

Minutes for RBAC Meeting: June 7, 2023

7:00 – 9:00 pm, virtual Webex meeting

In attendance online: Wendy Aaronson, Monique Ashton, Bryan Barnett-Woods, Connie Bertka, Nancy Breen, Ben Bullock, Joel Danish, Brian Donnelly, John Foreman, Erin Girard, Jody Kline, Andrew Leuetkemeir, Bill Michie, Stuart Miller, Dave Nelson, Nelson Ortiz, Carl Peterson, Shaun Ryan, Chris Ruhlen, Harris Scwab, Shannon Brescher Shea, Andy Smith, Dave Stinchcomb, and Tracy Threefoot.

Nancy started the meeting at 7:01 pm with an announcement that this meeting will be recorded. She asked for the May meeting minutes sent by Sophie on May 25 to be approved. Shannon motioned to approve; Tracy seconded the motion.

Nancy announced agenda changes including Mark Pirezchala not attending tonight. Councilmembers will not be part of the discussions with developers. Nancy thanked Monique Ashton for asking developers to present to RBAC and RPAC. Joe Gillepse will not be present for his agenda item due to a family emergency.

(1) Bryan provided the City Update starting with the Bloomberg Philanthropies grant to fund an **asphalt art project**. The proposed location is along Beall Avenue and would be implemented along with the complete streets projects proposed by the recent Beall Avenue safety study. It will provide aesthetics to the road as well as encourage safety, economic and cultural development. This draft of this joint letter with RPAC (Rockville Pedestrian Advocate Committee) is attached. Dave motioned to approve this support letter and Wendy seconded.

Shannon thought the Safe Routes chalk-in Saturday, June 3 was quite moving with family members of victims participating. It was a nice way to involve children and art.

(2) In the Council update, Monique wants to make RBAC aware of upcoming projects and provide feedback as needed. A series of Town Halls occurred include one on public safety last week. A Vision Zero Town Hall is coming up on June 22 and a good time to voice concerns and follow updates from Public Works staff. This virtual forum will start at 7 pm and last about 1.5 hours.

Monique announced WMATA and BF Saul have been talking about **the Twinbrook Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge project**. Several competitive grant opportunities may be available to fund the the design in hopes to connect the Metro station to communities that have historically divided.

Grant opportunities have coming in like the asphalt art project to enhance pedestrians and cyclists safety. The Fleet Street program will have bikeways as per the Bikeway Master Plan. Monique recognized Bryan for the Employee of the Year award and thanked all passionate volunteers who participated in Bike to School Day and Bike to Work Day.

(3) Bryan continued his City Update and announced the **Pedestrian Master Plan** is available for reviews and comments. Please provide your comments to him or online at:

<https://engagerockville.com/pedestrian-master-plan>

The Planning Commission is having a meeting on 6/28 and the Vision Zero Forum in on 6/22 at 7 pm.

The application for the **Halpine Road bicycle lane design project** was submitted earlier this month. The grant awardees will be announced in the fall. The **Martins Lane project** is moving forward. Safe streets and roads policy is being applied to all projects. The City and the State are moving forward to begin the **N Stonestreet project**. This project will include design of bicycle lanes on both sides of the street, per a request of RBAC.

(4) Nancy announced a **bike ride with City staff** on Sunday, August 27 with a rain date of September 3. Riders will provide comments and feedbacks to city planners about specific spots in Town Center. Staff will learn how it will feel to bike in and around Town Center especially when the E Middle and N Washington project should be complete by then. The boundary for the Town Center plan includes 355 from Richard Montgomery High School to N. Washington. More details can be found online: <https://engagerockville.com/towncenter>. Bryan suggest we prepare beforehand specific places we want to discuss or have concerns about.

Suggested locations of discussions include (1) the intersection leading into the Giant (MD 355 & N. Washington); (2) the Fleet Street transition from on-street to shared-use path; (3) the bollards on Gibbs Street; (4) crossing MD 28 at Adams or Washington where cars cannot enter (opportunity to add "EXCEPT BIKES" signage).

(5) In Sophie's absence, Nancy reviewed volunteers needed to lead **upcoming bike rides**. She wanted to thank everyone who helped on the successful May rides and those who have signed up for the June rides. Each ride leader and sweep should have received emails from Sophie confirming your participation with a ride description on Meetup. However, we do need a sweep for the Tuesday, June 13 ride. Dave sent an email and volunteered to sweep.

For July, Sophie will touch base with everyone who have signed up on the Google doc about each ride.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1YCPum2GpdZiuYzvEnUAbMDrBAv7E9imQNVyZVsQc4PQ/edit?usp=sharing>

The only ride that we need a leader and sweep for is on Tuesday, July 25. Who wants to lead a ride on this date?

Sophie also wanted to acknowledge Olivia for helping with the Bike Rockville with RBAC Meetup group. Her second set of eyes looking at ride descriptions and feedback has been quite helpful.

Wendy led the first Tuesday night ride in June with about 30 attendees. Tracy was the sweep; Connie fixed a flat for a rider and Olivia was a big help as a pointer riding mid. Tracy will ask Sophie about the procedure for participates who did not sign up thru Meetup and signed paper waivers.

(6) Nancy wanted to discuss the criteria for **RBAC letters to Mayor and City Council** in support of biking infrastructure out of Rockville's city limits. Projects on Little Falls Parkway in

Bethesda and Tuckerman Lane in Potomac prompted this. Dave suggested further discussions be tabled until projects have progressed some more.

(7) Nancy proposed **inviting Mayor and City Council candidates** to the next RBAC meeting since a mail-in election is coming up in November. Jake drafted some questions for candidates to answer specifically about bicycling in Rockville (see attached).

As committee, we cannot endorse nor advocate any particular candidate. Since RBAC meetings are recorded, these are available to the public. But the City cannot edit the video nor promote any candidates attending the meeting. The meeting recording could be shared via the RBAC listserve (which currently has 77 subscribers). Perhaps WABA can help promote the video recording. As a public service, we can also promote on Facebook and Meetup. Written responses can also be made public for those who cannot attend the RBAC meeting.

(8) As a prelude to the development review of the **900 Rockville Pike** project, Andrew Leuetkemeir at Traffic and Transportation in the City updated that the County's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) plan is at 35% design stage. A lot can still change with this plan that runs on 355 from Bethesda to Clarksburg. However, he is working to see how the BRT will work the City Master Plan and affect the developer plan, especially on the frontage road.

John Foreman, the City's Development Services Manager, has been working and meeting with the property developer for about four years as well as with Maryland SHA (State Highway Administration).

Brian Donnelly is the civil engineering representing MGH, the developer. Also present was Jody Kline, the land-use attorney; Joel Danish, the applicant; and Dave Nelson, the traffic consultant on this project. Boundaries of the 0.95-acre site is MD 355 on the west, the WMATA wall mounts on the east, Edmonston Drive at the north with Twinbrook neighborhood in the far east corner, and the south boundary is the access entrance at MD 355. Plans include an 8-foot-wide bike lane and a 7-foot-wide pedestrian lane along MD 355. Currently the plans call for the bike lane to be two-way running north and south. It was suggested to maintain the width of this bike lane but make a one-way travel lane so there is less confusion for cyclists and still in compliance with the Master Plan.

(9) Harris Scwab represents the Tower Preserve Michael Harris Homes for the **Tower Oaks project at Wootton Parkway**. Also present were Ben Bullock; Stuart Miller from Lerner Enterprises; Andy Simth, the traffic consultant; and Erin Girard. Nelson Ortiz is the Principal Planner from the City working with this developer.

Harris says they have been working with the City for over a year with about 82 new homes include a number of moderate-priced townhomes throughout the 8.83 acres. The current private access drive will converted to a public street as well as the interior roads. The plan includes a buffered 5-foot bike lane in both directions connecting Wootton Parkway and Tower Oaks Blvd. Due to space restrictions the rest will be a signed speed-controlled roadway with sharrows. But offers a connection to the Carl Henn Millennium Trail at Tower Oaks Blvd. The office building will increase bicycle storage from 20 to 40 bikes.

(10) The Memorial Day Parade was rained out this year.

Tracy reported there is a new stop sign for cyclist on the trail at Dunster and Falls Roads.

(11) David reported **RPAC** had a productive walking meeting in Town Center with City planners and councilmembers. Bryan led the walk with about 8 stops along the way.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sophie Chan-Wood