

# Pedestrian and Bicycle Path Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2022

Committee Members Present: John Phelps, Jim DeHerrera, Antonia Malchik, Mary Behrendt, Giuseppe Caltabiano

City Staff Present: Karin Hilding, Maria Butts, Craig Workman

Public Present: Mike Fitzgerald, Rachael Schmidt, Ron Brunk, Bruce Boody

- A. The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.
- B. Jim moved to approve the minutes. Mary seconded. Approved unanimously.
- C. Public comment:
  - a. Mike Fitzgerald commented that Miles Ave. is “deadlier than you realize.” He told the committee of being almost hit by a car coming around from Railroad Ave.
  - b. Rachel Schmidt with Safe Trails Whitefish asked for updates on the trail connection through Riverbend Condos and looking forward to seeing plans for the trail and movement on the easement finalization.
  - c. Jedd Sankar-Gorton from Whitefish Legacy Partners looking for update from Craig on the wayfinding signs. Craig commented that he’d thought they were all up.
- D. New Business
  - a. Transportation Plan: Karin reported on the Transportation Plan for the city: consultants have been working through a lengthy process of creating a matrix with evaluations of the proposed bike/ped projects throughout the city. They’ve highlighted sections they thought were most critical according to that matrix and Karin wanted to bring the matrix to the committee for review. If there’s something that doesn’t make sense, it would be good to know.

John Phelps asked if these numbers correspond with the 2017 Connect Whitefish map, and Karin said no, this is a new numbering and priority system. Karin will send out the matrix and map again and ask committee members to review the priorities.

John P. commented that if we have time to review it until the next meeting we can discuss it at length at that next meeting. Karin said there is time, and also reiterated that there will be a lengthier public process after we’ve gone through the draft and submitted it to the consultants. Karin said if something about the evaluation criteria doesn’t make sense, or if something is missing, then that is something we can look for and give feedback on.

- E. Old Business
  - a. River Bend Condo Easement: John P. asked for updates on Riverbend Condo easement path. Craig said that he and Angie had a conversation with the lawyer for the HOA, and the lawyer is having trouble getting consensus among the condo

owners. Craig suggested asking the HOA to form a committee to work with the city so that we can get some concept-level design for the path, but the lawyer isn't quite there yet because the condo owners are split down the middle. They were hoping to hear back from him last week but haven't yet.

There was a lengthy discussion about the Riverbend Trail easement, conceptual design, FWP approval, and engineering design.

Maria proposed that Giuseppe seek clarification from council when he reports on this committee meeting. She said that city staff does have to go step by step for strategic reasons, and right now the first step has to be establishing the easement. Without taking that step, the process might get stalled. However, she said that city staff can work on other things at the same time, such as coming up with a design. Maria then pointed out that designs cost money and with budget meetings coming up that can be included in things that city budgets to work on. She also said that staff could ask Dana for direction, or staff can ask at council tonight, or they can get direction internally. But in the meantime, staff can talk about the path design, and can discuss how to approach FWP, and that this committee can be part of the process of working out how to approach FWP.

Giuseppe moved that the committee presents to council the following: we remind council about the three requests contained in the report approved by council in the November 7, 2021, meeting. Update council that the city attorney tells us she's still working on the first request regarding the easement location agreement with the homeowners. Tell council that we will assume that the path will be six feet wide if on the ground, and ten feet if elevated, and that the committee and staff will proceed with pursuing a conceptual design and begin to proceed with discussions with FWP. Maria interjected one clarification: The only people who can direct staff is council through Dana. Council needs to provide confirmation that staff can work on the second and third parts while working on the first, instead of approaching them consecutively. Maria said this won't even require a vote, just an agreement of all of council. Jim seconded the motion, amended to use the word "conceptual design."

Motion: Council had given direction for three action items to be completed. The city attorney is working on step one, and staff would like confirmation that staff can work on steps two and three while step one is being completed.

Giuseppe asked if John can make comment at tonight's city council evening reporting on this motion. All present voted in favor.

Maria said that she, Karin, and Craig are working on guidelines with FWP and if those guidelines are approved it will be easy for them to approve as 124 permit. In this process, they could talk about if something were done in the river, then that could be included in the broader standards and guidelines, which would make presenting a conceptual design easier.

John proposed skipping the rest of the agenda. Antonia requested a couple minutes for a quick Safe Routes to Schools update.

b. Safe Routes to Schools: Karin is working on setting up a meeting for Safe Routes to School with Craig, Karin, the middle and elementary school principals and the police chief and Antonia, as well as some interested parents.

F. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 7, 2022.

G. John P. adjourned the meeting at 10:05 a.m.