



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County
MEETING MINUTES



Tuesday, December 4, 2018 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am
1st Floor Conference Room, Miller Building
2825 3rd Avenue North, Billings, MT 59101

APPROVED BY A MOTION JANUARY 22, 2019.

Call to order: Ed Gulick, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

Members present: Amber Sundsted, City Council; Zach Hassler, County; Liana Susott, County

Others present: Scott Walker, Transportation Planning Coordinator; Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner; Members of the Public: None.

Public Comment Period:

- a. **Comments on items not on the agenda and request to add items to future agendas –**
No public comment was made.
- b. **Comments on items on the non-public agenda items –** No public comment was made.

Motion. Approval of the meeting minutes of: September 25, 2018 and October 23, 2018:

Zach Hassler, BPAC member, motioned to approve the minutes of September 25, 2018. Liana Susott, BPAC Member, seconded. Ed Gulick, BPAC Chair, suggested the following amendments: Delete “is” in second paragraph of old business. Add “to take action” in 1st Avenue North section after “...suggested waiting a while.” Motion passed unanimously to adopt minutes as amended. Zach motioned to approve October 23, 2018 minutes, Amber seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Discussion Update. BPAC By-laws and membership – 2014 by-law edits were never adopted so BPAC is currently operating under amended by-laws from 2008. As a result, BPAC members suggested considering some revisions. Former City Administrator McCandless also suggested term lengths harmonize with other City Commissions. Impetus for changes in 2014, which were never adopted, was wordsmithing and adding term limits. An attendance section was put in as well.

During meeting, BPAC members did not see a reason to change membership. Representation from other entities makes sense to consider if BPAC is assigned extended responsibilities on funding. Members questioned having a seat set aside for non-elected bodies. Non-profits can comment during the public comment period.

Before the next meeting, Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, will have a track changes version started that has specific things in it that BPAC may want to change. These topics may include the process to amend the by-laws and the length of terms. Elyse will look at the term lengths in both the City and County.

Zach commented that it was nice to see BPAC duties. It was suggested that the BPAC duties could be used as an outline for the yearly update to governing bodies. BPAC members also expressed that they want to provide input in advance of projects. They could tackle one of the duties per meeting with speakers. Ed commented that duties are different than a work plan.

Discussion Update. Ability to report concerns and complaints on the City website –Street and Traffic complaint form has been updated to include a box for residents to check if they have a complaint or concern related to biking or walking. Complaints will get sent to Elyse. BPAC requested that Elyse create spread sheet with information from the form plus one added column to show if action was taken or not. Ed requested having this on the monthly agenda to read off if there are comments submitted online.

Discussion Update. Downtown bike parking. Have two rack left after the three racks are installed at the Court House. There was a request from the Parking Division for a rack between Toad and Willow and the McDonald Loft building on N. 29th St. There have been 12 requests total for racks, with 11 installed without applications for a total of 23. The bike parking account has \$550. Elyse expects to hear about the Tourism Grant on December 15. Ed received a \$240 donation for bike parking from Jeff Butts.

New Business:

Motion Recommendation. Educating City Lobbyist on the importance of giving 3 feet passing space. Bike Walk Montana has introduced legislation to give a safe passing distance to cyclists. Liana moved City lobby in support of 3 ft. passing space proposed legislation, Amber Sundsted, BPAC member, seconded. Discussion on the motion followed. Amber was not sure how successful it would be, but Ed said that maybe by educating now, it will help get the bill passed later on. Zach is not sure the law would make things safer for bicyclists because he believes infrastructure is more effective. Ed commented that right now there is not much for law enforcement to work with when there is an accident. After discussion, the motion passed unanimously. Check to see if Bike Walk Montana has paragraph about 3 ft. passing and send out to BPAC.

1st Avenue North Project. Scott Walker, Transportation Planning Coordinator, gave a presentation on the 1st Ave. N project, which is a major project in downtown Billings running from the Metra to Division Street. At first, it was put forward as a maintenance project. Scott was on oversight committee. MDT then decided to look at a full reconstruction project. Would have cost about \$2-3 million to restripe, redesign is more expensive. Scott saw the redesign drawings and there were no bike/pedestrian amenities at all. Bikeway and Trail and Transportation Plans say there should be bike facilities on 1st Ave. N. Scott asked MDT to reconsider including bike lanes. The consultant brought back plans with bike lanes from Division St. to N. 13th St. and sharrows from N. 13th St. to the Metra. The City Public Works Department was not in support of the idea. City/County Planning and City Public Works met with MDT again and looked at the project holistically. Lane widths are very wide which leads to faster traffic, and a bad bicycle and pedestrian experience. Instead of striping bike lanes, it was suggested to build bulb-outs to make the pedestrian experience better. Will also include boulevard walk and reconfigure parking. The vision is about 70% of intersections having bulb outs, tree lined streets, pocket parks where appropriate, but no on street bike lanes. Public Works committed to 2nd Ave. N and 3rd Ave. N improvements with bike facilities. Scott thinks that MDT will work with City on what the new look of 1st Ave. North will be. There should be good synergy with Downtown Traffic Study and what happens with 1st Ave. N.

Project won't get constructed for a couple of years.

Zach is supportive of more friendly streets for pedestrians and making 2nd and 3rd Avenues N more bike friendly.

Cost of 1st Ave. N reconstruction could be in range of \$18-20 million. 1st Ave. N is a federal aid route so no local money will go into it. Ed thinks having bulb-outs will help in the EBURD area and west of downtown.

BPAC members restated that they would like to have the opportunity to review and advise on capital projects. Scott suggested trying to get to public meetings.

Ed would like to have someone from Public Works at BPAC meetings. Maybe have someone there quarterly. Could be good to have in by-laws that want to have attendance from Public Works. Maybe get a Public Works report every time they come. Could get updates on 30% review, etc. Elyse will reach out and see what Public Works thinks of having someone attend the meetings.

Other Business:

Future Agenda Items:

Look into timing of Capital Improvement Plan so BPAC can invite speakers while the plans are being made. Also see if the County has a similar document. Have a yearly reminder for when consider CIP. Process is changing and not sure who will take the reins of the document now. Scott is not sure what the timing is. Updated every other year, but can make small changes in off year.

Adjournment at 12:59 p.m.