

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Council  
2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 108 East Green St., Ithaca, NY  
Monthly Meeting 02/18/10, commenced at 7:05 pm.

Attending:

Josh Carlsen (Chair)  
Cynthia Brock (Liaison, Board of Public Works)  
Jennifer Dotson (Liaison, Common Council)  
Tim Logue (Liaison, Traffic & Engineering Dept.)  
Matt Freedman  
Andy Goodell  
Dave Nutter  
Ananda Brutvan (guest)  
Mike Brutvan (guest)

Agenda:

1. Review of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes -- 12/09, 01/10, 05/09, (07/09 lost)
3. Reports - Chair, Liaisons
4. Discussion - Safe passing zone (Andy Goodell)
5. Discussion - BPAC in 2010
6. Bike Plan - The next steps
7. New Business
8. Guests
9. Adjourn

**This was said before the meeting commenced (what does it refer to?)**

**Jennifer did Maria Coles get back to Josh about changes to the ??? Josh will get back to that.**

1. Review of Agenda

Josh reviewed the Agenda. Guests were introduced. Mike and Ananda Brutvan are taping the meeting for Renee Brutvan (BPAC) who is absent.

2. Approval of Minutes -- 12/09, 01/10, 05/09 (lost)

05/21/09 minutes -- Josh moved to adopt, Andy seconded, all in favor.

12/17/09 minutes -- Josh moved to adopt, Matt seconded, all in favor.

01/21/10 minutes -- Dave has not seen the January minutes; Renee circulated them to an incorrect BPAC email address. A printout was circulated so that Renee can make changes by March meeting.

07/16/09 minutes are missing.

3. Reports - Chair, Liaisons

### **Josh Carlsen (Chair)**

- a.) Josh reminds the BPAC that we need to keep pedestrian issues in mind as well as cyclist issues.
- b.) Disability Advisory Council (DAC) liaison member David McElrath's term has expired; we haven't heard back from him. Josh will inquire. Tim suggest Josh contacts the DAC chair, Larry Roberts.

### **David Kay (Planning & Development Board liaison)**

Explanation of the current status of the Seneca St. construction at the Women's Community Building via an email circulated prior to the meeting 02/16/10 (ATTACHED: BPAC100218\_David\_Kay\_email.pdf). Dave wants BPAC to send a formal declaration to the Board of Public Works (BPW) recommending against bump outs. Moved this issue and any action statement we want to make to 7) New Business.

### **Cynthia Brock (BPW liaison) and Tim Logue (TED liaison)**

- a) Repairing/Replacing damaged Ithaca sidewalks:

A Sidewalk Committee has been formed to look over the current sidewalk program, and come up w/ some suggestions. Cynthia asked Tim to report on the current situation: Tim explained that there are two efforts happening

1) There was a Sidewalk Committee (SC) over the last year and a half that was looking over new sidewalk installations, places where there aren't sidewalks, and trying to prioritize within different parts of the city, particularly, the three hills and the flats, what would be the priorities for new sidewalk construction. BPAC did get a chance to review that, (a spreadsheet of a few months ago). **ATTACH-- TIM DO YOU HAVE THE LIST?** That effort was brought to the BPW, which gave it a general nod of approval with no specific corrective action taken, so that list will be used as top priorities.

2) We **(WHO?)** just got a request from Congressman Maurice Hinchey's office whether we were interested in a small amount of money though an appropriations bill (yes, of course). Two projects were submitted; one from the Traffic & Engineering Dept. (TED), and another from the Planning & Development Dept. (PDD):

*Cornell St. @ E. State St. continuing one block north (TED):*

There is a one block gap in the sidewalk network which is part of a Safe Route to School (SRTS) to Belle Sherman, but also would help people going the other way toward the entrance to the upper entrance of the wildflower preserve at 6-mile creek gorge. This project was chosen because it scored well on the priorities list, and because TED thought the SRTS aspect particularly too would resonate with the Congressman. It would probably be paid for by a blend of federal aid, Cornell's Community Transportation Investment Program, and standard assessments to homeowners. Cynthia inquired whether Cornell has been contacted regarding their portion, Tim replied yes they have; The BPW and Common Council need to take action on the project.

Improvements to the intersection would be included as well, particularly, adding in pedestrian indicators, push buttons, and ADA ramps at the corners,.

*City of Ithaca sidewalk repair program (PDD):*

This project is focused on the existing city sidewalk repair program. It's been done in many ways in the past, which were somewhat controversial at times and certainly complex and burdensome at other times. The basic premise of SC is that the existing method of getting sidewalks repaired is cumbersome, very complicated, someone onerous on property owners at times, and is understaffed to meet expectations for the amount of work they need to do. SC wants to digest the existing program and make recommendations for improvement. The process is long and complicated and involves many processes such that the improvement could take as long as 2, 5, 10 years or more. The City has their own sidewalk crew now, and some homeowners have been repairing their sidewalk, but they **(WHO EXACTLY?)** needs to be more efficient and get more work done. One idea is to give tickets for the damaged sidewalk, which are easier to administer and should get homeowners to repair them more quickly.

They are looking at whether the City's standards for a sidewalk needing repair are too stringent, and other issues. The SC might benefit from a BPAC presence, although it has already met several times, if anyone is interested. Dave wants to know if anyone has considered scrapping the whole method and have it be part of taxes, and be fixed through the Engineering and Maintenance Dept. **(DAVE, DO YOU MEAN BPW STREETS & FACILITIES DIVISION, OR TRAFFIC AND ENGINEERING DEPT, OR SOMETHING ELSE?)**. Tim answered that the City Charter and Municipal Code say the property owner is responsible for cleaning, repair and installation, and that would add an additional \$1.5 million to the budget every year. Jennifer asked if it could be considered a utility, and whether the City could do it little by little as each sidewalk is fixed -- which is how the water pipes were dealt with in the past. A comment was made that it would add another level of administrative complexity. Tim explained that property owners aren't fixing the sidewalks needing repairs - maybe 30 a year are fixed out of hundreds of notices handed out (approx. 800). Could we fund it otherwise? They are part of the public right of way, but a funding solution has not been found. If the repairs were added to property taxes incrementally it would spread the tax burden out.

Cynthia pointed out that there are liability issues as well. Once the maintenance is transferred to the City, then the City is liable for any injuries if it could be proven that they were notified in writing about the problem. Tim remarked that there are 80 miles of sidewalk in Ithaca and that the City clearly does not have enough money to fix them in a timely manner. Josh asked whether the City could train homeowners to do it themselves, saving them money. Jennifer thought BPAC should have a voice in the SC which meets at 10:00 a.m. e/o Thursday. Josh would like to get the extant SC materials so we can assess them. Tim suggested contacting Lynn Yost (a city engineer in charge of parts of the sidewalk repair program) and noted that a lot has already been written down --- it's a lot to wade through. Josh noted that BPAC can't make any recommendations without being acquainted with the material. Matt remarked that the status quo just isn't working. Tim said further that the public perception is that the assessments are not fair, because some problems are very small, without realizing that the small, unnoticed, problems are

more often the ones that cause pedestrians to trip What is BPAC's stance? Tim will talk to Lynn to get the SC meeting notes and memos, and Josh will email her at lynney@cityofithaca.gov.

b) This winter Cynthia is noticing an increasing number of people in wheelchairs using the road, as well as pedestrians, in the traffic lanes. Andy asked if there is someone we could call, and Tim answered the Building Dept., 274-6508. They'll take a picture to verify the unplowed state, then give it a day or two, and if it's still unplowed, they report it to the BPW who will shovel it and send the property owner a bill Sidewalks must be shoveled by 24 hours after the snow starts falling.

#### 4. Discussion - Safe passing zone (Andy Goodell)

3-Foot Safe Passing Zones, or Vulnerable User laws are on the books in 12 states (NH, AZ, AK, FL, IL, MN, MN, OK, TN, UT, WI and CO), with bills pending in many more. The laws started out principally to protect public servants in roadways, i.e., police, emergency workers, construction crews, etc., but also included, or were expanded to include, pedestrians and cyclists. Vulnerable road user laws raise penalties for drivers who are involved in incidents with cyclists, horse riders, pedestrians, construction workers, etc.

Is BPAC in favor of such laws, or should we help new all-encompassing, 3-ft. passing zone laws get passed in NY? Can the City of Ithaca pass something like that? Jennifer thinks it would be more effective on the County level, and even then it would be inconsistent from town to town as you drive through. Andy wonders if there is already a state law in general, on the order of using due diligence when passing. Cynthia wondered what utility such a new law would add. Jennifer commented that cyclists can take the vehicle's plate number and report incidents to police, who will visit the offender's house to tell them the police take it seriously. Andy Goodell comments that he has had different experiences; he was told to go down to the police station to report the incident, and was then lectured as though he had done something wrong, or was told the police couldn't do anything about it. A few of his complaints were actually about the police themselves and their driving. In addition, there isn't any feedback whether any action was actually taken, or if it produced any results. Jennifer thinks we should talk to officers, check in quarterly or so with them. Tim thinks it would be more effective to develop an internal protocol for how to handle cyclist complaints. Could it be something during the day, more one on one where we report what's going on, report some problems, difficulties as they occur.

#### 5. Discussion - BPAC in 2010

**Josh:** Ray Benjamin (who is in charge of maintenance at DPW's Streets & Facilities office) sent an email (ATTACHED: BPAC100218\_DPW\_wish\_list\_email.pdf, 2010 Proposed Street Const.pdf) to him of what construction they expecting to do this year. Cynthia and Tim are trying to untangle the items so they don't all happen in the same place at the same time, which means coordinating City, Water and Sewer, Streets and Facilities, Traffic & Engineering projects, NYSEG, state DOT, fire and police, school district projects, etc. Josh reminds us that *Ray's list is not set in stone, it is just a wish list of things that MAY happen*. Josh will send it to us so we can think of it in terms of coordinating with other projects. We need to make recommendations before spring, e.g., Cynthia suggested reminding road crews not to put a seam where cyclists will be traveling, or to please pave the parking lanes as well as the traveling lanes.

**Cynthia:** There is a lot of transition for Streets & Facilities this year and that there isn't a 5- year plan. BPW want's to coordinate Streets & Facilites and Water & Sewer with an eye toward working together to further our goals in terms of sidewalks and bike lanes especially.

**Tim:** brought his list of projects that he's planning to work on as City Engineer he'll send to BPAC listserv (ATTACH: BPAC100218\_Tim\_Logue\_email.pdf, 2010TransWorkPlan.pdf). He quickly reviewed some of the items:

**Construction Projects:**

- ÿ Collegetown Traffic Signal Replacement: Done deal
- ÿ Six Mile Creek walkway: Extension of walkway

**Design Projects:**

- ÿ Stewart Ave. Reconstruction: Between State St. and Campus Rd., he has some money for design, to rebuild the road w/ new bricks, probably including lights etc. Can we fold in a sidewalk? The scope of the work isn't defined, but it could be from ROW line to ROW line. The funding he has is for part of the design only, they still need to get it funded to construct.
- ÿ 700 block of Hudson Street sidewalk: Hudson St. from Pennsylvania Ave. to city line, there's a gap in the sidewalk. The sidewalk would then connect to a multi use trail.
- ÿ Green & Seneca Street Chokers (TIP project ): 2 locations, federal aid programmed but not obligated. **CORN & PLAIN ST. WAS MENTIONED, WHY? WHICH LOCATIONS? GREEN/CAYUGA? SENECA/CAYUGA? CORN/PLAIN?**

**Engineering Studies & Transportation Planning:**

Tim mentioned that the Columbia St. project is not his project, but a **DCES ????** project. The bridge is going to construction this year, and the Clinton St. bridge as well, which is in design. Tim will help make sure those plans get reported to BPAC. Those projects should be on the upcoming project list all the projects from all the city agencies. **(Where is this list? ???ATTACH??)**

- ÿ Transportation Plan and City Comprehensive Plan: Transp. Plan folded into Comp. Review process
- ÿ Collegetown Plan – Transportation Elements: Urban design project
- ÿ Trails Master Plan: Formalize
- ÿ Ithaca Road Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan: Requesting bike ideas
- ÿ New Bike Lane Evaluation (Hector Street and Old Elmira Rd): Uphill bike lane on Hector, bike lanes on Old Elmira Rd..
- ÿ Crosswalk Studies (upper Thurston, Stewart & University): Requests
- ÿ South Hill pedestrian planning with Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC): Pedestrian improvements between city line and campus; possible "road diet" (narrowing lane), perhaps add a bike lane?, study capacity and safety issues.
- ÿ Complete Shared Lane Pavement Marking (Sharrows) study: Finishing that up.

**Grant applications:**

- ÿ Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) update: State and federal.

**Administrative Efforts:**

Continuing bike parking isn't listed specifically, but it is in the plan.

6. Bike Plan - The next steps

01/22/10 Email from Kent Johnson (TED): Bike Plan next steps (ATTACHED: BPAC100218\_Kent\_Johnson\_email.pdf, Bike\_Plan\_Next\_Steps.pdf) Dave Nutter replied to Kent's email on 01/23/10 (ATTACHED: BPAC100218\_Dave\_Nutter\_email\_1.pdf) asking questions re: levels of costs with regard to

different choices and particulars of a given project, for example, whether complicated projects have simpler parts to them that are affordable to do now. That sort of information would factor into our recommendations.

## 7. New Business

a.) Does anyone want to take a lead on gathering info about the Commons redesign for BPAC? do we have any issues with it. we should look at the plans. Jennifer on the CC talked to the Planning Committee about it because CC had some issues with it. There still doing a lot of public outreach about it. Jennifer Kushner just got on email list seeking input, suggests Josh contact her. The design choice has been made, but they're not getting input on dissenting views and a4-5 differing views, esp. about the budget, the amphitheatre. We should keep up with the project schedule. There is a power point from Jennifer **(ATTACH or LINK).**

b.) Seneca St. construction at the Women's Community Building (WCB). Dave wants BPAC to send a formal declaration to the Board of Public Works (BPW) recommending against bump outs (ATTACHED: BPAC100218\_Dave\_Nutter\_email\_2.pdf)

c.) Josh brought up the Hector/State/Floral/Elm Sts. intersection and noted that the drawings we saw at 12/17/09 BPAC meeting are slightly different now. They are posted at <http://bikeithaca.org/> (ATTACHED: BPAC100218\_79Elm13A\_links\_email, 13A-79-Option-A.pdf, 13A-79-Option-B\_1.pdf, 13A-79-Option\_B\_2.pdf, 13A-79-Option-B\_3\_-with-mid-block-ped-signal.pdf, 13A-79-Option-Cpdf). Josh asked whether we had all read the "Rt 79, 13A, Elm Safety - Oct 14 2008 Meeting Notes" (ATTACHED: Rt-79-13A-Elm-Safety-Oct-14-2008-Meeting-Notes.pdf) posted there which Dave pointed out is pretty much the only statement we have defining the problems we're trying to solve in that intersection - there is nothing else defining our goals. Tim Logue : street and traffic improvements at 79 and Elm St. Engineering got money to do what they wanted to do related to pedestrian traffic safety. but there was no predefined problem set. Jennifer asked whether BPAC should stated some of the specific problems, and Tim replied that now would be a good time to do so, before Engineering. got any farther along on the project.

At the beginning of the meeting Josh had circulated copies of the images as handouts for reference. Tim went over the various scenarios with us and reasoning behind them. A 4-way stop didn't work out well in the models, creating some safety problems, significantly rear-end collisions. Tim would be happy to write up the findings on that scenario more formally with a more in depth explanation. We want to narrow down the concepts posted for the BPW, considering transit as well as traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists.

## 8. Guests

Mike Brutvan wanted to know if building a bridge over the inlet near Wegman's would help to ease traffic congestion at Floral/Elm/State/Hector Sts. and whether it was considered as an option. Jennifer explained the issues and costs involved with such a project and that it was unfeasible at this time.

## 9. Adjourn

9:10 pm

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