

West Hartford Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission Monthly Meeting Minutes

Tuesday November 12, 2024, 7:00 PM

Room 400, Town Hall

1. Call to Order, Attendance 7:00pm

Ed Pawlak, Jen Bowman, Jill Morawski, John Wenz, Andrea Belli, Tristan Sokol

2. Introductions

4 community members present

3. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

After a small change the revised minutes were approved unanimously

4. Old Business

a. Trout Brook Trail safety signs/markings project update

John met with Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure Services, and heard a positive response including indications that we would be invited to a future meeting on the topic. Discussion comparing trails in NY, Farmington Valley, and the different signage and experiences people have. It is noted that the PBC was not consulted with the design of signage of Trout Brook Trail. The lack of guard rail on Phase 3 was discussed and the options for pedestrian safety including the planned flex posts, or planters.

b. Park Road recommended bike racks

Following our recommendations, Greg Sommer said that not all of the locations would be suitable for bike hitches due to a narrow right-of-way, though the bumpouts could be good options.

c. Google Docs questions for Town Manager and Town Engineer

Some questions have been submitted, and more questions are welcome. Ed will send the questions to Town Manager and Town Engineer prior to our December meeting. The new Center plan was brought up, with concern around the diagonal parking and bike/pedestrian safety. Some commission members feel strongly that the town could do much better with the process and outcomes. Some confusion around the design direction plans, and when/who they were made available to. Further discussion was tabled for the next meeting with the Town Manager and Town Engineer.

5. New Business

a. 2025 Meeting Calendar

13 Jan, 10 Feb, 10 March, 7 April (moved for WH schools spring break), 12 May, 9 June, 14 July, (August Recess) 18 Sept, 14th Oct, 10th Nov, 8th Dec

b. Planning West Hartford-Farmington bicycle connectivity

Alan Blasenstein presented on the Farmington Valley Trails Council. Trail connectivity is in discussions from Farmington to West Hartford, and West Hartford could make some connections going west towards Farmington and getting access to the Farmington Valley trail network could open up quite a bit of new trail network via the East Coast Greenway. Alan is hoping to recruit one or more PBC commissioners for a committee to explore the options, his number is 860 798 3369. Creating this group as a subcommittee of the PBC was posed as an idea. John, Tristan, Jill volunteered for the subcommittee.

c. Engineering/Vision Zero update

Ed had a phone call with Greg Sommer on Nov 6: Bicycle facility plan is going to the CPED committee on November 20th, and is expected to be approved with discussion. Another road safety audit on the north end of New Park Ave is planned later that day. New Park Ave complete streets and road diet design by VHB is nearing completion, the Town is hopeful that next spring's construction season could be the start. 240 reflective signal backplates are being installed at 33 intersections. Additional Accessible Pedestrian Signals are being installed, including intersection of Boulevard and S Quaker. A pedestrian signal at that intersection is an exciting update for some community members. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons will be installed at unsignalized crosswalks. 3 raised crosswalks have been installed and seem to be very effective. The road diet on New Britain Avenue from the Hartford line to South Rd was installed by the DOT, there is an opportunity to make the shoulder area that has been created to become bike lanes with support from the Town. Town is exploring feasibility of bike lanes on New Britain Ave. and Newington Road (both state roads).

d. P&Z update

2 projects have bike and pedestrian impacts: The University of Hartford property and The Holiday independent living facility. No applications have been submitted to town.

e. Reports from Hoboken, NJ Vision Zero and Naples, FL - tabled

f. UConn T2 Center Pedestrian Safety Workshop 8/29/24 highlights – tabled

6. Around Town

Community members discussed the Bishops Corner redesign. Concern is brought about if the slip lanes are taken out, then more traffic would create increased behavior that is even more unsafe. Proposal for moving the pedestrian crosswalk out of the intersection. Discussion ensued about how the slip lane cross walks are very dangerous for pedestrians.

7. From the Library

8. Announcements

Discussion around the pedestrian killed last week at intersection of Oakwood Avenue and St. James Street, and how darkness contributes to pedestrian danger.

9. 12/9/2024 PBC meeting - email items you would like included on the agenda to Ed Pawlak (ecosys88@gmail.com)

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned unanimously at 8:34pm