

Minutes of the Transportation Commission Meeting held on Wednesday, January 11, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Training Room at Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

Members Present: Amy Panici, Chairperson
Paul Chouinard
Clay Weaver
Jim Grosh

Members Absent: Mark Wagstaff
Eileen Miller-Girson
Rachel Nocera

Staff Present: Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E. Director of Engineering
Linda Reilley, Engineering Assistant II
George Carpenter, Police Chief
Dan Walsh, Police Department

Also Present: Nancy Schofer, 325 Sheridan Road
Dominic Gatto, 1234 Princeton Place
Beth Drucker, 2500 Greenwood Avenue

Chairperson Panici called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Review of Minutes

Motion to approve the December 14, 2005 minutes.

Motion by: Commissioner Grosh
Second: Commissioner Weaver
Discussion: None
Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote

2. Review of Bike Task Force Meeting Minutes

- No discussion

3. Five-Village Bike Trail—Presented by the Bicycle Task Force

- Chairperson Panici welcomed the members of the Bicycle Task Force and asked for staff comments. Ms. Reilley provided an overview of the materials in the packets and asked the Bike Task Force to discuss the Five Village Trail in greater detail.

- Nancy Schofer, 325 Sheridan Road and Chairperson of the Bike Task Force (BTF), introduced the project by providing some history. She stated the BTF has a vision for the abandoned UP right-of-way that has tremendous potential benefit. She indicated the BTF has been working with the other four Villages (Skokie, Glenview, Northfield and Northbrook) and has taken the lead to answer questions like “what has to be done?” and “who is going to do it?” She stated the time to act is now, because there are several developments along the corridor pending. The task force has put together a working plan and draft letter for President Canning to send to the other affected Villages. The BTF is seeking the Transportation Commission’s support in their endeavors.
- Dominic Gatto, 1234 Princeton Place, provided a summary of each community’s participation to date. He reiterated the importance of documenting the plan now, because the development activity in Northfield may conflict with a future bike path. Mr. Gatto outlined the location of the path which begins at Lake Cook Road and actually continues north through to Libertyville. The path will terminate at the CTA’s yellow line in Skokie.
- The Committee discussed the differences between leasing ComEd right-of-way and purchasing property from the UP. Mr. Gatto explained that Northfield has the longest section of path at 2.44 miles and that the estimated purchase price for Union Pacific Railroad land is \$1 million per mile. Skokie’s yellow line extension to Old Orchard is currently under development.
- Chairperson Panici asked if the other Villages have bike groups similar to Wilmette. Mr. Gatto stated that Skokie’s staff has been involved, Northfield has several elected officials that are advocates and Northbrook also has a resident bicycle advocacy group. Glenview has had little involvement to date.
- Beth Drucker, 2500 Greenwood, stated the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation and other agencies consider Wilmette as having one of the most active advocacy groups in the Chicagoland area.
- Chairperson Panici questioned how bicyclists would be able to cross multi-lane highways such as Lake Avenue safely. Mr. Gatto stated the feasibility study would consider such obstacles. Some options include using the existing signalized crossings or perhaps building new pedestrian-activated crossings. The cost for construction of the path is \$1 to \$2 million per mile.
- Ms. Drucker stated there are grants available and the first step to receiving a grant is to have a plan and complete a feasibility study.
- Commissioner Weaver concurred stating the feasibility study will outline the best locations for the path.
- A discussion ensued regarding the benefits of an easement versus purchasing property. Commissioner Weaver stated that leases with

ComEd often include language indicating ComEd can remove the bike path for any reason, at any time.

- Commissioner Grosh asked what the timeline was for building this project. Mr. Gatto indicated the next federal transportation bill will likely be passed in 2009. It is important to have a feasibility study completed prior to the next bill, so we can seek funding.
- A discussion of funding opportunities took place. It was suggested that the Cook County Highway Department, the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, Chicago Area Transportation Study and other regional groups be included.
- Police Chief Carpenter asked if the North Shore Path could be used as an alternative. Mr. Gatto explained that it is important to have a link to the south and public transportation. Ms. Drucker stated that bike trails should be conveniently located so people will use it. Even a couple miles of added distance will make a big difference to the recreational rider. Commissioner Weaver observed that as the North Shore path moves south, it gets farther and farther away from the proposed trail.
- Chairperson Panici stated this is a large undertaking and everyone should be working toward the same goal.
- Commissioner Chouinard asked if the other communities were aware of this project. Mr. Gatto explained that they will be meeting with Glenview's staff. Elected and appointed officials in Northfield and Northbrook are already aware of the project. Skokie's staff is also moving forward with the concept.
- Chairperson Panici recommended copying applicable staff and the Village Managers on the proposed letter to the Mayors.

Motion to support the Bike Task Force's efforts on the Five-Village Trail, including support for President Canning to send the proposed draft letter to the other four Villages and to begin a study to examine feasible alternatives, such as seeking easements from ComEd.

Motion by: Commissioner Weaver
Second: Commissioner Grosh
Discussion: None
Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote

4. 2006 Traffic Calming—Hunter Road Discussion

- This item was tabled until the next meeting.

5. Old Business / Pending Matters / Next Meeting

- Ms. Mayerhofer provided an update on the Sheridan Road Bicycle Path.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2006.

Feedback

- None

Motion to adjourn.

Motion by: Commissioner Chouinard

Second: Commissioner Grosh

Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brigitte Mayerhofer.