**Harwich Bikeways Committee Minutes**

**November 6, 2023 11:00 am**

**Held at the Harwich Community Center**

**Attendees** :

Fran Salewski, Chairman

Alain Ferry, Vice-Chairman

Charlene Pilon, Clerk

Paul Gazaille

Charles Walkley

The meeting was called to order at 11:10.

The Minutes of the Sept 19 meeting were approved.

**New Business**:

1. **Committee Vacancies**: The Committee has 2 vacancies. The Committee discussed how we might recruit new members. Paul suggested reaching out to the Chatham/Harwich Newcomers Club. Alain suggested posting on Facebook with a link to the Town of Harwich website Bikeways Committee page. It was agreed that we will start with Alain’s suggestion and hold on contacting the CHNC.
2. **Update on the Vulnerable Users Law**: Fran asked if any member had any updates. Paul contacted Lincoln re: the installation of the road signs. Lincoln expects delivery in Nov. with installation within the 90 day required time line. Fran asked if the Traffic & Safety Committee could be contacted re: the use of the large digital sign that was discussed at their meeting in July. Charlene agreed to contact the Chairman, Linda Cebula, to follow-up on that and to find out if our Committee can get advance notice of their next meeting. Fran contacted Julie Kavanaugh about the concept of putting a leaflet about the new law in the next tax bill mailings. Julie thought it was a good idea and was checking with Town Hall staff about the feasibility. Fran has not yet heard back from Julie. Using the MassDot leaflet that has been mailed out with RMV notices would likely not be feasible. Charlene will check with MassBike if they have a similar leaflet we can produce for the mailings.
3. **Update on the Bikeways Committee Charge**: Alain proposes that the Committee change its name to Harwich Bikeways and Pedestrian Committee. This would be consistent with committees in other towns such as Brewster and Sandwich. Our Committee would have a more comprehensive charge to include other recreational activities such as walking and running. In this way we foster and support increased usage of the OCRT for transportation and recreational activities, not just centered on safety and maintenance. Alain also envisions a connection to and support of the Recreation Committee as it pertains to cycling, walking and other trail activities. Before our Committee discusses this any further Charlie suggested we contact Julie Kavanaugh, our Select Board liasion, as our next step to clarify the process. Alain agreed to contact Julie.
4. **DCR Meeting re: Mass Trail Grants**: Alain informed the Committee about an upcoming information session on future trail grants on Wed. Nov. 15 at noon. Alain will be attending and will forward information to all Committee members with more details.
5. **Bill H3470**: Alain reported back to the Committee about his participation in providing input about this Bill that was discussed at the State House recently. The Bill that is being put forward will change the language of the current pedestrian crosswalk law to change the word pedestrian to vulnerable users so that any vulnerable user as defined by the new Vulnerable Users Law, including cyclists riding across roadway crossings along bikeways, will get the same consideration as pedestrians. In this way signs that state a cyclist must walk across a roadway crossing to require vehicles stop will be moot. Cyclists will however be required to stop at the stop signs before crossing. If this bill passes it is expected to go into effect in 2025. State Representative Tommy Vitolo sponsored the bill.
6. **Bike lights for J1 students**: The need to provide bike lights for J1 students was discussed. These students are often cycling home late at night without lights. Charlene brought up the MassBike Light Brigade program and if we could host an event to hand out lights. Paul will contact the Cindy Williams at the Chamber of Commerce for a contact name for the J1 program. Charlene will contact MassBike re: hosting an event. Alain suggested we consider the Harwich 5K (organized by the Chamber of Commerce) as a potential Light Brigade event here in town. He also mentioned the Tour de Barnstable (1st Sunday in June, now managed by Alain)as a better match but it’s not held in Harwich so would not be a Harwich Bikeways Committee effort.
7. **Trail Update**: Charlie recommended we contact Chatham Bikeways Committee to coordinate speed limit signage on the OCRT like those that are on the CCRT. Everyone agreed. Charlie will follow-up by contacting the Chairman of the Chatham Bikeways Commiittee. Paul sent photos to Lincoln about the serious cracks on the OCRT and is waiting to hear from Lincoln if anything can be done before the anticipated repaving in 4+ years. Also Paul sent Lincoln photos of trees and shrubs that need pruning and is waiting on a response. Charlie suggested Paul contact Falmouth DPW re: a machine that was used on the Shining Sea trail to smooth out cracks and share that information with Lincoln. This same info could be shared with the Friends of the CCRT and the new DCR superintendent, Susan Johnston (Eric’s replacement) at Susie.Johnston.ma.gov who attends the Friends meetings.
8. **Trail Maps**: Charlie and Paul recommend we remove maps on Nov. 1 each year as ridership is very low and rain ruins the maps. Everyone agreed.
9. **Next meeting**: Tues Dec. 19 at 11 am
10. Motion to adjourn at 12:12 pm.