



MINUTES

City of Flagstaff PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4:30 pm Thursday, November 8, 2007

City Hall, Staff Conference Room
211 West Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 pm. On roll call, the following Committee members were present:

Georgia Duncan, Chair
Sharon Grasso
Kathie Oehme
Jim Tuck

Members absent:

Mike McDonald
Heather Taylor
(One vacancy)

The following City staff was present:

Martin Ince, Multi-Modal Planner
Gerry Craig, Traffic Engineering Manager

Others present:

Jack Welch
Darrell Boomgaarden

I. PRELIMINARY GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Announcements

Sharon Grasso asked if the Commission could review the plans for pedestrian crossings on Fort Valley Road at Forest Avenue and Fremont Boulevard.

Jim Tuck announced that Mountain Line will be reprinting its bus schedule and route map within the next few months, and asked the Committee for suggestions to improve the map or schedule. The new map will continue to include FUTS trails. The PAC will bring suggestions to the next meeting. Jack Welch said that the schedule can be confusing, and asked if there is a way to improve its readability.

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Kathie Oehme said she would like to review the issues of bikes on downtown sidewalks. Gerry Craig clarified that the current City code allows bike on most sidewalks, but not downtown. Mr. Welch stated that there is a problem for bikes leaving the Route 66 FUTS trail at San Francisco. Bicyclists want to travel south on San Francisco, which is legal, but they are sometimes ticketed. The Committee asked that a discussion of this item be placed on the next PAC agenda, along with a discussion of how the Police Department's volunteer force might help.

2. Public Comment

Darrell Boomgaarden asked if two items could be discussed on the next agenda; first, a discussion of the goals of the PAC, and second, information on FUTS funding through the BBB tax, including information on the expiration and renewal of the tax.

Mr. Welch said that the Mountain Line citizen review commission has been meeting and will be making a presentation to the City Council on November 19 regarding recommended ballot questions. Renewal of the Mountain Line tax will be going to election in May of 2008, and it must pass to keep Mountain Line running. The PAC should be interested because transit is an important part of the overall pedestrian environment. He said that it is important to spread the word about the importance of transit.

3. Approval Of Minutes

Minutes from the September 13, 2007 meeting were not available but will be provided at the next meeting.

II. OLD BUSINESS

1. Pedestrian Awareness Week – International Walk to School Day

Mr. Welch reported on activities from Pedestrian Awareness Week and International Walk to School Day in October. He said there were some successes, and some things that could have been done better.

International Walk to School Day was a success; numbers from all schools except Marshall School were up from previous years. The walking school bus at Sechrist School also had its highest numbers. "Try Transit" day went well, and the downtown accessibility audit was small but informative.

He said that the event could be improved with additional funding. He mentioned Safe Routes to School funding, and a possible grant from FedEx.

Ms. Oehme wondered what could be done to get parents more involved. She said that kids who live close to school are getting rides. Ms. Grasso said that it is

important to promote the message at school and to get teachers involved. Kids can encourage and convince the parents to get involved.

Martin Ince mentioned that there may be some information on encouraging parental involvement on the national Safe Routes to School website, and suggested having someone do some research on what techniques have worked elsewhere.

The PAC had a brief discussion about the difficulty of overcoming "stranger danger" fears.

There was a discussion about crossing guards and school enrollment boundaries, especially at Killip School. Ms. Grasso suggested addressing the crossing guard issue at a future School Board meeting. Mr. Welch offered to look into it.

III. NEW BUSINESS

1. Flagstaff Walks Map

Mr. Welch introduced the concept of a "Flagstaff Walks" map to highlight and promote walking tours around Flagstaff. He said the idea is based on a map from Santa Monica, which he passed around the room as a sample. He said City Council member Joe Haughey has expressed an interest and may have some money.

Mr. Welch also said he would like to include a wheelchair accessible route.

Mr. Tuck asked if this would be a tourist-oriented map for downtown. Mr. Welch replied that it would concentrate on the downtown area.

Mr. Tuck suggested hiring someone to produce the map, and expressed a concern that it could be a significant volunteer project.

Sources for funding the project were discussed, including Flagstaff Medical Center and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Ms. Oehme suggested involving the Chamber. Ms. Grasso said that NAU may have some resources. Mr. Tuck said that the project could be done in conjunction with the Disabilities Awareness Commission (DAC), and reiterated his concern about how much work it might take. Mr. Boomgaarden said that the map could be as simple as an 8-1/2 by 11 Xerox sheet.

Mr. Tuck mentioned the new "History of Flagstaff" brochures that were produced by the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). He indicated that the CVB might be interested in the walking maps.

Mr. Welch said that Marie Jackson had written a book about the geology of downtown Flagstaff that could be translated into a walking tour. He also suggested other possible themes, including a mural walk, a public art walk, and a tree walk.

Mr. Tuck suggested inviting Stacey Button from the CVB and Geoff Barnard from the DAC to the next meeting.

Mr. Welch said bus connections and bus legs should be included.

2. Use of De-Icer on City Streets

Mr. Welch explained that there have been three public meetings regarding a proposal to experiment with using chemical de-icer on some City streets. He said that there were environmental concerns with using the de-icer, but there were trade-offs. The chemical needs to be used correctly and not over-used, or it will not work. Salt can be harmful, but so are cinders.

Mr. Boomgaarden mentioned that chemical de-icer is already being used on some roads in town.

Mr. Welch said that as a bike rider, he wants to get rid of cinders. The chemical de-icer will be done as a pilot project.

Mr. Craig summarized a discussion he and Mr. Ince had with Erik Solberg, the City's assistant public works director. He said the material is a naturally-occurring salt compound, to which other chemicals are added. It comes in a granular form, but it can be wetted down. It works by creating a liquid layer between the pavement and snow that makes the snow easy to remove. The chemical also melts some snow. He suggested that the PAC observe the trial and consider making a recommendation in the spring when the trial has been concluded.

Mr. Tuck asked how corrosive the chemical is. Mr. Craig explained that it is not as corrosive as standard salt, because less is used and the compound itself is less corrosive.

Ms. Grasso stated that people often walk in the street in the winter and spring because of cinders on the sidewalk. She said the cinders do not get cleaned up quickly.

Mr. Ince said that ADOT is completing a study on the environmental impacts of the de-icer. Mr. Craig added that ADOT has been using it for 10 years. Ms. Grasso asked if there were a study on the impact of cinders. She said that something is going to put on roads, and the question is which material is better.

Mr. Boomgaarden said that he sees some browning of trees along the road, and wondered what caused it.

Ms. Grasso asked if there is information from other places that use the de-icer. Mr. Ince suggested that Lizette Melis from the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee may be looking into the experiences from other communities.

Mr. Boomgaarden suggested thinking about the best way to evaluate the trial. He said the PAC should collect enough information to have an opinion. Mr. Tuck asked for a list of things to watch for during the trial.

A guest speaker on the experiment was suggested for the next meeting.

3. FUTS Planning and Prioritization

Mr. Ince provided the Committee with a copy of the latest FUTS project status report.

Ms. Grasso suggested using the report to list concerns and issues that need to be resolved, such as how to safely get across Fort Valley Road to access the FUTS trail that is being built along side of it.

Mr. Ince suggested that staff and the PAC should try to address concerns and resolve issues during the planning phase. A brief discussion about the crossing of Fort Valley Road at Fremont ensued.

Mr. Boomgaarden asked if the list includes projects in the planning phase. Mr. Ince replied that it does.

Ms. Grasso said that she wants to call attention to concerns so they can be resolved. Following a brief discussion, the Committee reached a consensus to develop a list of areas of concern or problem areas regarding pedestrian facilities. Ms. Oehme asked who the audience for the FUTS project report is. Mr. Boomgaarden stated that it is important to make people aware of problem areas.

Mr. Craig said that it was very beneficial for staff to have the public involved in identifying projects and priorities.

Mr. Ince offered to bring the BAC list of priorities to the next meeting as an example.

4. Modern Roundabouts

Mr. Craig provided some background and information on modern roundabouts, especially regarding their accommodation for pedestrians. A discussion about the design and function of roundabouts followed.

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IV. CONCLUDING GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Reports

There was no further discussion regarding the FUTS project update.

2. Concluding Announcements

Mr. Tuck asked if the PAC could send a letter of appreciation to Becky Daggett for her service on the PAC. Ms. Daggett has resigned from the PAC to accept a position with the City's Community Development Department.

To save paper, the Committee agreed that all members should print a copy of the agenda for themselves. Mr. Ince will bring copies for the public, so Mr. Welch need not make additional copies.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 pm.