

Ellsworth Bicycle Pedestrian Committee Minutes Thursday, March 1, 2007

Attending:

Lee Beal, Ellsworth City Council
Cathy Kozaryn, Ellsworth Resident
Jef Fitzgerald, Ellsworth Deputy Planner
Maryann Locke, Recreation Commission
Candy Gammelin, Recreation Commission
Tom Stipe, URHC
Jane Freeman, URHC
Helena Peterson, URHC
Jim Fisher, HCPC
Heather Albert-Knopp, HCPC

Review of February 1, 2007 Meeting Minutes

- Question: How much can we draw on Dan Stewart, Maine DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator? His presentation was very useful and might be good for other committees and groups. Jim's response: Dan covers the whole state, but he's certainly happy to help us out as he's able and is especially interested in Ellsworth because of its key location.
- Motion to approve minutes – Lee
- Seconded – Cathy
- Approved as written

Coming Events

- Tuesday, March 27 – Maine Safe Routes to School Conference at Augusta Civic Center
- March 28-29 State Scenic Byways conference, including one day of focus on scenic view-sheds

Administrative Issues

- Chairperson needed for the committee; compiling the duties of a chairperson might help make it easier to recruit one.
- Also in the future a note-taker/secretary will likely be needed as well.

Origins and Destinations Mapping Activity

Jim Fisher brought two large maps of the city. The committee used markers to note the locations of neighborhoods, which would be the “origins” of many bike/pedestrian trips (orange); destinations including services, shopping, trails (pink); and current walking/biking routes (green). This information will be incorporated into committee maps and prioritization activities.

Additional notes from this activity:

- Transportation enhancement funds do exist for a bicycle/pedestrian connection between the High School and Spring Street along the rail line. There are several hundred thousand dollars available for such a project.
- Group agreed that bicycle/pedestrian mobility for high school students is a high priority, and that if current funds are available then this may be a key opportunity to seize.
- The route between the high school/Spring Street could also connect to the DeMyer Fields in Ellsworth Falls, and would link neighborhoods to these destinations. This could be a key first component of a bike/ped system for Ellsworth
- Middle school/new school area would be a good opportunity for a “Safe Routes to School” grant project. Currently 50% of students are dropped off by their parents (that doesn’t include the kids who ride the bus).

Summarize and Map Related Planning Documents

Comprehensive Plan

- Jef presented excerpts of the Ellsworth Comprehensive Plan, prepared by Michelle Gagnon. Those pieces related to biking and walking have been highlighted.
- Homework: committee members read these comp plan extracts.
- Visit www.cityofellsworthme.org/planning/compplan.htm

Ellsworth Waterfront Plan

- Jef presented maps and photos of the Waterfront redevelopment plan, including short-term and long-term improvements for the waterfront area including sidewalks, crossings, a park, and a waterfront trail.
- Funding is being sought to implement this plan.
- Elements of this plan should be incorporated into the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan
- Visit www.cityofellsworthme.org/planning/planning.htm - “Morrison Lot” link.

Ellsworth Community Health Plan

- Helena spoke to the Ellsworth Community Health Plan, which mentions recreation opportunities, increasing physical activity and being active, increasing social networking especially among elders, and the importance of safe and accessible transportation. All of these have relevance to the bike/ped committee.
- The Health Plan deals generally with these subjects but does not make specific recommendations for improvements in Ellsworth.
- See www.healthycom.org for more information

Downeast Sunrise Trail

- Jim presented on plans for this multi-use trail that will connect Ellsworth with Brewer and further downeast with Ayer’s Junction. This will be a rail-to-trail/rail-with-trail project. The portion that’s rail *with* trail, between Washington Junction and downtown Ellsworth, will be quite costly to create.

- For more information: <http://www.sunrisetrail.org>

Downeast Excursion Rail

- A planned excursion rail using the existing tracks between downtown Ellsworth and Green Lake.
- Plans are to have excursion rail services beginning in 2008 or later
- More information is available at www.downeastscenicrail.org

Strategic Transportation and Recreation (STAR) Center

- The proposed STAR Center would be a station for the excursion rail, a parking area, could be a bus station, could host Chamber of Commerce office, etc.
- Exact location not yet determined, will be located somewhere near the railroad tracks in downtown Ellsworth
- Currently planning a feasibility study to see if there's a market for this project – in process of seeking funds to pay for the study
- Information available at www.hpcme.org/landuse/ellsworth/STAR/

Acadia Gateway Center, Trenton

- Plans have been developed and some funds secured for an inter-modal facility. This will have parking for 400 cars, links to Acadia, etc.
- See www.acadiagatewaycenter.com for more information

DOT Long Range Plan

- Jim is involved with developing the long range plan, which is also used to develop a six-year plan for DOT – information will be forthcoming.

Parking Study for Downtown

- Ellsworth received a planning grant and is in process of hiring a consultant to do this. Information pending.

Vision, Goals and Objectives

Group reviewed the vision, goals and objectives that Heather revised based on input from last meeting.

- The committee agreed on the following draft Vision for 2030: *Ellsworth is a vibrant community with many inviting destinations, providing a safe and accessible transportation system for all users. People walk and bike daily for transportation and recreation. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are designed, encouraged and celebrated as indicators of a healthy community.*
- Add mention of aesthetics, quality of life, and health to mission statement
- Add mention of health under education and awareness goal
- Heather will revise to incorporate these suggestions prior to next meeting

Next Meetings:

Tuesday, March 13, 2007 – 5:30PM, Ellsworth City Hall Auditorium
Thursday, March 29, 2007 – 5:30PM, Ellsworth City Hall, Room TBA

Agenda for next meetings will include:

- Further refinement of draft goals, objectives, strategies – especially moving deeper into the “strategies” and proposed improvements
- Ellsworth Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan – Assembling the narrative portion

Homework for next meeting:

- Review documents from last meeting, including Ellsworth Comprehensive Plan
- Review revised “Goals, Objectives, Strategies” document
- Brainstorm: are there other potential “strategies” or bicycle/pedestrian improvements that should be added to the existing list?