



CITY OF COLUMBIA
BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)
October 10, 2022
4:30 PM

Richland Library Main Branch
Columbia, SC 29201

PAMELA BYNOE-REED • ZACH CAVANAUGH • DEREK DAVIS • CHRISTINA GALARDI • DOUGLAS GIOVANETTI
CARMEN LATIMER • JENNIFER LEAPHART • CYNTHIA WATSON • MARY SCOTT-CHANCEY WILLIAMS

In attendance: Zach Cavanaugh, Christina Galardi, Douglas Giovanetti, Carmen Latimer, Mary Scott-Chancey Williams

Absent: Pamela Bynoe-Reed, Derek Davis, Jennifer Leaphart, Cynthia Watson

Staff: Leigh DeForth, Dana Higgins, Shane Shaughnessy

Mayor Daniel Rickenmann, Eshana Young-Pierre, Blue Bike SC, Blake Gibbons, The COMET, and John Epting were also in attendance.

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chair Cavanaugh

Mr. Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 4:31pm with five members present to establish quorum.

II. REGULAR AGENDA

b. Meeting Minutes

- Approval of September minutes

Mr. Cavanaugh made a motion to approve the August minutes. Ms. Latimer seconded the motion.

As Mayor Rickenmann was running late, Committee members discussed item 2c, Open Streets briefly. A summary of the discussion regarding Open Streets that occurred prior to and after item 2a is included below.

Mayor Rickenmann entered the meeting at 4:35pm.

a. Welcome Mayor Rickenmann

Mr. Cavanaugh welcomed Mayor Rickenmann and opened the floor to questions.

Ms. Scott-Chancey Williams asked Mayor Rickenmann for clarification and direction concerning the mission of BPAC and how they could help the City. Mayor Rickenmann stated he was beginning to look

into the various City plans that had been developed over the years, particularly the East Central City Plan. He stated there were a number of plans in progress and conversations occurring. He highlighted conversations with SCDOT regarding the narrowing of N. Main Street between Elmwood Ave. and River Dr. and Gervais St. Additionally, he indicated SCDOT seemed more receptive to creative solutions to problems such as painted crosswalks and bike lanes. Mayor Rickenmann also stated the City had hired third party grant writers to go after State and Federal grant funds that were mostly application-based, rather than formula-based. He further stated that he was interested in getting donations from philanthropic partners such as the Boyd Foundation to help fund project implementation. He said that the State was expecting a surplus in next year's budget and that for projects to receive funding, they would likely need to be collaborative instead of individual efforts.

Mayor Rickenmann said that he would like for the BPAC to focus on things that could be implemented quickly and suggested the BPAC could come up with the top three priorities that could be achieved in this fiscal year.

Ms. Scott-Chancey Williams said she had seen some plans for the North Main corridor and liked what she had seen. She then asked Mayor Rickenmann what the status of the Neighborhood Slow Zones was. Mayor Rickenmann stated the City was working toward implementing the plan, and had received a study from Denver, which suggested that they use plastic speed humps which were easier to install and made less noise.

Mayor Rickenmann said that other priorities of his included: adding bumpouts to areas to help slow traffic and add parking; converting street parking into cycling and pedestrian areas next to sidewalks; increasing density and building up downtown living (he noted that approximately 3,000 people were living in downtown Columbia versus approximately 10,000 in downtown Charleston and Greenville); and cross-pollinating with the various universities in the area to make the City more diverse and walkable. Mayor Rickenmann also stated that Council wants to see existing City plans implemented.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked Mayor Rickenmann when new BPAC members would be appointed. Mayor Rickenmann said that the Council Committee that had been discussing the topic of appointments to City Boards and Commissions had recommended that appointments be made on a quarterly basis, with the next round of appointments in November.

Ms. Scott-Chancey Williams asked about the possibility of a grocery store in downtown. Mayor Rickenmann responded that he was interested in hiring third-party surveyors to approach grocery stores about that possibility. He stated that one of the main hurdles was the lack of density downtown, that the City was losing population, with Richland One losing 9% of its population due to people moving to Richland Two school district and wanting larger homes. He indicated that he felt that adding middle market housing such as townhomes and duplexes would help build the necessary density. He said that a neighborhood-sized grocery would be a possibility, potentially in the Bull Street development.

Ms. Young-Pierre asked if a bicycle and pedestrian planner position would be refunded. Mayor Rickenmann said that there had been conversations about possibly including it in the next year's budget but that the position would be split between tasks related to bike/ped planning and the completion of the 2014 ULI study.

Ms. Galardi asked about the role of BPAC in the execution of projects and plans and promoting biking and walking in Columbia. Mayor Rickenmann stated that he thought it was Council's job to promote the City but that BPAC should be involved in helping formulate new plans.

Ms. Scott-Chancey Williams asked about the status of the Vista Greenway, now that some funding for the expansion had been allocated. Ms. Higgins answered that the City was currently internally designing the greenway to extend to N. Main Street. Mayor Rickenmann noted the goal was to have the greenway eventually through Bull Street to Richland Memorial Hospital. He said that he said the SCDOT property where the greenway will be placed is a great opportunity for future mixed use developments in the vicinity of NOMA Gardens.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked about the status of the project on the former Jim Moore Cadillac dealership. Mayor Rickenmann said the developers were working on closing on the property. He said the City was working with the developers to add 75 public parking spaces to the development's parking garage and that the Middleton group had committed money to help improve the N. Main corridor. He said he envisions the N. Main Street corridor becoming similar to Howell Mill Road in Atlanta and an area good for small businesses and greater density.

Ms. Scott-Chancey Williams asked about Councilman Taylor's idea to get rid of fee-based rides on The COMET and if the City would have an appetite to help fund that effort. Mayor Rickenmann replied that the City had tried that with the Soda Cap Connector and that that had only accomplished ferrying homeless people from one end of town to the other. He indicated that there should be an effort to integrate The COMET into university campuses, rather than having individual shuttles from each housing complex moving students around. Mr. Gibbons stated that The COMET was working on improving its services, with a focus on reducing passenger confusion, increasing efficiency and reliability, removing duplicative services, and improving microtransit services.

Mayor Rickenmann stated that his goal was to increase density in downtown Columbia, and that he felt that modernizing design changes could help increase density. He said that the City had made zoning changes 20 years ago that they did not foresee the consequences of, and that he was interested in looking at the layers of design guidelines and working to open them up. Mayor Rickenmann said that he was excited about the plans to change Finlay Park that were developed by the City's Parks Planner Todd Martin, which included a flyover above Assembly Street which would connect pedestrians and bicyclists between Main Street and Finlay Park. The Mayor noted he was interested in connecting downtown Columbia to various neighborhoods and Riverbanks Zoo via painted bike lanes, and he believed that SCDOT would be willing to assist with that effort. He said this effort would be possible, especially if the City could collaborate with community partners such as CIU who have been organizing community clean-ups and philanthropic organizations such as Bloomberg.

Mr. Shaughnessy asked for clarification regarding the best way for BPAC to provide their three selected priorities to Council, and the Mayor indicated that a one page recommendation would be best.

Mr. Cavanaugh thanked Mayor Rickenmann for coming to the meeting and answering the Committee's questions. There being no further discussion, he then asked to move to the rest of the agenda.

c. Committee Reports

- Open Streets

Ms. Scott-Chancey Williams said that the Earlewood board was changing later in October and would solidify their annual calendar in November. She said that there was a 99% chance that after the calendar is approved that Open Streets would happen next Spring. She said they were looking at a smaller footprint, with a morning ride along a loop route and with the road closure along River Drive afterwards. There was some discussion of the possibility of the ride leading into the road closure, with roads to be closed as cyclists road by or into the area to be closed. Ms. DeForth asked if she had heard anything from the Greenview neighborhood who had been interested in hosting an Open Streets event, however Ms. Scott-

Chancey Williams said she had not heard back from the neighborhood's leadership, and the Mayor indicated that the neighborhood president had been out of town lately.

- Ambassador program

Ms. Galardi said that all of the materials about the program had been packaged and ready for next year's program and were located on the google drive for the BPAC gmail.

- Bike/ped tours/partnerships
- Marketing

There were no updates from either committee.

Ms. Young-Pierre said that there was a bicycling event at Segra Park on Saturday to celebrate Blue Bike's anniversary. She noted it would include a ride and a scavenger hunt and trivia quiz with prizes up for grabs, and she encouraged the members of BPAC to attend.

d. City Planning Update

Ms. DeForth began the planning update noting that the City had submitted an application for a grant via the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program for the Huger Connector portion of the project. Next, she said that SCDOT had awarded a bid for the South Main project. She then stated that SCDOT had finalized the transfer of the SC-277 project that would extend the Vista Greenway. Mr. Shaughnessy provided an update about the Fall Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts, noting that a number of volunteers had helped with the Fall counts, and that a report about CY2022 counts would be released soon. Ms. DeForth highlighted the opportunities to comment on SCDOT projects and plans and encouraged BPAC to participate. She provided an update about PARK(ing) Day, saying that 17 groups had participated, and that LS3P was awarded the People's Choice Award and BOUDREAUX won the juried Best Design Award, with the Capital City Shag Club receiving an honorable mention. Finally, Ms. DeForth noted the language regarding neighborhood slow zones in the update contained a link to Robert Anderson's presentation to Council.

Ms. DeForth noted that it was Ms. Galardi's last BPAC meeting as she would be rolling off the committee, and thanked her for her service. Ms. Galardi said she was happy to have been able to serve, and that since she moved to Columbia she had seen significant improvements and was sure there were more to come.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

V. ADJOURN

Mr. Cavanaugh made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Giovanetti. The meeting ended at 5:38pm.