

**Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
February Meeting Minutes
Friday, February 13, 2015
Maryland Department of Transportation
Hanover, Maryland**

Members Present

Robert Gaston
Deborah Grinnage-Pulley
Scott Hansen
Greg W. Hinchliffe
Jon Morrison
Erin Penniston
Kevin Racine
Carl Rebele
Fred Shaffer
Patrick Sheehan
Jennifer Terrasa
James G. Titus
Cari Watrous
John Z. Wetmore

Michael E. Jackson (staff)

Visitors Present

Stephen Ashurst
Emily Ranson, Bike Maryland

Acting Chair Greg Hinchliffe called the meeting to order at 9:39 AM

1. Approval of the December 2014 meeting minutes

Carl Rebele moved and Cari Watrous seconded his motion to approve the December meeting minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Subcommittee Reports

A. Tourism and Product Development – Absent subcommittee chair Dick Cushwa submitted a written report prior to the meeting. Carl discussed the October 2014 revised SHA Bicycle Map and praised its design. He advocated use of the color coded lines on the map showing suitability of bikeways and trails and distributed map legends for from the revised bicycle map and from the Wisp ski resort to illustrate his point. Carl also urged everyone to attend the Statewide Trails Conference hosted by the Department of Natural Resources next month.

Members Absent

Steve Carr
Richard Cushwa
Marci Ross
Michael Tagliaferri

Bob Gaston reported he has been focused on trail development issues in Cecil and Harford counties as well as similar activities in adjacent areas of Pennsylvania and Delaware. He expects the DNR Trail Summit to discuss redesigning and improving trail systems. Bob would like to see a regional overview of trails in Cecil County and adjacent counties in Pennsylvania and Delaware and to see greater coordination of on-road bikeways between Cecil County and adjacent New Castle County, Delaware.

Following a discussion about the new leadership in Annapolis and at the Maryland Department of Transportation Greg proposed that MBPAC send letters of welcome to Governor Larry Hogan and MDOT Secretary-designate Pete K. Rahn. Jim Titus moved and Cari seconded his motion that MBPAC sent these letters. Cari urged that the letter of welcome not be sent to Secretary-designate Rahn until he is confirmed by the Maryland Senate. Michael Jackson noted that the State Highway Administration had agreed to fabricate US Bicycle Route 11 signs and posts for this recently approved bikeway in Washington County.

B. Commuting and Transportation – Subcommittee chair Greg Hinchliffe submitted a written report. Jim asked Kevin Racine, a Havre de Grace resident, if a sidewalk once existed on the Hatem Bridge noting there is a sidewalk along the south side of US 40 leading up to the western side of the bridge. Carl recommended that Jim ask the SHA district engineer rather than Kevin.

Jim reported that SHA and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission – Prince George’s County are having discussions on which agency would take responsibility of a proposed extension of the WB&A Trail that SHA might construct within the right-of-way of MD 704/Martin Luther King, Jr. Highway between the current western terminus of the trail and the District of Columbia line in Seat Pleasant. There was also a discussion about the issue of “free range children” and whether an on-going child protective services investigation of parents who allowed their minor children to walk without adult supervision conflicts with state and federal initiatives promoting walking among youth. MBPAC’s Legislative and Government Affairs and Education and Awareness subcommittees are to meet to discuss free range children in more detail at a time yet to be determined.

Kevin attended a MARC meeting in Perryville. During this meeting it was noted that a vacant spot within MARC’s rail maintenance facility was proposed as being suitable for a “bicycle park” where touring bicyclists passersby could stop and relax and do bicycle maintenance. In response to a question, Kevin noted that the location of the proposed bicycle park was not adjacent to the Perryville MARC station. Lacking proximity to the MARC station there was consensus that the proposed bike park would not be attractive to touring bicyclists. Scott Hansen reported on updates to the transit oriented development map he has been working on at the Maryland Department of Planning. The link to this map is <http://mdpgis.mdp.state.md.us/tod/index.html>.

Greg said he has been busy fielding media interviews in the past few weeks in his role as interim Executive Director of Baltimore’s bicycle advocacy group, Bikemore. One of those interviews was with the “Today Show” which pictured him leaving flowers on the crash site where a bicyclist was killed by an errant Episcopal bishop motorist in Baltimore City last December. Greg led a group of 1,000 bicyclists to the crash site. Bike Maryland and Bike AAA have been working with SHA to address Linthicum community concerns over a proposed bikeway along MD 170 at the I-695 interchange. He has attended numerous additional bicycle and pedestrian related meetings between Baltimore City and Havre de Grace.

C. Education and Awareness – E&A subcommittee chair Erin Penniston submitted a written report. She noted that E&A subcommittee member Deborah Grinnage-Pulley, Michael and herself had worked on drafting a new E&A annual work plan. Erin described its features and said it was not yet finalized. The subcommittee report provided information on the Street Wize Foundation’s community bicycle program, provided a link to a report regarding best practices relating to sidewalk, trail and protected bike lane maintenance and news that America Walks has a redesigned website for 2015 among other items. Michael described a Howard County Department of Aging program that promotes bicycling among older adults, called Cycle 2 Life.

D. Legislative and Government Affairs – L&GA subcommittee chair Jon Morrison submitted a written report. He identified three unique bills affecting bicyclists and pedestrians, HB 300, HB 540/SB 371 and SB 547. HB 300 would require a study of transportation modes used to access and exit Metrorail stations. Jon said the study does not include analyzing use of bicycles among the travel modes to be studied. Jon asked the bill’s sponsor to amend by adding bicycles to the travel modes under study.

HB 540/SB371 would require SHA to accept or decline requests from local governments to create Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas within one year of the date of the requests. SB 547 would require vehicles overtaking and passing bicyclists, motor scooter and EPAMD operators to slow to a safe speed and removes an existing exception to the general rule that overtaking vehicles must provide 3 feet of clearance by eliminating the exception of inadequate roadway width. Jon noted that Delegate Aruna Miller may introduce a bill permitting crossing of double yellow center lines when safe to do so in order for overtaking vehicle operators to provide 3 feet of clearance when passing bicyclists. It was noted that Bike Maryland in the past has opposed legislation allowing crossing of the double yellow center line to pass by 3 feet of clearance. Cari, who grew up in Pennsylvania, said that driver education students were taught to cross double yellow lines when safe to do so to pass bicyclists safely.

Jon will try to get legislation introduced that would render flashing white and red lights on bicycles legal. He noted that Public Service Commission (PSC) hearings regarding the merger of the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) with Exelon are winding down with nothing to report regarding the effort to get PEPCO to permit the construction of shared use paths along their utility rights of way. John said PEPCO will likely ask the PSC to ignore the trail access question as not being germane to merger discussions. Jon would like to get together with Erin regarding the free range children issue. John heard about a legislative proposal that would prohibit moving funds currently dedicated to the construction of the proposed Purple and Red light rail lines to pay for highway projects.

3. Video Shorts Presentation

Greg showed two short videos, the first one called Xtra Normal which featured a fictional conversation between a traffic engineer and a concerned citizen who questions the highway department’s rationale for a roadway reconstruction project that appears to ruin the existing bucolic nature of the roadway in question. The second video featured the virtues of electric assisted cargo bicycles from the perspective of a mother of young children who happily pedals several delighted children through their neighborhood.

4. Other Business

John said it appears likely that Congress will approve another short term extension of the federal transportation funding authorization but expects proposals to eliminate funding for transit and bicycling. Michael said he posed a question about bicycling to US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx during a question and answer session last month at the annual Transportation Research Board conference. Secretary Foxx affirmed that bicyclists and pedestrians are part of the transportation mix and he predicted that the percentage of commuters traveling by bicycle and on foot would dramatically increase in the not so distant future.

Jim provided report findings which said Maryland had the second highest rate of transit usage in the nation, behind Massachusetts and New York State which are tied for first place. Erin asked Jim for the data sources and Jim responded that he would do so. Kevin said many newcomers who relocated to Harford County as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions are disappointed with the lack of public transit options compared to those offered in their former communities.

5. Public Comment

Emily Ranson of Bike Maryland announced that the annual Bicycle Legislative Symposium will be held in Annapolis on March 17 which will start later in the day than previous symposiums and will end with a Happy Hour event.

6. Adjournment

Greg entertained a motion to adjourn at 11:30 AM which was unanimously approved.