect girls with life skills they can use off the bike as well.
- 75 minutes once a week, eight sessions in the fall and spring. Ages 5 and up, grouped into two-year ranges. Focus on emotional development but also teach basic bike maintenance. Joyful to see how excited girls get about pumping up their tires. Safety and riding skills are a huge component. Want to support safe learning so that girls will enjoy what they're doing in a safe way.
- Group sizes are small: 10-15, with 2-4 volunteer coaches in each session. Are community members who come together to work with the program and the girls. We talk about maintenance and friendship and communication. Program designed not to be restrictive. \$75 fee but have scholarship program. Can provide bikes and helmets if needed. Introduce a new topic each week. Working with Phoenix Bikes to graduate the older riders into Phoenix Bikes' programs and build on their bike maintenance skills.
- 55 programs, mostly in NJ. Just started in DC and Arlington this past spring. Hoping to expand into MD and VA. Really just constrained by number of volunteers. 42% of students received assistance (scholarship, bike, or helmet). Some sites are subsidized based on percentage of kids receiving free or subsidized lunch in schools.
- Mary-Jane question: where do subsidies come from? A: mostly funds raised through grants. Received a generous grant from Reston Bike Club.
- Mary-Jane question: how do you get your volunteers? A: word of mouth and social media. Anne Witt had a connection in NJ, posted on Facebook. After working through part of a season, they asked if I would be interested in being the local program director to get this off the ground in DMV. Need and interest in this area is huge. We've been fortunate this past summer to get over 15 new coaches. Had a training session on Friday, more Zoom sessions coming up. Hoping to get the word out about upcoming sessions that will run from end of September to mid

November. 4 locations: DC, Jones Point Park, 2 in Arlington.

- Ken comment: if you send your materials to our mailing list, we can repost.
- Ken question: other than dollars, are there things you need donated? A: we keep things simple so don't need bike parts. Gently used kids' bikes are always welcome. We work with Phoenix to get them fixed up.
- Elizabeth question: how do you handle logistics of getting bikes to classes? A: right now, we've only needed 1 bike. I just put it in my car. Phoenix Bikes has helped but they also have limited capacity. We will need to find something long term, whether that's a small storage unit or infrequently used garage.
- Eldon question: 14 and up seems like a pretty broad category. Do you actually get into adults? A: no, we leave that to WABA. We don't really teach them how to bike. We're not set up that way as a program. It's about participating in biking. With older kids, we haven't had a 14+ group in D.C. But my understanding from other locations is that it's a more advanced experience. Mountain biking if that's an option, or longer rides to work on different bike skills.

BPAC Business items

- Upcoming walks and rides – Josephine
 - Women's history ride went well: about 20 people for the Alexandria-Arlington portion, about 6-8 for the longer ride to Fairfax.
 - Del Ray murals walk on Sunday, September 25
 - Halloween ride on Saturday, October 29
- Bike rodeos – Eldon
 - Let Eldon know if you're available to volunteer for the bike rodeo on Friday, September 16
 - Long-term, Eldon would like to find someone else to take over the bike rodeos. Is a lot of fun.
- CHIP update – Mary-Jane
 - We were the lead on the strategy about encouraging people to move around for physical/mental health. We've briefed the governing committee twice. They sent out a survey asking what they can do for us. As a group, we are trying to come up with responses. Are still sharing info about each other's events and hopefully getting more participation that way. But it doesn't really tackle the real reason the group was sent up.
- Infrastructure committee – Ken
 - Polk Street sidewalk – half-block on Polk just west of Pegram. Passed TPB unanimously. Is being appealed to Council on Saturday. Ken will probably try to speak to it. Don't think it's going to be a serious issue at Council.
 - City staff has proposed three speed limit reductions across the city. On N.

Beauregard, on Braddock, on Seminary from Kenmore to Pickett. From 35 to 25, and down to 15 in school zones. Organizations that want to submit a letter should do so by September 15. Propose endorsing speed limit.

- Elizabeth comment: state law already requires that speed limits be reduced by 10 miles in school zones.
- Ken: we would just say that we like what staff is proposing.
- Eldon comment: at school board meeting last Thursday night, there were two speakers who urged school board to also write a letter endorsing those changes.
- Kristin comment: Beauregard is already down to 25. Would only be 15 during school drop off and pick up times. Also ask that you write a letter supporting Polk Ave. sidewalk.
- Motion about Polk Ave. carried.

○ Education committee – Eldon

- BITS started this week. Kristin is very organized, has the classes spread across the different schools. Need volunteers who are available during the school day. Please sign up. Sign up process is very easy. Jim and Eldon have signed up for a bunch of classes, but we would love for you to replace us on some of those days.
- Kristin comment: we heavily rely on Jim and Eldon and others who have joined over the years. Extremely rewarding. Volunteers are mainly working with the beginning riders. We always welcome more hands. I try to be at schools where biking is new. You have to do volunteer application through ACPS. I made a training tutorial to share the common language, like ABC Quick Check. Is one of the most rewarding units I teach. Care strongly about having it equitably done. All third graders will have an opportunity. Only Jefferson-Houston turned us down, and only because they're under construction right now and don't have outdoor space. Looking to purchase strider bikes for kindergarteners and first graders, so can focus on balance skills at those levels. We purchased 75 bikes last year, donated old bikes to Velocity. Middle/high school have their own fleets. All PE teachers will be trained.
- Mary-Jane: does volunteer badge need to be renewed? A: not sure. During covid we weren't having people volunteer. This year, I assume things are more relaxed.
- Eldon comment: I thought I had to reapply, but when I was going through the process online, it jumped on me so I sent a question to ACPS. Response I got back was that you don't have to reapply if you've volunteered recently. Can send you the contact info for ACPS to ask directly.
- Kristin comment: we also try to wear either the BPAC or SRTS vests to identify us as volunteers.

- Serdar comment: please send info on volunteer for BITS and bike rodeo.
- Chairman's topics – Ken Notis:
 - East/West bike/mobility routes
 - We've been asked by Councilmember Bagley to suggest a low-stress E-W bike route, and the Council would then talk to staff about prioritizing that. There's a 5-year work plan but what we're not getting is a connected route anywhere. Limits the utility of biking for many people.
 - Would be beneficial to have a E-W route that enables people to access Old Town. Three suggestions: (1) Wilkes/Jamieson/Mill/Eisenhower, (2) W. Braddock/King, or (3) King from Beauregard to Old Town. Would be in addition to anything happening on Duke Street.
 - Things to think about: what would be the criteria for picking one? Discuss the merits of each on the listserve. Write up a recommendation with justifications for Councilmember Bagley.
 - Elizabeth question: was this covered at recent WABA meeting? A: I wasn't on the meeting, but I don't think it would have been covered.
 - Eldon comment: think we need to move forward expeditiously. Look forward to you driving us on this. A: Jim has given us a lot of material to work with. Recognize that we want to be responsive. Don't know exactly what Sarah's timetable is. May end up being tied to budget discussions starting in November.
 - Mary-Jane question: does T&ES have their new person? A: I know they have their second. We should probably invite the person to be a guest speaker, maybe at October meeting. Don't know if they've even posted for the third position yet.
 - Eldon comment: City is going to post for a climate position. Think we should push for more biking and walking as part of climate solutions. Ken response: once that person is hired, we should also invite them to speak.
 - Volunteer opportunities – Ken
 - Bike rodeos are fun. Don't have to be a bike rider at all.
 - BITS – we need 1-2 people to step up.
 - Boards and committees – Ken is wearing two hats as Chair and infrastructure committee chair. Ken would like someone to take over as committee chair. There are other members on the committee. It's valuable, can be fun, there's a lot to be done. We could revive legislative/policy committee if someone has interest.
 - Treasurer – Erin is on leave, will be stepping down at end of year. Zack is currently doubling as both secretary and treasurer. Zack

could move into treasurer position if someone is interested in secretary position.

- Communications – need someone to help with newsletter and social media.
- Treasurer's report and Secretary's report – Zack DesJardins
 - Zack had a family emergency. Report and discussion deferred until October.
- Other business:
 - Next guest speaker should probably be Alex Carroll and her new staffer
 - Would be good to know whether Police Department is planning to participate in future meetings

Public Comment

- Kristin comment: City just got a grant to do more safety audits around schools. Expect to kick off the process this fall and conclude next summer. Planning a holistic effort with staff and parents. There are still items from 2017 walk audits that haven't been addressed. Can ask about whether volunteers are needed for walk audits.
- Ken question: what about status of African Communities United's issues about access to Francis-Hammond? A: is still an open issue. Escalated to director of facilities.
 - They might be good participants in walk audit.