

**STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH**

December 9, 2011

The Streets and Transportation Committee Meeting of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Chair Pat Coluzzi on Friday, December 9, 2011 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Pat Coluzzi, Lorraine Zellers, Kathy Osterholm (arrived at 11:10 a.m.), Jim Ellison, John Gauger, Dennis Diehl left meeting at 10:53 a.m.

Absent: Cindy Lovett

Audience: Tom Zellers, David Hastings of Jolley Trolley

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Bill Sargent made a motion, seconded by John Gauger, to approve the Agenda with the deletion of Approval of Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the October 31, 2011 Streets and Transportation Committee Meeting were not available for approval.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

Discuss a snow removal policy.

Pat has spoken with Mel Craig since the last meeting. Mel will be putting a memo together from the Public Works Department's with its recommendations for the Committee to review with regard to snow removal. The issue is where the piles of snow are located such as the intersections, sidewalks, etc.

Kathy suggested that the City not use salt in a snow event. Kathy will send a memo to the Chair noting that she had reviewed ordinances and policies from several seaside municipalities which use sand, crushed ash, etc. which is not detrimental to the waters. Pat said that the Committee needs to talk with Mel and Greg Ferrese with regard to when salt is used, if there is a policy with using salt, etc.

Lorraine noted that many of the ordinances were similar with 24 hour removal of snow, etc. by the homeowners which would be an issue for the City. This issue would need to be discussed with regard to establishing a policy..

Kathy said that everyone in the City should have at least one off-street parking space. Downtown parking and walking is the key issue in a snow event.

John noted that the Public Works Department has been putting a coating (brine) on the streets before the snow event occurs.

Bill did not think the Committee should be overly concerned about the use of salt because the City gets a lot of ocean spray. He is against something that would harm the lakes but on the other hand this is minor. Bill was not sure he would want a policy to exclude the use of salt if it is cheaper and leaves the City with cleaner roads. Putting sand down on the roads has to be cleaned up. Get Mel in here.

Pat said that the plan for next time is for Mel to be in attendance at the meeting to discuss his idea of what to do with the snow in terms of plowing, etc.

Discuss the options for planting flowers in the City.

Lorraine gave a presentation of "Rehoboth in Bloom", the feasibility of a city-wide beautification program. At the last Committee meeting, Lorraine and Kathy were charged with a fact finding mission of Lewes in Bloom. The mission of Lewes in Bloom is to promote the beautification and maintenance of Historic Lewes and the community at large. By doing so, historical preservation, urban forestry, environmental awareness and wide-ranging community involvement, in addition to floral displays and landscaping are enhanced for everyone's enjoyment.

Lorraine had spoken with the president of Lewes in Bloom and had gone to the 10th anniversary luncheon. Lewes in Bloom started 10 years ago with Warren Goldie and seven volunteers. They did the planters/barrels on Second Street, 1812 Park and St. Peter's Church. The inspiration was by going through the quaint towns be-decked with flowers while on a trip to Europe. Subsequently, Lewes in Bloom has become winners of America in Bloom competitions in 2003, 2005 and 2010. How this was done was with buy in from the Chamber of Commerce, Council and Parks & Recreation. The City of Lewes is the main financial supporter. Lewes in Bloom is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization for fundraising efforts. A membership drive was done in 2011 to the residents and businesses which helps to defray any shortfall. Lewes in Bloom participated in the America in Bloom initiative. The mission of America in Bloom is to promote nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements. America in Bloom is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It is a non-profit, volunteer-supported organization which was started by a group of floriculture businessmen to help industry and was patterned after French, British and Canadian programs. America in Bloom provides a framework for continuous improvements in communities which programs such as quality of life program, community improvement program, civic pride and community involvement program, educational and community engagement program, acts as a catalyst, provides inspiration and is a tool, and sponsors friendly competition. This would be a great project for the City. It fosters volunteerism in the community and promotes collaboration between neighborhoods, businesses and organizations. This would also be applicable to other projects such as the beautification of Baltimore and Wilmington Avenues, urban forestry (park maintenance, clean-up), lake preservation (buffers, rain gardens) and historic preservation. The financial breakdown for Lewes in Bloom is that Council provided \$9,000.00 to \$10,000.00 annually. Watering is a major expense in the amount of \$8,000.00. Volunteers have been replaced by a paid volunteer who has a truck with a water tank. The plants, soil, fertilizer, moss liners, planters cost \$3,000.00. First year startup expenses could be considerable for planters, hayracks, tiered from \$25.00 to \$200.00 depending on the size, type and number. The next step would be to have discussion and get input from Committee members to determine what the suggested projects would be such as City parks, Lake Gerar bridge, etc. The greatest difficulty would be to get volunteers and have a point person. The mechanism of operation would be to decide if it is City run, volunteer based with the Committee and/or Parks & Shade Tree Commission oversight, or contractor based, i.e. Sposato. Lorraine has talked with people on the street, and there seems to be interest among the residents. She has also talked with Main Street which thinks this may be a great program and would be willing to be part of it. Grants are available for programs such as this.

Pat noted that since Sposato has a contract as the landscaper for the City, the watering for this project could possibly be included in that contract. This program could be championed by Main Street. Pat has made it an initiative for the Farmers' Market to help beautify Grove Park. There is money available from the Farmers' Market to move forward with doing some things in Grove Park. One of the members of the Board for the Farmers' Market is interested in this program and is a master gardener. The project at Grove Park could possibly be a City project. Pat has talked with Greg about a possible matching grant with the Farmers' Market and the City.

Bill said that the tree initiative could be wrapped into this project. He knows of a person who would like to have a role in creating a donor program in the City such as with Baltimore where the campaign generated over \$2,000,000.00 for trees.

Kathy said that the Boardwalk is the most visible place in the City where people are constantly walking. The streets ends that meet the Boardwalk are inconsistent with what is/is not planted. She suggested having a project to adopt a street or street end at the Boardwalk where people could volunteer to put plants in with the idea that there could possibly be matching funds.

Pat has talked with Ned Kesmodel of the Parks & Shade Tree Commission about pulling members of the Commission to help with this project. It was suggested that this matter should be discussed at a Commissioners' meeting to reach consensus for the Streets & Transportation Committee to have a sub-committee that will pull people from Parks & Shade Tree Commission with regard to the beautification projects.

Jim Ellison made a motion, seconded by Lorraine Zellers to form a sub-committee with the co-chairs being Lorraine and Bill, and that interested members can be drawn from Parks & Shade Tree Commission on an informal basis after having notified the Commissioners. Motion carried unanimously.

Bill noted that the buffer which is mostly non-flowering plants has been cut down around Lake Gerar, and he thought of what could be done with wildflowers. Lorraine said that complaints have been received from people who live around the park side about how tall everything was growing, etc. The same issue was occurring at the playground at Stockley Street. A meeting was held with Greg, Todd and Lorraine about these issues. Todd would be willing to give a presentation to the committee. Wildflowers have been planted in different stages.

Pat said that Sally Boswell who works at the Center for Inland Bays has started the effort of rain gardens in this area. This is another idea to look into, and there may be possible funding for it. One of the areas that could be beautified is the east parking lot beside the Convention Center. A rain garden could be put in at the water tower. Pat would also like to see baskets at the bridges coming into the City. Approval would be needed from DeDOT. The sub-committee should be convened before the next Committee meeting. It should come up with a project and a budget.

This item will be placed under Committee Reports on the Agenda for the next Commissioners' Regular Meeting.

Review data from Public Meeting held on November 19, 2011.

Pat noted that the Public Meeting for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan was held on November 19, 2011. A number of documents - Findings, Challenges, Vision and Goals resulted from this meeting. The top five pedestrian and bicycle challenges identified and prioritized by the public were: 1. Lack of east-west bike route other than Rehoboth Avenue. 2. Education of tourists and residents. 3. Silver Lake Bridge – speed of traffic, closeness of passing traffic and crossing bridge in general. 4. Scarborough Avenue/Schoolvue connectivity. 5. Crossing Route 1 from west to get to Rehoboth.

Kathy voiced concern that some streets were not correctly identified and about the measures for goals. She suggested choosing a best measure for each goal. More information was gotten from the public meeting than from the interviews that Delaware Greenways did initially. Information needs to be given to people that has to be used in sequence such as with first showing parking, then showing walking and biking. People who come into the City will first need to know where to park. Maps have already been done to get to places. Coordination is needed of what is currently out there with regard to bike safety, maps, etc. There is nothing mentioned in Technical Memorandum No. 2 of the creation of policies and procedures for using bicycles, mopeds and scooters in the City. There is nothing mentioned about creating bike lanes or the number and placement of bike racks. Kathy suggested creating fewer goals by combining goals. There is a perception that the goals were based on the tallies from the public meeting.

Bill said that Technical Memorandum No. 2 is too loose. The challenges Jeff Greene has noted should be the findings. In regard to findings, first it should be said that Rehoboth is potentially very dangerous for many bicycle riders, and the problems should be noted that the dangers particularly occur in the downtown area on Rehoboth Avenue and are dangerous for young riders because they cannot handle the traffic. A strong statement should be made about the dangers. The second finding is that it is not clear to people of where they can ride their bicycles. There should be guidance to make it clear where people should go. With regard to the third finding, it will be very hard to put in bicycle lanes in the City. The fourth finding is that it is difficult to go between neighborhoods without crossing areas of significant danger. Each of the findings that have been listed provides important information but it is not stated in a straightforward way. The public meeting provided confirmation of the problems that the technical findings show. The technical diagrams weakened the document. In regard to the vision, Delaware Greenways made a weak case that its vision flowed from the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). The vision should be removed from the document. Bill suggested having six goals instead of ten. Goal No. 1 - Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. No. 2 – Encourage biking and walking. No. 3 – Improve connections within Rehoboth Beach and to the region's trails and parks. No. 4. – Promote and enhance the role of sidewalks and streets as a public space should be eliminated. No. 5 – Increase the connectivity is the same as No. 3. No. 6 - Publicize bicycle routes that are enjoyable and relatively safe. No. 7 – Make bicycling safer and more fun it will become increasingly a good way to get around. No. 8 – Monitor and update on a defined scheduled should be eliminated. No. 9 – Gain recognition as a bike friendly city. No. 10 – Educate motorists. Bill was unhappy with the measures because so many of them are not really measurable.

Jim Ellison voiced concern that there has not been any change at all. There is a larger issue than just the number of goals or the public. Twenty-two out of the 29 measures are actually strategies. Goals are not measurable, but strategies are. The recommendations are missing. He would be willing to play a role in challenging the goals. What needs to be taken back to Delaware Greenways is a revised, sharpened and reduced list of goals with some instruction that the Committee needs to have it.

Jim and Bill will meet on five or six goals and examples of strategies for accomplishing those goals. This document will be forwarded to the Committee members for feedback. A meeting will be held on December 19, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. with Pat, Jim and Bill and Jeff, Mark and Christine of Delaware Greenways with regard to instructing them on how the Committee would like to see the plan.

Discussion ensued as to having a plan in place on how to get to the Breakwater Trail and Gordon's Pond, signage, safety, connectivity, etc. Bill said that an important finding is that Columbia Avenue is a narrow, heavily

used street which is not conducive for bicycling. Kathy said that a bike path is needed on either Columbia or Henlopen Avenues. It was noted that a couple of signs on Henlopen Avenue for bike riding would not be a big deal. There should be signs on Columbia Avenue directing bicyclists to go on Grove Street to get to Henlopen Avenue. The shoulders of Columbia Avenue should be paved. A safe side of those roads is needed for walkers or bikers to use. Either Columbia or Henlopen Avenue would be the perfect place to use a green pathway. The real issue is the degree to which the City tries to solve the problem. A suggestion was made to make Columbia Avenue one-way going east and Henlopen Avenue one-way going west with bike lanes. A traffic study could be done to see if this idea would work. If the first and second streets away from Rehoboth Avenue would be changed to one-way streets, parking would still be maintained on both sides of those streets; but this would allow room for bikes, carriages, strollers and pedestrians.

David Hastings said that making parking areas less crowded could create more speed and more problems, particularly on Columbia and Henlopen Avenues. The more congestion, the safer a person is because everyone is more aware. Discouraging cars would not be the best public relations move, but through time it may be the best way to get vehicles off the street. There are a lot of options with public transportation.

Discuss items to be included on future agendas.

Items to be included on future agendas: The Rehoboth in Bloom sub-committee will determine a meeting date and time for its initial meeting. The sub-committee report for City beautification will be placed on the next Committee agenda. The result of the Delaware Greenways meeting will be placed on the next Committee agenda. John Gauger will be working on drafting a policy/ordinance on political signs to be placed on the February or March agenda. Discussion of a snow removal policy will be placed on the next agenda. Dennis Diehl will forward an email to the Committee regarding the white striping at the circle and additional crosswalks on Rehoboth Avenue which will be discussed at the Delaware Greenways meeting. Discuss a pilot project with regard to putting up pedestrian crossing signs at the circle will be placed on a future agenda of the Commissioners. The consensus of the Committee was for Greg to order them for a pilot project at the circle.

Set next meeting.

The next meeting has been scheduled for January 13, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

There being no further business, Chair Pat Coluzzi declared the meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Ann M. Womack, CMC, City Secretary)

**MINUTES APPROVED ON
FEBRUARY 3, 2012**

(Pat Coluzzi, Chair)