

Meeting Minutes

Salem Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee

Wednesday, September 6, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

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

Members Present: John Wathne (Chair), Cat Seiferth, Annie Wolf, Colleen Downie, Josh Nagle, Charlie Heaps, Connor Ryan

Members Absent: Matt Caruso, Josh Gillis, Walter Morrell, Alex Maranto

Also Present: Tom Devine, Senior Planner

Call Meeting to Order

Wathne calls the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Wathne opens public comment.

Christina Madore of 8 Federal Street speaks about the weekly “bike bus” she has been leading to the Carton School since last May. There are usually 6 or 7 families participating and they start at Grace Church on Essex Street and people join along the route. Initially the police escorted the group. She considers the program successful but believes more infrastructure needs to be rolled out for safety. She invites Bike Committee members to join the bike bus.

Collaboration with other North Shore Bike Advocates

Jonathan Salt of the Beverly Bike Committee is present in the room and introduces himself. Terry Cowman of Manchester, on Zoom, introduces himself too. Salt provides background on the Beverly committee. It is not an official city committee but they have a successful relationship with the city government and they are looking at becoming an official city committee. They have had success with advocacy, information tables, and promoting bike lanes. They assisted with the development of a bike lane routes plan that the city is working to implement. They had a recent event with MassBike and its director Galen Mook suggested North Shore groups collaborate.

Cowman says that the Manchester Bike Committee is an official city committee. The group pays attention to projects in town and advocates for better bike infrastructure to be incorporated into roadway projects

Wathne suggests considering having a biking forum with multiple communities and MassBike. Salt suggests beginning with a group ride. Cowman will consult with Galen Mook on this. Salt will coordinate with Devine to schedule a group ride.

Salt also discusses the new Vulnerable Road Users Law requiring cars to pass cyclists and others with at least 4 feet of clearance. Cowman states that Manchester created a video about the new law. Devine will share it with the group.

Promotion of Bicycling on Social Media

Downie met with Lisa Peterson, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, to discuss promoting biking through official City of Salem social media channels. Downie suggests that Bike Committee members doing a regular bike trip take a photo and write a blurb she can share with the Mayor's office.

Potential Micromobility Forum

The group decides to first have a group ride with regional advocates before deciding to plan a forum.

Miscellaneous Events

Devine mentions the upcoming Drive Electric Event at Beverly High School on Saturday, September 23. It is an opportunity for people to showcase their electric vehicle, whether a car, bike, scooter, or something else. Devine will provide information by email for people who wish to register to showcase an electric vehicle.

Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data, Promotion, and Expansion

Document reviews: Salem Bluebikes Data through 8/31/2023 (slide deck)

Devine presents ridership data for August which was substantially higher than last year but lower than last month. The group discusses the low ridership at the Community Life Center station. Nagle suggests that if a station is moved, it should be moved near the High School. Wathne wishes to see demographic data of riders. The group also discusses encouraging the hospital to embrace bikes.

Devine reports that the Mayor is interested in repeating last year's free October Bluebikes membership for residents and depending on funding may extend it to Salem workers. The group discusses whether there should be bikes added to the system in October. Devine states that he doesn't see that as an option, especially considering how it would result in fewer empty docks to lock a bike. However, Bluebikes has offered bike valet service in the past to help with the high circulation of bikes in October.

Bike Parking Ordinance

The group agrees to table this item until the September 6 meeting.

Bike Parking at Food Stores

To follow up on last month's discussion regarding the lack of bike parking at stores on Highland Ave., Devine reports that data supports the committee's perception. A few years ago, the City studied access to food stores and found that almost none had bike parking. Wathne wishes to issue a letter to owners and management.

Staff Update

Devine provides the following updates:

- Devine has been working with the Traffic & Parking Department to prioritize locations for additional bike racks, with a focus on North Street, Bridge Street, and downtown. In the downtown, where there is competing demand for sidewalk space, additional parking meter racks will be added.
- The City's contractor will be adding two crosswalks on North Street soon. The Traffic & Parking Department still needs time before presenting North Street data. They've wanted a year of operations to occur first, but the crash data is preliminary even after the year. The Bluebikes data for the North Station is available and an intern did bike counts on some Sundays.
- Devine says there is a series of projects that the committee saw at earlier design levels that will be back to the committee as design advances. These include Bridge Street (Flint St. to Washington St.), Highland Ave., Lafayette Street (West Ave. to Marblehead line), and Boston St. Heaps asks Devine to report at a future meeting on work to restripe existing bike lanes.

Meeting Minutes

Ryan motions, Downie seconds, and all vote in favor to approve the 5/3/2023 6/7/2023 meeting minutes.

Adjourn

Downie motions, Ryan seconds, and all vote in favor to adjourn at 8:22 p.m.

Approved by the Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee on 12/6/2023.