

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Salem Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee

Wednesday, January 3, 2024 | 6:30 p.m.

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

Members Present: John Wathne (Chair), Cat Seiferth, Annie Wolf, Charlie Heaps, Colleen Downie, Walter Morrell, Josh Nagle, Matt Caruso

Members Absent: Connor Ryan

Also Present: Tom Devine, Senior Planner

Call Meeting to Order

Wathne calls the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Wathne opens public comment.

Prospective Bike Committee member Paul Carson introduces himself to the Committee.

Bike Parking Ordinance

Document reviewed: City of Salem Bicycle Parking Guidelines, Approved 12/18/2018. With undated edits.

Wolf leads continued review of this document to inform the development of a Bike Parking Ordinance.

The group reviews the sections addressing short-term vs. long-term parking, recommended minimum quantities, payment in lieu of bicycle storage, and rack types. The Committee notes that e-bikes and larger cargo bikes have become more common since the guidelines were written. Seiferth suggests the policy should be more of a mandate rather than guidelines. Larger bikes with wide tires should be accommodated and charging facilities should be provided, just cars are accommodated this way. Downie states that the increasing weight of bikes needs to be accommodated and we should be sure racks don't require lifting. The current guidelines discourage racks that require lifting unless other racks requiring no lifting are also available.

Heaps suggests being careful about mandating electric charging for bikes; it could cause resistance to adopting the whole ordinance. Seiferth states that it is inequitable that we mandate parking and pay for EV chargers.

Downie suggests that if the Committee proposes an ordinance, it should include all the things the Committee wants and let the City Council trim it down. The group discusses the process with City Council. Wathne suggests having informal consultation with City Council prior to submitting it formally. Downie wonders if this could be added to the car parking ordinance, so there is a parking ordinance with sections for cars and for bikes. It would be more equitable to be clear that parking isn't just for cars. Wathne wonders if electric scooters should be accommodated too. Seiferth notes that there is a right to charge law in Massachusetts that applies to bikes and advocates for a right to store, which would mean an accelerated permitting process.

Seiferth states that the racks shown in the guidelines are not useful. She is critical of the requirement for additional review of creative or artistic racks. Seiferth will do some research on better racks. Nagle suggests being more inclusive and comprehensive to include broader storage types, including indoor. Devine states that this conversation is deeper than was had for the initial review of these guidelines and some of the recommended rack types might not be recommended today. Morrell says some of these recommended rack types are still useful and says it is important to preserve existing bike racks. Heaps suggests a matrix of storage types and characteristics and where they are appropriate rather than relying so heavily on photos. Caruso notes an example of an apartment building that has a bike room to work on residents' bikes and sees that as a selling point for the building.

The group discusses the logistics of the City accepting a payment in lieu of bike parking. Wathne is concerned about using the funds to build something nowhere near the building, but Devine states that land use law requires something like that to be directly tied to the development. The group suggests removal of the section.

Wathne praises Wolf for leading this effort.

Bike Parking at Stores

The group discusses distribution of the Committee's letter to local stores encouraging the addition of bike racks. Devine will inform the Committee of which stores it gets sent to in case they wish to make a follow-up visit.

Bikeshare Ridership Data for December

Devine reports that data is unavailable due to an ongoing upgrade of the data platform. He notes that ridership is typically very low this time of year.

Devine announces that Boston and other core Bluebikes communities completed a soft launch of new e-bikes in the system. They are starting with 50 bikes and ramping up to 750 in the coming months. The bikes have a max speed of 20 MPH and 60 mile range. Pricing is 10 cents per minute for members, 25 cents per minutes with day pass, and 7 cents per minute for income-eligible riders. Mayor Pangallo and Salem staff are talking

with Bluebikes about bringing e-bikes up here. But until then, e-bikes that migrate into Salem will be returned to the core communities.

Bikeshare Expansion Into Surrounding Communities

The group discusses its hope to see Bluebikes expand into surrounding communities, such as Lynn, Peabody, Beverly, and Marblehead. Lynn is a gap between the Bluebikes communities of Salem and Revere.

Launch of North Shore Coastal Bicycle Collaborative

This group was initiated by bike advocates from other North Shore municipalities. They hope to see Salem advocates involved. They are meeting on Tuesday, January 16 at 6:00 pm in Wenham. Devine will email the details to the group again. Morrell and Heaps plan to attend.

Salem's Safe Walking Advocacy Group

A grassroots group of advocates for pedestrian safety has formed. They are calling themselves the Safe Walking Advocacy Group, or SWAG for short. They have met at Habanero Cycles. Members of the Bike Committee express interest in exploring coordination or collaboration with SWAG.

Commission Vacancy

Pau Carson notes that he submitted an application to the Mayor. Devine will check on the status of the application.

Meeting Minutes

Caruso motions, Nagle seconds, and all vote to approve the October 4, 2023 minutes.

Adjourn

Wolf motions, Caruso seconds, and all vote in favor to adjourn at 7:54 pm.