

Morgantown Pedestrian Safety Board Meeting Minutes
Public Safety Building- Morgantown, WV
Monday, February 8, 2010

I. Call to Order by Chair Abildso at 4 pm.

II. Attendance: Chair Christiaan Abildso, Dave Harshbarger, Bob Anderson, George Lilly, Maria Smith, Jimmie Simmons, Matt Cross, Jon Bond, Stan Cohen, Don Spencer, Hugh Kerig, Bill Reger-Nash, Ella Belling

Guests: John Duarte, Donald Price, William Blosser

III. Review of Public Forum: Christiaan

1. Those that attended were largely from one of two groups:
 - a. *Property owners* in Morgantown that have installed their own sidewalk of their own volition or by city order. These people believe they are being unfairly taxed.
 - b. *Elderly* who are concerned about how they will be affected financially
2. Overall feeling: Very good idea in principal, but the funding needs modification; public concerns:
 - a. Prioritization of projects
 - b. Who will be in charge of the funding/planning?

Bill Reger-Nash-observation from the forum:

1. 8% of the population is 65 years of age, 65% of forum attendees from that age group
2. We must now address the 50 years of sidewalk infrastructure neglect

IV. After the Public Forum hosted by The Dominion Post, Bill, Christiaan and Don met with the City Manager Boroff, Mayor Byrne, and Councilman Spencer:

- 1) Mayor and City Manager did not see the "political will" to propose this fee now. They are willing to put more money into sidewalk budget
- 2) They proposed a systematic approach to include (1) City of Morgantown gateways, (2) cost sharing (30/70, 40/60, etc.) for select areas of the city where there is a demand for the installation of sidewalks. This cost sharing would leverage the investment of the city, (3) There is currently \$60,000 in the budget for traffic calming, and (4) the City is developing a mechanism to improve lighting (paid for by the financial savings associated with the new low-energy lighting), (5) Thermoplastic crosswalk markings are now possible, if we can obtain cooperation for the WV DOT.

V. Future of the Plan

1. Councilman Spencer developed key points from the forum to serve as guiding points:
 - 1) Current Pervasive Perceptions of Importance of Sidewalks
 - 2) Sampling of Existing City Sidewalk and Curb Ordinances
 - 3) Implications of Enforcing Existing Sidewalk and Curb Ordinances
 - 4) Improving Fairness in the New Plan Fee Assessment
 - 5) Implementation of Walkway, Walkway Lighting, and Traffic Calming Fee
 - 6) Property Owner and City Responsibilities
 - 7) Administration of Walkway Improvements
 - 8) Implementation of Improvements
 - 9) Ongoing roles of the Pedestrian Safety Plan...Traffic Calming Plan
 - 10) New Addition to Connecting Network Sidewalk Plan

2. Further, Councilman Spencer cited the
 - 1) Lack of support from rental property owners and seniors
 - 2) For an 80' lot, the current change would be \$1.53 a week, the equivalence of a half of a gallon of gas, which is wasted waiting in traffic
 - 3) Need for education campaign, we are not used to thinking of the value of sidewalks
 - a. Example: 'The rail trail'

VI. Bill Reger-Nash proposed using Transportation Enhancement Funds to develop a pedestrian safety/childhood obesity social marketing campaign in 2012. This extensive and comprehensive campaign would be similar to the 2005 WV Walks campaign, which realized a 12% increase in walking. Planning for the funding application would begin Fall 2010.

Matt Cross – appreciated the comment from Taylor Richmond during the forum re: WVU students told they shouldn't bring cars to campus but then face terrible walking conditions

Morgantown Pedestrian Safety Board Meeting Public portion 4:30-6pm

VII. Open Comment from public

1. John Duarte – presented letter to the Board, and indicated he studied the issues for up to 10 years and raised issues concerning the:
 - a. Legitimacy of the board, misrepresentation of membership
 - b. Pedestrian Safety Board did not obtain sufficient input from neighborhood associations and other special interest
 - c. Sidewalk obstructions: 1) Garbage cans, 2) Utility poles, 3) Mailboxes, and 4) parked vehicles
2. Further, Mr. Duarte indicated that he will not participate in helping the Pedestrian Safety Board due to the current composition of the board.
3. Dr. Jimmie Simmons wanted further clarification about the board's legitimacy, purpose, and failure to follow Robert's Rules of order for conducting the meetings.
4. Dr. Simmons made a motion: The Pedestrian Safety Board should not make a recommendation to the City Traffic Commission or City Council regarding funding for the Plan. There was no second to the motion and no further discussion.
5. Matt Cross believes we are servicing the public.
6. Stan Cohen indicated that we have successfully involved Morgantown Neighborhood Associations regarding the Pedestrian Safety Plan. He raised the further issue about how the Pedestrian Safety Plan, if adopted, will change the existing Morgantown City Code regarding sidewalks.
7. Don Spencer responded that the Plan as proposed does address the changes to the code and the transition period. Further, the 'fee' is being discussed because for a city in West Virginia, there are only 4 options available for funding the proposed plan. The Plan addresses immediate problems and connectivity around the city. Connectivity is a totally different mindset compared to the house-by-house sidewalk issue.

VIII. Meeting was adjourned at 5:15 to allow for written feedback on Sections 5 (Ped Infrastructure Plan), 6 (Project Priorities), and section 10/Appendix I (Funding) of the Pedestrian Safety Plan. Christiaan will collect and summarize these comments for discussion at the next meeting

VIII. Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 8th, 4-5:30 pm at the Public Safety Building

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jon Bond, Edited by Bill Reger-Nash, Approved and distributed by Christiaan Abildso