

# **Burlington Walk-Bike Council Special Meeting Minutes**

Sunday, November 19, 2017

5:00-6:00pm

**Presiding:** BWBC Chair Erik Brown Brotz

**Local Motion:** Interim Executive Director Jason Van Driesche

**City Officials:**

- Department of Public Works Director Chapin Spencer
- Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Director Cindi Wright
- Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Project Manager Jon Adams-Kollitz

**Present:** 23 community members

**Minutes taken by:** Charlene Wallace

**The meeting was preceded by a one-hour bike tour with stops at key intersections and neighborhoods.**

## **Agenda: Q & A, plus sharing ideas with Chapin Spencer & Cindi Wright**

**Jason Van Driesche:** Displayed big map of plan for downtown bike network. The plan for the meeting is to add post-its with ideas to the map.

**Erik Brotz:**

- Lots got done this year though not as much as we had hoped
- The Walk/Bike plan wasn't approved by City Council until May, so it was late to develop and distribute bid information for contractors in time to do the work in the 2017 season
- Planning in 2017, however, allowed a number of projects to be cued up for 2018. Contractors will be lined up to start work in spring 2018
- The City is planning to do projects in batches, so that the public process can address several projects at the same time, then build/implement them

**Jason:**

- There are two issues that impact the success of the public process: not only how much new walk and bike infrastructure the City plans to do overall, but how long we drag it out for. The idea is to move ahead expeditiously
- The City must work with the challenges of NIMBY concerns vs. the needs of the entire city. The process is structurally biased to favor individuals who object
- Miro says there is limited political capital available. The public has only so much patience with major infrastructure changes, so we must manage the public process carefully

## **Discussion**

**Comment:** Green Mountain Transit (GMT) needs to be integrated into the process. Walking and biking to public transit is an important piece of the transportation network.

**Chapin Spencer:** Yes, the bus system has gaps in connectivity. GMT has the same network they've had since the 70s. They're now in a planning process to reassess: the [NextGen Transit Plan](#).

**Question:** How does GMT's plan and Plan BTV Walk/Bike get coordinated?

**Chapin:** Generally, they are two separate planning processes. I am on the Board of Commissioners for GMT, so I coordinate what I can. Burlington has no Transit Advocates group, so there's no citizen group speaking up for transit.

**Jason:** Local Motion doesn't coordinate with GMT; we have a lack of capacity (staff) to do so.

**Question:** Why aren't there more separated paths in town, like the Riverside Ave path?

**Chapin:** Separated paths, like on Riverside, by definition have conflicts between bikes and people on foot. And for bike safety, separated paths have safety issues when cars frequently turn across them (into businesses and driveways). The Kennedy drive path is an example of a separated path with no curb cuts, a much safer path than Riverside is. Though the Riverside Path feels better to ride on than the road, it's necessary to be on alert for cars, since drivers don't expect people to be traveling fast on what looks to them like a sidewalk.

The plan for our network is not yet all figured out. Plan BTV Walk/Bike has identified general corridors, then specific design work needs to happen.

Many wanted wider sidewalks along North Ave, but with many curb cuts and the inherent conflict between pedestrians and people on bikes, it was determined that it wasn't safe enough to build a separated path (wider sidewalks) there.

**Question:** Why are sidewalks so narrow?

**Chapin:** In PlanBTV, the plan is to build sidewalks wider if possible. Managing storm water, run off, road width, and property boundaries makes this challenging.

**Question:** Are there any opportunities to build new separated paths?

**Jon Adams-Kollitz & Cindy Wright:** Parks prioritizes looking at our projects as both transportation and recreation. Coming up, there will be new connections between the bike path and North Ave.

At Oakledge Park, there's new pavement that helps connect the bike path to the bike lane on Flynn.

The connection to Killarney Drive at North Avenue will have a flashing crossing light; planning for this was good interdepartmental work.

In terms of resistance from adjacent property owners, we need to help them see that their 'sacrifice', (usually losing parking, is part of a larger plan that others are making sacrifice for as well.

**Question:** Sweeping is low hanging fruit, and important for bike safety. Why can't this be more consistent?

**Chapin:** We're doing a new round of sweeping this week.

**Question:** The new waterfront rec path by the festival area isn't kept open during events, even though when they moved the path they promised it would stay open. Cars on Lake St cars are prioritized, making it dangerous for bikes.

**Cindy Wright:** Glad you made me aware of this, as I wasn't yet in this job during summer. I will look into it.

**Question:** Paint—why doesn't Burlington have our own line striping equipment?

**Chapin:** As long as we get our bid in over the winter, we get can get it all done. A striping truck is a very expensive item, too much to add to the 300 vehicles the City already maintains. S. Burlington bought a painting machine, a tow-behind; the quality of their striping isn't as good as can be done with a truck.

We need to have a plan; get approvals early. Then it all can be included in the bid.

City employees do painting 'hand work', like sidewalks, but we must contract the 'long lines'.

**Comment:** At Intervale Rd & Riverside Ave, cyclists often cross dangerously, and don't wait until the walk signal. Having a bike signal there could direct people to make better choices.

**Chapin:** I don't know if there's a retrofit to add bike crossing signal to a walk signal. We'll take that under consideration.

**Chapin:** I recommend this advocacy effort: changing the law to make it legal for bikes to cross with the Walk signal.

**Chapin:** To improve the bike network, we're exploring a two-directional bike lane on Champlain and Park St.

**Comment:** Use See Click Fix (SCF). Get the app and log issues and problems you encounter around town so that DPW knows there's a problem.

**Chapin:** SCF is good for maintenance issues like potholes and sweeping. For structural changes, it doesn't work.

**Question:** Will the City extend the path on Willard St. going north past North St. to Riverside?

**Chapin:** No, that's not part of the plan at this time.

**Question:** What about accountability on road repairs? Sometimes pavement patches sink and have rough edges, making it more dangerous for bikes.

**Chapin:** We're developing standards for how road re-surfacing is done after subterranean utility repairs. The City does some of this work, but so does Gas and Telecom. In winter, cold patch must be used, then the City goes back in summer to do a proper repair. The City is raising its standards and making efforts to do smoother patches; requiring a better sub-surface, for example.

The City is investing in subterranean water pipe repairs. 25% of water mains are over 100 years old. Before road resurfacing, we're digging up the old pipes to repair them.

**Jon Adams-Kollitz:** We appreciate the tremendous work everyone is doing at DPW and Parks. Some great work is being done.

**Jason:** It's important to rethink how projects move forward, particularly the public process

Plan to go to City Council next week. The council is voting on a **Public Engagement Plan** to guide how public process will work. How much public engagement will be required for approval? How can we bring projects together in one packet so there's a comprehensive look at all the things that need to be done?

**Comment:** Parking at corner of Battery Park by police station is important.

**Chapin:** Surface parking is not the highest and best use for public land. We are building parking below buildings as often as possible.

For example, the City sold the Browns Court lot (off of King St. near St. Paul). The plan is to build housing and have parking below.

The same will happen in the parking lot behind Bove's.

**Question:** How do we know about shuttle parking lots?

**Chapin:** Find out about remote shuttle parking lots at UVM, Champlain, and UVM Medical Center by contacting those institutions. The City has no plans now for remote parking lots.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.