

Meeting Minutes

Salem Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee

Wednesday, June 7, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

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

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

Members Absent: Alex Maranto, Connor Ryan

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.

Discussion of Improved City Hall Annex Bike Storage – Stacy Kilb, Sustainability Engagement Coordinator

Document reviewed: *Bicycle Storage at 98 Washington St., slide deck, 6/7/2023*

Kilb discusses the limitations of the City Hall Annex's bike racks that require lifting a bike. They are difficult for riders who lack the height or strength to use these racks or who have any accessibility issues. She has measured the space and looked into the ADA requirements. The Bike Parking Guidelines would require 16 spaces. Kilb normally observes 2 or 3 bikes. The group discusses various bike rack options. Kilb shows a wall rack that mechanically lifts the bike, but it isn't clear if the product is actually available yet. The group also discusses whether there are other locations available in the building.

The group thanks Kilb for looking into this.

Staff Update

Devine provides the following updates:

- Devine and Traffic & Parking Staff are identifying locations of additional public bike racks. This includes adding parking meter racks throughout downtown. They have also identified locations for freestanding racks on North Street and Bridge Street Neck.

- The bike parking ordinance that Councilor Cohen and Eric Papetti discussed at a previous meeting needs substantial work and no one currently is leading it.
- Former member Kylie Sullivan of Salem Main Streets wishes to coordinate a bike event in August during the Derby Wharf Maritime Festival and Salem Willows Jazz Festival. Devine will share details as they materialize.
- Staff hope to have a joint meeting of the Bike Committee and Traffic & Parking Commission to review North Street data after a year of the projects operation, which would be October. Bike Committee members are still welcome to volunteer to do bike counts. Kilb suggests the Liberty Hill Ave. crossing guard could help.

Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data, Promotion, and Expansion

Document reviewed: Salem Bluebikes Data, Through 5/31/2023, slide deck.

Devine reports a strong increase in ridership month to month and year over year. Riders per bike per day is a little ahead of peer municipalities but always lower than the systemwide rate. Devine reports the ridership by station.

A member of the audience reports that there are never bikes at the Community Life Center. Devine will report the matter to Bluebikes. The Committee would like to see that balancing is better and then monitor the CLC station's ridership through the summer before considering relocating it.

The three new stations have been deployed in Vinnin Square, Bridge Street Neck, and on Derby Street. Devine states that this totals 18 stations and it would be difficult for the City to sustain a system bigger than that.

Discussion of Bicycling Events

Wathne states that he staffed a Bike Committee table at the May 13 Green Living Expo and Wolf split her time while also staffing a table for her employer. Wathne reports that there were comments about the bike network's lack of linkages. Wolf says people were interested and positive while noting the network's limitations. The group discusses what they can do to advance projects to address the missing links. Wathne suggests adding estimated construction dates to the interactive bike master plan map. Caruso wonders if the East Coast Greenway can be tapped into to help with the work. Devine reports that they have been a partner. Wathne suggests collaboration among North Shore Communities. Caruso says this should go beyond staff and reach the public. Downie would want this to go beyond the room where it is discussed and reach more broadly. Caruso suggests working more with Destination Salem. Wathne says we need to be clear that the network is not complete and should advocate for funding and education not just to the public but also to the powers that be. Downie wonders if we should prioritize a limited number of gaps and do time lapse videos to build awareness of the projects' need and also of the ways to bike through the gaps in current conditions.

Josh Nagle, in the audience, suggests the Committee could do a bike valet at a big event, such as the food truck festival. The group supports the idea. He also plugs the June 23rd Salem Bike Party event at 7:00 p.m. on Salem Common.

A member of the audience named Diana talks about the Friday bike buses with parents and students to the Carlton School. Some other bike buses in other communities are on a bike path, but much of this route is through city streets. Kids arrive at school happy and the bike racks get filled up. She mentions that there is a need for more bike safety training. She would be interested in seeing another bike rodeo in Salem. The CLC offered a safety class last year for older kids. Caruso says there was another group that refurbished bikes for kids and did safety trainings. Kilb says Carlton has had bike swaps for kids of different ages to trade bikes and they outgrow them. Seiferth says liability is a challenge when giving away bikes and her company was unable to get commercial insurance for this. A bike swap between people might be easier. Her shop could fix bikes noncommercially. She is also happy to contact MassBike about their bike safety classes. Downie asks if the Recreation Department will do the bike safety programming again and Devine says no one has taken it over from the employee who left.

Committee Vacancies

Devine reports that Mayor Pangallo is appointing Josh Nagle to the committee. The Mayor is also appointing another member, but Devine prefers not to say more until he hears back from the person to confirm they are still interested.

Miscellaneous

Devine notes that Habanero Bike Bodega has opened on Washington Street.

Meeting Minutes

Caruso motions, Wolf seconds, and all vote in favor to approve the March 1, 2023 meeting minutes.

Adjourn

Morrell motions, Gillis seconds, and all vote in favor to adjourn at 7:56 p.m.

Approved by the Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee on 9/6/2023.