

**Pedestrian Infrastructure Advisory Committee
To the Darien, Connecticut, Board of Selectmen**

Draft Minutes

Date: July 28, 2015

Place: Darien Town Hall, Room 119

Present: Terry Duffy, Ted Hawkins, Pat Morrissey, Holly Schulz-Amatruda, and Bert von Stuelpnagel

Absent: Joanna Garrett, Susanne Handler, Beth Harmon, and Jennifer Morgan

Guest: Ed Gentile, Director of Public Works, Darien

This was a regular meeting of the Pedestrian Infrastructure Advisory Committee (PIAC).

Acting Chair, Pat Morrissey, called the meeting order at 7:32 pm. Minutes from the meeting of July 21 were approved with corrections.

Holly has been in touch with People Friendly Stamford, an organization that was behind the revitalization of Camp Avenue in Springdale. The committee agreed to invite a planner from that organization to speak to us. The Camp Avenue Project provides extensive upgrades to the pedestrian experience in Springdale, like embedded crosswalks, granite curbs, bike lanes, push-button crossing signals, etc. The project was funded by the State.

Ed Gentile, the Town's new Director of Public Works, introduced himself and provided information on his background in town sidewalk construction and pedestrian issues which is considerable. He works closely with Don Anderson and Jeremy Ginsberg on street and sidewalk marking design and safety issues. Ed would be happy to come back for our meetings with these two individuals. When asked where input on pedestrian infrastructure issues come from, Ed said he was hoping that the PIAC would provide input. We discussed a number of the homeowner versus sidewalk issues. What are homeowners' responsibilities for sidewalks? The town is responsible for repair and upkeep but homeowners are responsible for snow and ice removal. Ed does not know of any town in CT that takes care of snow on all of its sidewalks.

All crosswalks in town are repainted once a year. When roads are milled and repaved the town simply repaints whatever lines were on the road before. Unless there has been a formal designation from the town's Legal Traffic Authority that a road has a bike lane, one cannot be painted. According to Ed, Darien does not have any bike lanes. Fog lines on the side of a road do not designate a bike lane.

Holly asked about seasonal (i.e. not winter) free standing signs in crosswalks to slow traffic. New Canaan has a number of these signs on 106 and in their downtown area. Ed believes these do adjust traffic speed but if Darien wanted to put these on a state highway, it has to be taken up with the state by Don Anderson and the Traffic Authority.

Asked by Terry about his budget and sidewalk construction priorities, Ed said his predecessor was budgeting approximately \$150,000 per annum for maintenance and upkeep. Public Works spent

\$270,000 in this fiscal year which is really a combination of the last two years' worth of maintenance. The cost of concrete sidewalks is estimated at \$60 linier/ft., and \$40 linier/ft. for asphalt. Regarding new sidewalks Ed requested funding for one new sidewalk this year which had a high priority and met criteria set up by his predecessor for consideration. There is a ranking criteria worksheet from the Public Works Dept. for new sidewalks that has been shared with the PIAC, including Replacement & Repair, "Model Block" and New sidewalk installation. However, Ed thinks it needs reworking and would look to us for comments. The town has no master plan for the expansion of sidewalks or bike lanes.

To construct a new sidewalk, what has to happen? Ed has to have detailed support information from the community to justify. When residents think they need a new sidewalk or amenity, he needs to know where and why with full details. Getting the affected property owners agreeing to a new sidewalk on their property is essential to moving it forward. Homeowner opposition was the biggest obstacle to the installation of new sidewalks when worked on these issues in Stamford as a city engineer. His most important request is to be sure and solicit feedback from all of the neighbors.

The committee discussed the map survey program. No deadline for the completion of our surveys could be set at this point. More experience with getting out, walking our sectors and using the evaluation worksheet needs to be done before setting the date. Bert said he was working on a PowerPoint presentation which would incorporate his notes and include photographs. He agreed to share the PowerPoint with the committee at our August 11th meeting. It could be a good template for others on the committee to use for collecting and presenting their data, and would help insure consistency of data across sectors.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ted Hawkins, Clerk