

## Meeting Minutes

### Salem Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee

Wednesday, July 19, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

City Hall Annex 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room & Via Remote Participation

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

**Members Absent:** Connor Ryan, Josh Gillis

**Also Present:** Tom Devine, Senior Planner

#### Call Meeting to Order

Caruso opens the meeting in Wathne's absence.

#### Public Comments

Caruso opens the meeting to public comment and there are none.

#### Summer School Bike Curriculum

Salem Public Schools first grade teacher speaks about the summer school bike curriculum for students entering 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and some 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The program is adapted from Boston's curriculum and they cover what makes a city a safe for bikes. They welcome visitors into the school to discuss bikes. The program runs through August 11. Devine will connect Michelle Grundy with committee members interested in participating as well as with a contact at the police.

Wathne joins the meeting and presides over the meeting.

#### Promoting Biking Through Social Media

Colleen Downie is exploring ways to promote biking through City social media channels and will have an update when she is present next month.

#### Staff Update

Devine provides the following updates:

- To celebrate National Drive to Work Week, there will be an event in Beverly to demonstrate electric vehicles. They welcome people who wish to demo any kind of EV, including an electric bike, to participate. It is September 23 at Beverly High School.

- There is preliminary North Street data, but the Traffic & Parking Department wishes to present it at a joint meeting after one year post-improvements. Wathne reiterates that the Committee is very interested in this data.

### **Bike Parking Ordinance**

Wolf has volunteered to help move this forward. The Committee reviewed the example ordinance provided by former member Eric Papetti, but there is more work to do. Wathne asks if Wolf will communicate with Councilor Cohen. Devine says he will keep the councilor informed and he may end up coming to a future meeting, since he might be the one who ultimately sponsors it when it is submitted to the City Council. Heaps asks for a short explanation of this work and Devine summarizes it. Nagle asks how the committee can support Wolf. Wolf says she needs any and all support.

### **Bluebikes Bikeshare Program Data, Promotion, and Expansion**

*Document reviewed: Salem Bluebikes Data Through 6/30/2023, slide deck.*

Devine presents the June Bluebikes data. As usual, year over year ridership has increased. But July had higher ridership than June. Members note that it rained often in June. The group discusses bikes that go missing and stray from the system. Heaps asks if there is data on lost bikes. Devine says the number is higher than they want to see. There are 20 or so missing bikes at this time. The city will coordinate with Bluebikes to minimize this.

Wathne asks about e-bikes and whether it is a better financial model. Devine says Boston and Cambridge are continuing planning to add e-bikes to the core of the system with something like 15% of their fleet. E-bikes can earn more money so there is potential to reduce the required subsidies for Salem. Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, with their very high ridership in the current system, actually receive a portion of rider revenue. But outlying municipalities like Salem, where ridership is never as high as in the core, have to subsidize the operations. This may shift some amount with e-bikes. Wathne wonders about other communities joining the system with e-bikes being able to more easily cover longer distances. Caruso asks if e-bikes would be through a separate membership. Devine says it was a two-tiered system he used in Vancouver. Wathne says the e-bike cost when he used it in Providence was much higher than pedal bike cost.

Heaps asks if higher costs would reduce ridership and whether we should consider a higher price to better cover the cost. Devine says that Salem, as one community among many in the Bluebikes system, doesn't get to set the system's pricing. But if the city desired to, it could subsidize the cost of memberships for, say, Salem residents. Devine says that Salem's system is essentially subsidized by the single rides and day passes tourists buy, which provide more revenue to the system but less value to the rider compared to monthly and annual passes.

Seiferth joins the meeting.

Caruso suggests the program should be promoted through the materials that are sent to new residents. Heaps suggests reviewing data showing the breakdown of riders by tourists versus students and residents.

### **New Members**

New members Nagle and Heaps introduce themselves.

### **Meeting Minutes**

Caruso motions, Wolf seconds, and all vote in favor to approve the 3/16/2023 meeting minutes.

### **Safety Classes**

Seiferth spoke with Galen Mook, the Executive Director of MassBike, who shared resources about bike classes. They will provide classes for about \$500, including instructors and insurance. This can also be done through the Safe Routes to School program. There is also a program through the League of American Bicyclists. She asks if there is budget for this. Maranto says she volunteered last year at the MassBike class at the Community Life Center. Nagle says Christine Madore is involved in a bike bus to school.

### **Adjourn**

Caruso motions, Wolf seconds, and all vote in favor to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.

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Approved by the Bicycling & Shared Path Advisory Committee on 10/4/2023.