

Meeting Minutes

Salem Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 5, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

City Hall Annex 1st Floor Meeting Room & Via Remote Participation

Members Present: John Wathne (Chair), Josh Gillis, Colleen Downie, Cat Seiferth, Annie Wolf, Connor Ryan, Matt Caruso, Michael Jaros, Alex Maranto

Members Absent: Walter Morrell

Also Present: Tom Devine, Senior Planner

Call Meeting to Order

Wathne calls the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Wathne opens public comment and there is none.

Proposed Bike Parking Zoning Requirements (Councilor Jeff Cohen)

Documents Reviewed: Example Bike Parking Zoning Ordinance Text, undated.

Ward 5 Councilor Jeff Cohen provides background on efforts to set zoning standards for bike parking and introduces former member Eric Papetti to speak.

Devine shares the draft document onscreen. Former committee member Eric Papetti describes draft ordinance language. He says he looked at a number of examples and tried to adapt the best one to Salem. It defines short- and long-term bike parking and sets ratios for different land uses and standards for design and access. It establishes a process to modify the requirements. Some things such as the table and specific ratios need to be adapted better to Salem. The purpose is to remove ambiguity so developers know requirements and don't have to spend a lot of time to figure it out.

Cohen says proposed edits from the Bike Committee would be helpful in the next eight weeks. It would also be helpful for committee members to attend the Council meetings when the language is submitted to the Council.

Staff Update

Devine provides the following updates:

- Traffic & Parking Staff are submitting a Complete Streets grant application for the construction of the extension of the Fort Ave. path through the Winter Island

Road intersection. The design is informed by comments received from the Bike Committee. The grant writer wishes to request a support letter from the committee. The group agrees to allow the Chair to sign a letter.

- There is still a need for volunteers for bike ridership monitoring on North Street.
- Devine submitted a federal grant application for improved bike and pedestrian connectivity around the North Street overpass but it was not successful. Essex Natural Heritage Area has folded the project into a regional request for congressional earmark funding for the Border to Boston trail.
- The Rousselot industrial plant in Peabody, the only active customer on the freight line from Salem Depot through Peabody, has announced its upcoming closure. This creates potential for a future rail trail. It is unknown whether a new user of the site will use the rail access. And there may be other freight rights for the line. One way or another, it would take time to abandon the rail line and create a trail.

Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data, Promotion, and Expansion

Document reviewed: Salem Bluebikes Data, Through 3/31/2023, slide deck.

Devine reports that the numbers are low, as expected in March, but better than the previous year. Ridership is in line with the peer municipalities, but still lower than the ridership across the system. The group is interested in seeing station to station ridership and Devine might have an intern map that. The group also asks to receive the data by email each month.

Bluebikes will offer free rides on one of the first very nice days of the year and “Mindful Mondays” through May. The three new stations at Vinnin Square, Derby Street, and Bridge Street neck are coming.

Discussion of Bicycling Events

Devine states that the April 11 Salem State Earth Days Group Ride is scheduled. The group confirms which of them will volunteer for the event. Devine will connect volunteers with Tara Gallagher at Salem State in in light of his planned vacation starting April 12, which is the rain date.

Devine remarks that the May 13 Salem Living Green Expo is another potential event the committee can participate in. Multiple members have been looking at having their organizations or employers participate too. Seiferth has been in touch with MassBike. Wolf has a table for her employer. Wathne volunteers to staff a table for the Bike Committee.

Downie states that a Carlton School parent is working to launch a bike to school program. The parent has been unable to attend a committee meeting. Downie is interested in seeing how the committee can support this. Bike to School Day is May 3rd. Maranto suggests having a bike safety training at the Carlton School.

Downie is interested to know if Bluebikes will do other social media promo for Bike to Work Week.

Remote Meeting Policy

Devine announces that the governor signed a bill to extend remote meetings to 2025, which allows flexibility to do remote and hybrid meetings. The group wishes to continue hybrid meetings.

Committee Vacancy

There is a vacancy on the Committee resulting from Eric Papetti's resignation and the Mayor hasn't nominated anyone yet. Jaros announces he is stepping down from the committee. He states that he is happy with the work of the committee and pleased that there are new voices.

Conflict of Interest Training

Devine reminds the group to complete the online training that is required of all municipal employees and board members.

Minutes

Ryan motions and Downie seconds to approve the 1/4/2023 minutes and all vote in favor.

Adjournment

Ryan motions and Gillis seconds to adjourn at 7:52 p.m. and all vote in favor.