

Burlington Walk-Bike Council Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2017

5:40-7:10pm

Presiding: Erik Brown Brotz

Minutes taken by: Sarah Goodrich

Others present: Phil Hammerslough, Steve Norman, Stu Lindsay, Emma Allen (Parks & Rec), Nicole Losch (DPW), Jean Waltz (Ramble), Sean Melinn (ONE arts & business network and Ramble), Anna Wyner (intern), Gary Rogers (Parks & Rec), Phet Keomanyvanh (CEDO), Jon Adams-Kollitz (Parks & Rec), Christine Hill (Bike Recycle), Serrill Flash, Katelin Brewer-Colie (Local Motion)

Agenda Item: Announcements

- Third Thursday (April 20) 6pm ONE Arts & Business at Old Spokes Home

Agenda Item: Open Streets

- Showed a couple videos
- It started in Columbia
- A community event where streets are closed to automobiles and people use the streets for biking, walking, dance, etc.
- In Burlington:
 - Year one: North Street and north to Pomeroy
 - Year two: A little shorter but similar to year one and included some demonstration projects
 - Year three: Stretched from ONE through Church Street and to King Street
- We're mainly talking big picture tonight
- Jean: What goes into making Open Streets happen?
- Emma: Open Streets is about connecting neighborhoods.
- Biggest cost is safety and security, police, etc. so more than one event will get expensive.
- Jon: Year 1 Katelin from Local Motion helped a lot to make Open Streets happen. Parks & Rec is the last one standing to make this event happen, and expanding to more than one event is too much for them. Connecting parks and connecting neighborhoods is a goal. Church Street didn't work well. Parks & Rec is looking for commitment from some other organizations.
- Erik: Katelin has said that Local Motion is willing to step up more than the past two years.
- Jon: Local Motion has been helpful.
- Groups not here tonight that could contribute: AARP (they did an event in a small town recently).
- Christine: What do you need from partners?
 - Jon: Most daunting is the closing of the streets. CERT and the Police have been central to this. Parks & Rec has the permitting aspect well set. CERT volunteered their time and resources. Last year we had 2-3 counties of their volunteers.
 - Event planning
 - Marketing and promotion
 - All three years we had themed areas of activities
 - Leafleting the neighborhoods and getting the word out
- Last year Church Street hired Green Mountain Concert, but they weren't reliable overall. Ron Redmond was behind this.
- Pride was happening at the same time.
- Church Street was heavily signed, but people aren't looking for signs.
- Gary: Battery Street would make more sense but the police have reservations about Battery.
- Erik: Union seems better than Battery.
- Emma: The police weren't going to let us do Union.
- Gary: Lots more residences on Union.
- Should Open Streets be its own event or partner with other events or both?
- Jean: As many things happening on the same day would be good.
- Jean: History of Ramble street closures: Crombie started block parties; Decatur took over block party; portions of Rose Street closed, bottom of North Street and Drew have been closed.
- Jean: Regardless of the relationship with Open Streets, the Ramble will try to close part of N. Winooski between Decatur and North as well as Decatur and part of North. There's talk of St. Joe's (ONE Community Center) serving as the hub.
- The Ramble Roundup is the big party at the bottom of North.
- The Epic Bike Ride ends at the Roundup.
- Streets closed 4:30-10:30pm.
- The Epic Bike Ride effectively closes the streets as it goes.
- The Ramble is the last Saturday in July.
- Open Streets has been early September.

- Gary: Concern about attaching the “Open Streets” name to events just to close streets. That’s the job for the police.
- Stu: As soon as Pine Street was reopened at the Art Hop, people went home.
- Christine: Make Open Streets more condensed so there’s more going on.
- Phil: Walkable is the key.
- Jean: Attempt to program events in various zones
- Erik: There’s opportunity for the Ramble to expand the openness of the streets, and maybe it can learn something from people who have done Open Streets, but it has its own identity that is different from Open Streets.
- Jean: The Ramble is a hub for any organization.
- Sean: Ramble and Open Streets are separate, but they could be on the same day. Open Streets could have an event at the Ramble.
- Katelin: This sounds like Sunday Parkways in Portland, which happened while there were also block parties.
- Katelin: Having biking and walking celebrated is enough for its own event.
- Coordination between events on the same day makes sense.
- Emma: June and July are busiest for Parks & Rec, so the Ramble is a tough time for Parks & Rec.
- Emma: Sunday mornings are the lowest traffic.
- Phil: Close streets between parks (Battery to Roosevelt)?
- Any pilots or demonstrations planned? Nicole: Not yet.
- Sarah: Open Streets is a lot of work. Let’s do just one.
- Jon: Parks wants 2-4 organizations to step up.
- Kim: From CEDO, interest in Open Streets is connecting neighborhoods, increase diversity, youth civic engagement, schools.
- Christine: Coupling with another event like Ramble could help solve the time and resources challenges.
- Katelin: A cyclovia/Open Streets is different than a street fair. This can get swallowed up by other events. Park to Park in some cities. It’s not meant to be full of stuff.
- Stu: In Belgium Car-Free Sundays that was centered on biking and walking.
- Christine: The transportation focus could work during Ramble, not so much during Art Hop.
- Erik: Does anyone have any reservations about having Open Streets during Ramble?
- Sarah: My concern is who is going to be the point person because Emma won’t be available.
- Katelin: We can get someone else to do it.
- Katelin: There’s a strong wish to keep Open Streets in a neighborhood in the ONE and just have bikes be traffic.
- Jon: Within neighborhood vs connecting neighborhoods? He’s in favor of connecting neighborhoods. He wants it to move forward and maintain its identity, regardless of when it happens.
- Erik: If the Ramble and Open Streets are on the same weekend, resources may be a concern. Are there any other concerns?
- Jean: Event insurance is an issue for the Ramble.
- Phil: Nicole’s idea to let the Ramble do what it does best, and Open Streets could help people get there.
- Ramble plays less by the rules, and the City needs to play by the rules.
- Katelin: Late July lots of folks are away. September college students have attended and volunteered.
- Kim: Who has attended the events? Diversity?
- Katelin: Lots of neighborhood people.
- Christine: Old Spokes Home is planning to sponsor a fundraising ride. Burlington Parks Ride is one idea. End of September, beginning of October, on a Sunday.
- Erik: Show of hands who thinks having Open Streets and Ramble on the same weekend is a great idea? About half.
- Erik: Likes two events, one with Ramble, one end of September.
- Emma: Who can work on figuring out a coordinator? Katelin, Jean, Nicole, Emma
- Kim: Police Dept does great outreach. This is about building relationships with neighbors. 20 Allen Street new facility need to block streets there.
- Katelin: LM can be more involved than last year, not sure of the best role.
- Sean: Can coordinate with local businesses.

Matt Boulanger sent me the following input by email:

- What has and has not worked well for Open Streets in previous years?

What has worked: The streets have been open! This might be obvious, but the simple experience of being able to use a street that is normally dominated by cars is HUGE. There are lots of festivals and events that use other types of public spaces like parks, but being able to do stuff in the street is different. I have been very happy with how the event has evolved over the last few years to bring more stuff out onto the pavement as well- as the event has demonstrated to emergency services folks that this can be done safely.

What could work better: (Disclaimer, my view on this is from a very particular perspective, because for each of the last three Open Streets I have been tied down to my booth all day and have not had a chance to circulate on the streets themselves). I have generally been located near one of the "ends" of the street, usually pretty far from most other stuff. This has made it more challenging to engage with lots of people, which is why I mostly want to be a part of it. I might consider mixing the activities up a little bit to encourage people to move around more.

- Should Open Streets be its own event, or join with other events (e.g., Old North End Ramble, South End Art Hop) - or should it do both?

I absolutely vote for Open Streets to be a part of Art Hop, maybe the Ramble, but I think Art Hop has the broadest potential to engage the most people who didn't specifically come to do Open Streets. I also feel that being on the same day as the Pride parade and Art Hop (but in a different part of town) pulls people and focus away from Open Streets. From my perspective, the most important thing is to engage with those outside of the avid bicycling/ open streets advocacy crowd, i.e. regular people who need to see an Open Street and related temporary bike/ped facilities in order to "get it." Ideally, an open streets component to something like Art Hop would be a surprise to many people and something to ponder when they got home.

- Should there be more than one Open Streets event this year, and if so, where and when?

I'm not sure. I absolutely think there should be street closures and pop-up bike infrastructure elements introduced to the Ramble if they aren't already part of it. I think Open Streets as smaller events more frequently closing smaller sections of streets throughout the city would be really effective in reaching more people where they are.

- What should the event(s) look like?

I think the greatest impact of Open Streets events is when they show people the impact of what happens when you shift the balance from cars to people. Public spaces (which is what streets really are anyway) become pleasant places to move through, but also to linger- to sit, socialize, connect. If Open Streets were more of a regular thing throughout the city, they wouldn't have to be as big of a deal: close the street, set up cafe tables and "pop-up-park" elements and see what happens! Food trucks and activity stations are great, but not totally necessary to smaller-scaled events. I'm not sure i would bring goldsprints to lots of smaller events- but that's OK!

- Who can work on making them happen?

Well, there are the obvious players in terms of the City and folks like Local Motion (especially pop-up bike infrastructure stuff). What about neighborhood associations, more school partnerships- kids who experience these events will not forget them and will carry the experience forward into heir lives when they are citizens of places considering shifting the balance of their streets!

Thanks for the chance to comment!