

Meeting Minutes

Salem Bicycling Advisory Committee

Wednesday, February 2, 2022 | 6:30 p.m.

Remote Meeting

Members Present: John Wathne (Chair), Michael Williamson, Josh Gillis, Jayne O’Leary, Connor Ryan, Matt Caruso, Eric Papetti, Alex Maranto, Michael Jaros

Members Absent: Colleen Downie

Also Present: Tom Devine, Senior Planner

Call Meeting to Order

Papetti called the meeting to order. Devine describes the remote meeting format and procedure for providing public comment.

Public Comment

Papetti opens the meeting to public comment and there are none.

Spring Bike Event Planning with City’s Recreation Coordinator

Recreation Coordinator Caroline Robitaille describes a proposal for an April program. It would be a monthlong scavenger hunt through Salem’s bike paths and bike lanes. Participants would take pictures of destinations and icons. Prizes would be issued. The goal is to get people outside using the infrastructure and to increase familiarity with the facilities. It would be great to also promote Bluebikes through this program. Caruso suggests finding a way to encourage people to participate using a Bluebike. Devine will provide an updated map for the program. Papetti suggests coordinating promotion with Bluebikes and considering whether this should happen in Bay State Bike Month. Wathne wonders if Bluebikes could give out free passes for the program. Devine states that Blue Cross had given out some annual and day passes and he suggests using them for this program. Williamson suggests Forest River Park or Winter Island passes as prizes. Ryan says he is willing to help design the scavenger hunt. Robitaille asks the Committee for suggestions for scavenger hunt destinations and members suggest several. O’Leary states that the Salem State sustainability staff could be a good partner for this, since they have given out helmets to promote biking. Wathne suggests promoting this in the Salem News. Maranto remarks that we should be mindful that families with small children may not be comfortable with in all parts of the bike network where connections are lacking and riders need to mix with traffic.

Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data & Promotion

Document referenced: Salem Bluebikes Data, through 1/27/2022.

Devine presents ridership data for the Month of January. Overall ridership is low across the Salem system. An eighth station will be added by the Hawthorne Hotel. Additional stations are planned for North Salem and the lower level of the Commuter Rail Station. Devine has submitted a grant application for three further stations throughout the city.

Wathne asks if we know demographics for riders in Salem versus other communities. Devine says such data is available only system. Overall it shows that there is more work to do to attract riders beyond the young white men who currently dominate. Devine spoke yesterday with the City's new Latino Affairs Coordinator about what can be done to reach more Spanish speakers. The group discusses Salem ridership compared to the system as a whole.

Caruso says when he was Acting Director of Salem Main Streets, they handed out materials to promote events at the train station and wonders if this can be done for Bluebikes too. O'Leary suggests closing select downtown streets and offering free Bluebikes rides to promote the program.

Prioritization of Small Projects

The group wishes to keep this item on the agenda for future meetings. Papetti suggests advocating early for any projects the Committee prioritizes, because it takes a long time for a project to materialize. Wathne notes that the connection from the jail to the train station should be on the list. Jane adds to the list bike repair and cleaning stations. Devine will add any items members email him about.

Staff Update

Devine provides the following updates:

- Development projects of interest
 - Salem Oil & Grease is at the Planning Board tomorrow for project changes that do not affect the previously approved multiuse path through the property.
 - The North Shore Community Development Coalition's project at Derby and Lafayette Streets and the redevelopment of the City's parking lot at the train station are both in a holding pattern while internal review is ongoing, but there will be additional public presentations in the future.
- Devine had circulated notice of the School Facilities Master Plan survey. The Committee designated Ryan to serve on the working group, but he has received no correspondence on the matter. Devine will look into it.
- The Planning and Sustainability Departments are including bike parking requirements in two proposed ordinances. One ordinance would require bike parking in new or renovated municipal buildings. The other would be a zoning

ordinance that convert's the City's bike parking guidelines to a zoning ordinance. The former is planned to be considered in subcommittee February 8 and the latter, because it is a zoning ordinance, will be taken up at a joint Planning Board and City Council meeting—date to be determined.

- Legislation has been filed to formalize the legal definition of e-bikes. This is of interest in Salem in particular so that if it wishes to have electric bikes included in its bike share program, it would want those bikes to be considered street legal. The City also filed a home rule petition that would effectively legalize e-bikes in Salem and this is before the legislature too.

Announcement of Committee Vacancy

Devine announces that Kylie Sullivan has chosen to resign from the Committee due to her limited availability. She states that she hopes to continue supporting the Committee in other ways. Devine encourages members to get the word out about the need for a new member.

Discussion of North Street Safety Enhancement Project

The group is concerned about the portion of the bike lanes that become unprotected and asks the Chair to issue a letter requesting that the City evaluate moving the curb in a future phase to accommodate protected paths through the whole corridor.

Williamson motions and Caruso seconds to authorize Wathne to submit a letter to the Traffic & Parking Department asking for a review of alternatives to maintain the protected bike lanes throughout the corridor and all vote in favor.

Meeting Minutes

Caruso motions to approve the 8/4/2022 meeting minutes, Ryan seconds, and all vote in favor.

Adjourn

Gillis motions to adjourn at 8:07 pm, Caruso seconds, and all vote in favor.

Approved by the Bicycling Advisory Committee on 5/4/2022.