

Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee Meeting Agenda
Meeting 07-20
Thursday, July 9, 2020
7:00 PM
Virtual – Webex

Attendees:

Eric Fulton, Chair; Corinne Abramson, Vice-Chair; Marissa Valeri, notetaker, Twinbrook Community Association; Judy Rudolph, notetaker, Town Center; Ann Gaines, Town Center; Jonathan Goldsmith, Twinbrook; Carl Peterson, RBAC; Paula Hubble, Victoria Condos/Town Center; Ethan Goffman, John Becker, Americana Center Kathleen Kleinman, Mike Stein, Twinbrook

City Officials: Mayor Bridget Newton, Councilmember Monique Ashton, Rockville City Police Chief Victor Brito, City Staff: Alyssa Roff, staff liaison, Emad Elshafei, Traffic and Transportation, Craig Simoneau, Public Works, Mike Wilhelm, Chief, Construction Management Division, Public Works

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the location of the RPAC meeting minutes. Judy requested a link on the RPAC web page that would take folks directly to the meeting. Alyssa would bring that request to the web team again. The idea of an annual report was raised by Alyssa, and it was deemed a good idea to explore further.

Sidewalks - Construction, Reconstruction, Prioritization - Mike Wilhelm and Craig Simoneau

Simoneau kicked things off with a few slides. The first explained the various departments that have input into sidewalk issues. It also outlined the guiding documents and standards used in various aspects of sidewalks such as the ADA and City Code. Noted that the updating of the city road design standards is part of the Vision Zero Action Items. Eric asked about the Synthesis of Pedestrian Policies guidance document. Emad explained that the document is more about traffic management for the neighborhood. It is just guidelines on pedestrian-related matters. Vision Zero includes this policy and it needs to be updated.

The last slide was about inspections. Concrete and asphalt CIP programs - repaving occurs every 12 years on average. Inspections occur per the Level of Service Schedule in between the 12-year cycle. DPW needs everyone including the public to report repairs that are needed. DPW relies on the public so the public needs to report things.

Finally, Craig walked RPAC through a large spreadsheet that the DPW crews use to inspect and determine the order of inspection of sidewalks and asphalt/roads. The inspections are slow drive-by inspections. These supplement the 12-year cycle inspections. The reflectivity of signs is also measured, in lumens. Lines on roads are refreshed every 6 years. High traffic areas are refreshed more often.

Mayor Newton: Question about Wooton Parkway between Falls and Seven Locks. Four-hour turnaround - a reason that the road needs more work? Do other agencies do patchwork? CS: 4-hour repairs are just on hazards.

Judy: When you hand off to SHA - on emergency issues, do you have a way to hold their feet to the fire? MW: We have no other way to handle it. It is state code and City has a shared maintenance agreement but City has not been reimbursed in 2 years for repairs on state highways. CS agreed.

Kathleen: Shared her experience with the dangerous curb cut, a brief pause is all she will give it. The entire sidewalk should be shut down. It is a hazard.

Ann: What happened to Kathleen? Can it be shared widely? MW: The driveway cuts are too steep, Kathleen tipped close, she was forced into the street to use the curb cut. All the ramps are substandard. AG: The hazard level - how is it defined? Hazard versus non-hazard. MW: Inspector discretion. AG: Why are drops not hazards? CS:

Judy: Is there anything we can do from a political standpoint to pressure SHA? It is a systemic problem and it impacts city residents. Craig: Frustrated with SHA, Mike is also frustrated. State legislators sometimes help. SHA responsiveness is a problem.

Eric: Inspections - sidewalks curb cuts and aprons are inspected by inspectors in cars. Encouraging inspectors to walk. Sidewalk reconstruction: replacing concrete or making the sidewalks better using City standards? Improvements are done through CIP projects. \$5-\$20k to relocate one pole.

Emad: Made the sidewalks useable in Twinbrook when light poles were in the middle of sidewalks. Emad made that happen, so kudos to Emad.

Eric: Residents encouraged to use Report a Concern. CS: Old system, going to a new system called ERP that will create a dashboard to see all the data in one place.

CS: Will send the presentation to Alyssa. MW: Ann has his cell phone number, share it with all.

City Updates - Alyssa Roff

Vision Zero passed unanimously on Monday night. Alyssa thanked RPAC members for all. There was a meeting of the Vision Zero task force yesterday.

The Pedestrian Master Plan is up next. In August, RPAC should have a brainstorming meeting to gather ideas and thoughts. Alyssa will research what other communities have done, but it is a pretty new concept. Eric is very excited about it, as the County is working on theirs too. He will send out resources to help study up before the meeting. Eric will meet with Nancy Breen from RBAC about that.

RPAC is there to help make the Master Plan happen, and to make all of the Vision Zero action items happen. RPAC is the pedestrian lens throughout the City in every aspect of City life.

Emad: Town Center Road Diet is for Middle Lane and Washington Street The idea came as a recommendation from ULI to make it more pedestrian-friendly. Some data has been collected already by consultants working on this issue. They are looking at a variety of options but there are challenges such as bus stops and parking. Will this road diet affect traffic on other roads? There are many things to study and consider before presenting it to the Mayor and Council on October 5.

Eric asked about the WMATA Metro bridge project. Is there a timeline?

Emad shared that the bridge is not safe, and the City did not receive any notice. There is no timeline for inspections (maybe they are done), repair, anything. They are trying to get the info from WMATA. City is talking to Montgomery County on the signals along 355 to try to make crossing 355 safer in the absence of the pedestrian bridge. County needs to talk to SHA too. City is trying to move things quickly since bridge is closed.

Councilmember Ashton asked about the length of time needed to change the timing of crossing. Emad stated that no, it doesn't. But there has to be a will to do so.

Incident & Enforcement During COVID - RCPD

Chief Brito noted that since the public health emergency was declared, we have had to retool enforcement and deployment of resources. Enforcement has not stopped in any way. Targeted enforcement has been temporarily suspended due to health concerns. RCPD always works on traffic and criminal enforcement.

PowerPoint on impact to automated speed and red light enforcement from Conduent, the company that does the automated cameras. There are 17 speed cameras in Rockville that are rotated. There are 11 red light cameras.

**Get copy of PowerPoint

June numbers are looking somewhat more normal now that the lifting of stages is happening. Vehicle speeds are still an issue.

Judy: Asked about volume data and the percentage of citations. Chief stated that he would look into it.

Since Governor declared the public health emergency to date there have been 10 incidents of pedestrians being hit by cars - 2 bicycles, 1 scooter, 1 skateboard, 7 on foot. Of the 10, 6 found that the driver was at fault.

Recurrent Issues / RPAC Loose Ends

Eric touched on a few issues that we had on the agenda on February but were waylaid by COVID-19. The loop needs to be closed on the issue of pedestrian flashing beacons and utilization. Several solutions were raised such as painting the call button, raising the button, and placing a third beacon on the median for instances where the side beacons are obscured. Emad shared a mockup of a sign that could be used at all the flashing beacons.

The meeting was adjourned at