

Notes
Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee

April 16, 2020
313 Luck Ave SW, Roanoke VA

Present

Amanda McGee, RVARC
Rachel Ruhlen, RVARC
Cristina Finch, RVARC
Andrea Garland, City of Roanoke
Jim Lee, community volunteer
Garrett Brumfield, Overcome Yours
Lisa Cooper, Franklin County
Jeremy Holmes, RIDE Solutions
Kathleen Herndon, SPCA
Anita McMillan, Vinton
Tim Pohlada-Thomas, RVARC
Wayne Wilcox
Greg Walter, Greenway Commission

Nathan McClung, Vinton
Carol Moneymaker, VDOT
Ken Mcleod, League of American
Bicyclists
Erik Olsen, Montgomery County
Colie Touzel
Wayne Leftwich, City of Roanoke
Matt McKimmy, Ride Amigos
David Radcliff, New Community Project

Andrea Garland called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

1. Structure of the Bike/Ped Committee

Seeking more structure and formality, the Bike/Ped Committee sought advice from the RVTPO Technical Committee in 2017. The Technical Committee opted to establish the Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee as its subcommittee but after the first year, the Technical Committee hadn't asked for its advice and the committee felt constrained by the rules the Technical Committee had imposed. The Technical Committee disbanded its advisory committee so that the group could reform with more flexibility.

RVARC provides staff support for several other regional groups and this is how the Bike/Ped Committee started. The former chairs of the Bike/Ped Committee and RVARC staff developed a structure and procedures for the newly independent committee.

However, RVARC staff believed that an RVARC committee that has structure and procedures must have its structure and procedures established by the RVARC Board. Cristina Finch presented three options to the committee (see attachment for more details):

Option 1: Request the Regional Commission Create a Standing Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee

Option 2: RVARC hosts bicycle/pedestrian forum (preferred by RVARC staff).

Option 3: Create an advocacy group outside the government realm.

Every person present had an opportunity to comment. Everyone was in favor of Option 2. Committee members felt that Option 1 provided more legitimacy and strength at the cost of flexibility and would require rural involvement when there may not be strong rural interest. The amount of time involved to be established as an RVARC committee was considered daunting. Option 3 would give the most freedom but the disadvantage is not having staff to

look after it. It was noted that several RVARC-hosted committees (such as Option 2) have spun off to form their own entities (such as Option 3), like the Greenway Commission.

Option 2 felt more inclusive but could lose the continuity and could lose the weight of an established committee. One member commented that if Option 2 is selected, it should have formally defined activities and a stronger mechanism for documenting and reporting back activities. Another emphasized the need to have strong involvement from both local government staff and citizens. More than one commented on the importance of having RVARC staff to support the committee.

Members repeatedly asked if Option 2 could have some structure and formality and several seemed to feel uncomfortable with the prospect of no leadership within the group. Most RVARC-hosted committees do not have written rules although some operate by unwritten rules.

Committee members expressed some frustration at the amount of time that has been spent on structure rather than on the mission and at not having been informed before breaking off from the Technical Committee that the group would not be able to have its own rules.

Committee members commented on what they hoped to do when they joined the committee:

- Provide input into larger projects that would strengthen or improve the bike/ped component.
- Learn and network to improve another locality's trail system (both within and external to the RVTPO).
- Ensure connections between localities.
- Wanted localities to consult the bike/ped committee for advice, inform them of repaving schedules, and ask for input to make projects better.
- Wanted to be part of a diverse group working toward common goals.

Andrea Garland stated that she, Cecile Newcomb, and Rachel Ruhlen will take the lead in moving forward with the committee. Ken Mcleod offered to push forward with advocacy if anyone is interested. There was a strong interest in meeting again in May.

2. Announcements

Andrea Garland announced that the Wasena bridge survey is open:
<https://planroanoke.org/wasena-bridge/>

Andrea had hoped for separated bike lanes. The roundabout may preclude that but a workaround could be rumble strips providing separation. Rachel hopes for embedded counters in the bike lanes similar to Memorial Ave bike lanes. Andrea encouraged members to get familiar with the Wasena bridge website.

Andrea announced that the Pedestrian Safety Campaign will be launched this summer with the message "Every corner is a crosswalk". Outreach plans and the kickoff event have been affected by the pandemic but the campaign will still run in the summer.

Tim Pohlad-Thomas announced that RIDE Solutions is hosting an online university for Earth Day and will post a video every 15 minutes. Join Earth Day Online University here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2662076690563545/>

Anita McMillan and Nathan McClung announced that Glade Creek Greenway Phase 2, Hardy Rd & Vinyard Rd intersection, and Washington Ave & Pollard St pedestrian improvements are progressing.

General Description of Options to Pursue for Bike/Pedestrian Group

Option 1: Request the Regional Commission Create a Standing Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee

- The Regional Commission approves bylaws defining the committee's purpose for existing, its tasks, and membership (*note: bylaws could be different than those drafted by this group*).
- To keep membership current and to facilitate the tasks delegated to the Committee, RVARC staff would dedicate administrative and technical staff to facilitate the work of the committee.
- The committee will carry out activities to meet the tasks defined in the bylaws.

Option 2: RVARC hosts bicycle/pedestrian forum (preferred by RVARC staff).

- Any person interested in bicycle/pedestrian issues may attend the forum.
- The forum does not have bylaws, appointed membership, or elected chairs.
- RVARC staff and forum participants may recruit citizen participation and encourage locality staff representation.
- Any person may request agenda items to be discussed at forums, and RVARC staff will develop and distribute the agenda by email and post it online.

Option 3: Create an advocacy group outside the government realm.

- Members meet outside of work hours to discuss bike/pedestrian activities of interest.
- RVARC and local governments do not have a role in the advocacy group.

Note that any interested person will have the chance to participate (in some way yet to be determined) in the upcoming update of the RVTPO's Regional Bikeway Plan. Most likely there will be a variety of engagement opportunities offered during the plan's update as well as a steering committee.