



Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2022 • 5-7 p.m.

By computer at www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom

By telephone at: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 886-7605-1683

1. Call to Order

Dr. Nathan Belz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

*Nathan Belz, Chair

**Olivia Lunsford, Vice Chair

*Susan Bissell

*Jesse Coleman (absent)

*Travis Naibert

*Jim Richardson

*Peter Stern

*Larry Zervos

**Jackson Fox

**Deborah Todd

Don Galligan

Stan Justice

Tupper Becker

***BPAC Representative**

****FAST Planning Staff**

3. Approval of the February 24, 2022 Agenda

Motion: To approve the February 24, 2022 Agenda. (Naibert/Richardson).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

4. Minutes Protocol/Procedures Discussion

Dr. Belz stated he believed the meeting minutes had been more than adequate for the purposes of this committee. He reminded members that the meeting minutes were distributed in advance of their meetings. Dr. Belz strongly advised that any edits should be submitted to the FAST Planning staff, in writing, prior to the meeting so they could discuss them at the meeting. Dr. Belz did not want to continue to drag out the approvals over several meetings. Dr. Belz explained that FAST Planning had a procedure for putting those meeting minutes together that was included in the meeting packet.

Mr. Fox explained the procedure for meeting minutes for all FAST Planning committees.

5. Approval of the October 28, 2021 [Revised] Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the October 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Stern/Richardson).

Amendment to the Motion: The discussion part of the minutes be left out of the official minutes and moved to another document which could be used in the future for reference. (Stern/Naibert).

Discussion: Mr. Stern stated that the discussion did not belong in the minutes. Mr. Stern stated that he would like to see the discussion cataloged someplace and any other discussions that took place that did not necessarily have anything to do with the organization in a separate place, so more detailed information was available if needed. Dr. Belz asked Mr. Stern if it would be appropriate to remove the discussion, add it as supplement, and have a three-sentence recap in the meeting minutes.

Mr. Stern responded yes.

Vote on Amendment to the Motion: None opposed. Approved.

Discussion on Main Motion, as Amended: No further discussion.

Amended Motion: To approve the October 28, 2021 revised Meeting Minutes and have the discussion part of the minutes be left out of the official minutes and moved to another document which could be used in the future for reference.

Vote on Amended Motion: None opposed. Approved.

6. **Approval of the November 18, 2021 [Revised] Meeting Minutes**

Motion: To approve the November 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes. (Naibert/Stern).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

7. **Approval of the January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Motion: To approve the January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes. (Richardson/Naibert).

Discussion: No discussion.

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

8. **Staff /Working Group/Chair Reports**

- Dr. Belz welcomed Susan Bissell as a new member of the BPAC. Dr. Belz noted that Carl Heim had resigned from the BPAC, due to increased work obligations, which left a State of Alaska vacant seat.
- Mr. Fox explained that Carl Heim had resigned so they now had two vacant seats to appoint. Mr. Fox did not believe that DOT would fill their vacant seat with a DOT staff member due to their increased workload. Mr. Fox stated that he forwarded the letters from interested individuals who wanted to fill the vacant seats to DOT for consideration.
- TIP Amendment #5 was adopted, which delayed construction of the Chena Riverwalk Project to 2024. There were a couple reasons for the delay. The primary reason was that the low bid for the Cushman Street Bridge Rehabilitation Project came back \$1.3 million higher than the engineer's estimate. The other reason was that negotiations with the Alaska Railroad to secure a long-term land lease were still ongoing.
- A new Public Participation Plan (PPP) was drafted by Olivia Lunsford. The PPP was released for a 45-day public comment period from February 27 to April 15, 2022. The PPP is posted on the FAST Planning website.

- The Policy Board approved all of the Technical Committee recommendations at their February 23, 2022 meeting.
- A BPAC Subcommittee Meeting was held February 17, 2022 for the right turn lane considerations at crosswalk locations for pedestrian/bicycle safety. Pam Golden of DOT&PF attended and added great value to the discussion.
- A second meeting was also held February 17, 2022 for the 5th Avenue Reconstruction Project. The meeting discussed the possible incorporation of a crosswalk at the School District Administration Building. DOT, City of Fairbanks, PEC, BPAC, and School District representatives were in attendance.
- Mr. Fox is currently working on a Resolution of Support for the proposed new trail connection between Creamers Field and the Birch Hill Recreation Area. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services intends to purchase the property at the northwest corner of the Johansen Expressway and Steese Highway intersection. They are looking at a pedestrian tunnel underneath the Steese Highway. The Borough Assembly already passed a Resolution in support of the project. Mayor Ward requested that the City of Fairbanks and the City of North Pole draft a similar Resolution of Support. Mr. Fox will be taking the Resolution of Support to the March 2, 2022 Technical Committee Meeting for their recommendation for approval.

9. **Public Comment Period:**

Stan Justice commented that road bikes liked to be on the road. They were going at a high speed, did not want to be going across driveways, gravel paths, or to be covered with gravel. Mr. Justice thought the road bikes could be on the road even if there was a separated path and did not think there was anything in Alaska Statutes prohibiting them from being on the road even if there was an adjacent separated path. Mr. Justice commented that most of the bikes sold were not road bikes. Mr. Justice commented that he thought that was pretty general around town too. Mr. Justice stated that his mountain bike and road bike were what he ended up using. Mr. Justice commented that when Gold Hill Road was going to be redone, there were people out there like Scott Bell and other folks, that really wanted a separated path. Mr. Justice stated that there was no dedicated bike lane. Mr. Justice stated that there was widened shoulders, but he did not see that they got a pedestrian facility at all. Mr. Justice explained that every time push came to shove, the path was ruled out. Mr. Justice explained that for the Ballaine path, he guessed they were lucky that they had a path that went past the little subdivision there. Mr. Justice stated that once again, DOT had buried that path. Mr. Justice stated that he measured the distance of that path. There was 4.3 miles of path, and 0.3 miles of that path that was basically unpassable because DOT had buried it with snow. Mr. Justice would like to see a fence go in there and that would keep a loader from pushing snow on the path. Mr. Justice commented that the loader would probably take that fence right out. Mr. Justice stated that something needed to be done there so that their path could make it through the winter. Mr. Justice commented that with the Yankovich project coming up one of these years was one of those type projects. Mr. Justice stated that they fought for years and years for a separated path that looped around the University for all those kids that came to town and wanted a path to ride on. Mr. Justice stated that as soon as things got tight, that path went away. Mr. Justice stated that on Gold Hill Road, a wide shoulder is not a pedestrian facility. Mr. Justice explained that it seems to him when things get tight, the road lanes get a little narrower, the paths get a little narrower, and the eminent domain gets narrowed, and everything

shrinks down a little bit. Mr. Justice stated that they said we have a standard lane width and bike path width and it drove him crazy.

Dr. Belz sympathized with Mr. Justice. Dr. Belz stated that we had a lot of snow this winter and it had to go somewhere. Dr. Belz stated that it frustrated him sometimes, but it had to be moved and Mr. Justice made a good point about distributing that snow.

Tupper Becker commented that he was a former DOT employee and that the culture was that they could not please everybody when plowing snow. Mr. Becker stated that he knew that DOT said that they could not satisfy everybody in the University area, but it would not take much to make a lot of people happy. Mr. Becker commented that Fairbanks, Alaska had more fat biking per capita than anywhere else in the world and had some of the best terrain. Mr. Becker added that they also had more talented individuals when it came to endurance racing in fat biking. Mr. Becker stated that if we had the infrastructure, we could be selling more fat bikes, seeing more people commuting, and less cars on the road. Mr. Becker stated that he knew that DOT was doing the best they could, but a little bit of effort in plowing sidewalks goes a long way with the community.

10. Old Business

a. Prioritization of Non-Motorized Projects

- ***Review of Project Scoring Criteria to Prioritize Short-Term Project List in Non-Motorized Plan and Sidewalk/Path Nominations to FAST Improvement Program***

Mr. Fox explained that he asked for BPAC feedback as to which of the criteria they favored when ranking the non-motorized projects to be added into Improvement Program and the Non-Motorized Plan. Mr. Fox explained that from the comments he received summarized, it looked like the BPAC wanted to keep it simple and narrow it down to a handful of criteria. Mr. Fox stated that he still did not have clear direction as to what they wanted and hoped for further discussion at this meeting. A lengthy discussion followed about the different criteria. Mr. Fox agreed to develop a consolidated list of scoring criteria based on the discussion and email that to the BPAC in advance of the next meeting.

b. Right Turn Lane Design Considerations at Crosswalk Locations (Action Items)

- ***Recap of Discussion at Work Group Meeting and Potential Action Items***

Mr. Fox explained a working group meeting was held on February 17th with Peter Stern, Jim Richardson, Pam Golden, and Beezy Bentzen. Mr. Fox explained that they concluded that more signs and pavement markings were not the solution, and that stop bars and signs were being ignored during the winter. Mr. Fox explained that the conversation switched from redesign of intersections to more non-infrastructure programs. Mr. Fox explained that they could offer a letter from the BPAC to DOT highlighting some of the issues such as sight distance issues that caused safety concerns at intersections, fencing, and snow berms near intersections that made it difficult for bicyclists and pedestrians to see oncoming traffic. Mr. Fox explained that some other ideas that came out of the meeting were applying for a grant from the Alaska Highway Safety Office to develop Public Services Announcements such as radio or television ads to highlight some of these issues and offering driver education at our schools. Mr. Fox explained that they could apply for up to three years of funding for driver

education curriculum that had not been in schools for several years due to lack of funding. Mr. Fox stated that one of the requirements missing from Alaska Statutes was the requirement that a new driver attend a driver education program before they were issued a license.

Dr. Belz recommended that they draft a letter to DOT about snow removal and snow berms, wait until the announcement that grant funding from the Highway Safety Office was available, apply for it, and then have a PSA made that was geared toward the Fairbanks community.

Mr. Stern suggested contacting AMATS to see if they were interested in jointly applying for a grant.

c. Road Shoulders vs Dedicated Bike Lanes, Paths, & Other Cycling Facilities (Action Item)

Mr. Fox explained that he left this on the agenda because he was not sure what action BPAC wanted to take on it. Mr. Fox stated that it was his understanding that the BPAC thought road shoulders should not be considered dedicated bike facilities but did not know whether they wanted to pursue writing a letter about it.

Discussion: Mr. Naibert stated that he read an excerpt from the DOT Statewide Transportation Master Plan, and on Page 13 it said that it was the policy of the Department that accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians be considered and implemented on all highway projects and exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Commissioner. Mr. Naibert commented that he had asked if the Commissioner had signed off on the Old Steese project. Mr. Naibert explained that the response he got from DOT was that the road shoulders were the bike lanes on the Steese project. Mr. Naibert stated that for future projects, he thought that they should state that shoulders were not an appropriate bike infrastructure that should be considered. Mr. Naibert stated that he thought they, as a group, should come up with criteria for when shoulders were not an accommodation for bicycles. Mr. Naibert stated that he did not know exactly what the action item should be, whether it be a letter, a meeting, or when a new project was brought before them.

11. New Business

a. Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) Overview

Mr. Fox provided an update and spreadsheet he created about the current funds available to Alaska through the new IIJA Bill.

Motion: To extend the meeting to 7:15 p.m. (Naibert).

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

12. Other Issues

Mr. Zervos stated that he was disappointed to hear that Mr. Heim was no longer with the BPAC and thought his input was very valuable. Mr. Zervos thought the polite thing to do would be to write a letter and thank him for his time on the Committee. Mr. Zervos also suggested writing a letter to Ryan Anderson asking him to appoint someone from his organization to become a BPAC member.

13. Committee Member Comments

- Mr. Zervos commented that he thought it was important that they had some mechanism to be able to get involved with these projects earlier on.

11. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn. (Stern/Naibert). The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. The next BPAC meeting is Thursday, March 31, 2022, 5-7 p.m.

Approved: 

Nathan Belz, Chair
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Date: 04.05.2022