



## **Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, March 31, 2022 • 5-7 p.m.

By computer at [www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom](http://www.fastplanning.us/keepup/zoom)

By telephone at: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 830-6327-0585

### **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

Rian Billings

Shawn Crites

Alayna Walker

Jessie Doherty

Kayla Leu Clark

Edward Doyle

Koen Kohrt

Stone Sibbett

Nasu Miisu

**\*BPAC Representative**

**\*\*FAST Planning Staff**

### **3. Approval of the March 31, 2022 Agenda**

**Motion:** To approve the March 31, 2022 Agenda. (Stern/Bissell)

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

### **4. Approval of the February 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** To approve the February 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes. (Bissell/Naibert).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

## 5. Staff /Working Group/Chair Reports

### Chair Report

- Dr. Belz noted that the Alaska Trails Conference was coming up April 6-8, 2022. Dr. Belz explained that it was free and online. More information was available at Alaska-Trails.org.
- Dr. Belz noted that access to paths and trails around town was under anywhere from 6-8 ft. snow berms and creating issues for bikes and pedestrians. Dr. Belz commented that he was looking forward to the Seasonal Mobility Task Force meeting and hoped it would lead to positive impacts for the upcoming winter season.

### Staff Report

- The Policy Board adopted a Resolution of Support for the new trail connection between Creamers Field and Birch Hill Recreation Area. Discussions with DOT about possible crossing locations along the Steese Highway are ongoing.
- Photos from an area resident were forwarded to Jackson Fox showing bus stop locations that were blocked by snow berms and people were unable to get to them, so they had to stand in the road to wait for the bus.

## 6. Public Comment Period:

Stan Justice thanked everyone for serving on the Committee. Mr. Justice commented that, as usual, he was calling to complain about the Skarland Trail. Mr. Justice explained that the path was near the intersection of Ballaine and Yankovich and he had been working on this issue for probably four or five years here now. Mr. Justice stated that he can see that his error was that he assumed somebody controlled what the loader operator does. Mr. Justice stated that he thought he had this made when his friend Ryan Anderson was the Regional Director but, as hard as Ryan tried, he could not control what the loader guy did. Mr. Justice stated that now the new supervisor has also just kind of thrown up his hands and says, "Awe, there's no room. It's just tough luck. Give up. Good luck." Mr. Justice commented that he should have from very beginning said that he wanted a barrier. Mr. Justice stated that the conclusion he had come to was that there needs to be some kind of barrier between the roadway and the path there so the path does not get buried. Mr. Justice stated that it just strikes him how thoroughly unsafe the path is. Mr. Justice explained that this year there was a place for pedestrians to get onto the roadway but then there was no place for them to get back off because the rest of the path was fairly useable but there was no way to get to it without crampons or an ice axe to get up over the berm. Mr. Justice stated that if people try and use the path, they are on very steep slopes, they're icy, it's hard, it's easy to fall. Mr. Justice stated that there was always the worry that the loader, not seeing what he was doing, buries someone that is on the path. Mr. Justice stated that this is a pedestrian path, and that big bucket of snow goes up in the air and gets dumped, and there could be somebody under it. Mr. Justice commented that this is a well-used pedestrian path and he would certainly like to see a project get forward. Mr. Justice stated that he had seen of lot of what looks like good projects on the list already. Mr. Justice stated that he did not know what it would take to get a fence or some kind of barrier in there so that the path is protected.

Dr. Belz stated that he heard Mr. Justice's concerns. Dr. Belz stated that he guessed he had gotten to the point where there had been ample time now for some of these things

to be rectified by sending somebody back out to open up some of these path access points. Dr. Belz thanked Mr. Justice again for showing up and voicing his concerns.

**Stone Sibbett** commented that somebody told him about this Committee because he was complaining about the trail on Chena Pump specifically to them and they mentioned it. Mr. Sibbett stated that he moved from Anchorage back in April. Mr. Sibbett explained that in Anchorage he was a bike commuter for five years with no car. Mr. Sibbett stated that up here that would be very difficult to do without a car especially when he lived a little way out of town. Mr. Sibbett stated that something that he noticed all winter was that people walk up and down Chena Pump all the time in the dark and it is absolutely not safe. Mr. Sibbett stated that he almost hit a guy the other day. Mr. Sibbett explained that the guy was walking on the white line in the dark. Mr. Sibbett stated that he just wanted to try to start getting the word out there, he thought it was a State road, but there was a trail out there, but it is just never plowed, and he has seen people on it all winter.

**Dr. Belz** explained that it is a safety issue, and it is unfortunate that right now there is a model, and a lot of these paths did not get cleared in the winter which forced non-motorized users elsewhere. Dr. Belz stated that he did know that there were programs where people could get high visibility clothing and stuff like that so hopefully, they were doing that, but it sounded like perhaps not, which was unfortunate.

**Shawn Crites** commented that he was wondering if there was a good GIS map of our Borough paths and, if so, who made it, and who would he contact to possibly get some GIS info.

**Dr. Belz** explained that he was in the right place and the person who would be best to talk to about that was Ms. Lunsford.

**Ms. Lunsford** added that she had posted the updated Bikeways Map link and email address in the Chat Box for the meeting participants. Ms. Lunsford explained that the updated bike map layer showed shared used paths, specified bike routes, sidewalk connectors, shoulders, and some of the unpaved facilities.

## 7. 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 the draft project scoring sheets included in the meeting packet. Mr. Fox explained that he compiled the scoring criteria based on input from the BPAC members. Mr. Fox explained that the BPAC could revise the scoring criteria and test them out using the sample scoring sheets.

### b. **Letter to DOT and City of Fairbanks Regarding Sight Distance Issues for Pedestrian/Bicyclist Visibility with Fencing and Snow Berms at Intersection Corners (Action Item)**

Mr. Fox explained that the idea to write this letter came up at the last BPAC meeting. Mr. Fox explained that Mr. Richardson and Ms. Bissell put together the text for the letter. Mr. Fox explained that the letter would be addressed to the DOT Design and Maintenance & Operations Divisions as well as to the City of Fairbanks Engineering and Public Works Departments. Mr. Fox stated that it highlighted the issues with fencing along the roads between the roadway and path that extended

so far into the proximity of the intersection that it caused visibility issues for both bicyclists/pedestrians and motorists. Mr. Fox stated that the letter also highlighted the issue of concerns about snow berms that were so high they also blocked the view of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians at intersections. Mr. Fox stated that it was a pretty softly written letter to highlight these issues and was for general awareness of all the parties involved. Mr. Fox stated that he did not think it would create any angst. Mr. Fox stated that he was also open to any revisions that the BPAC wanted to make to the letter.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Motion:** To approve the letter [to DOT and City of Fairbanks regarding sight distance issues for pedestrian/bicyclist visibility with fencing and snow berms at intersection corners]. (Stern/Richardson).

**Amendment to the Motion:** To change the fourth sentence in the first paragraph to read, "Another safety concern are fences that separate roadways from non-motorized pathways. When a driver is turning at an intersection."; change the first sentence in the second paragraph to read, "We also would like to point out that snow berms at intersections often cause the same safety concerns as fences by obscuring a driver's view of approaching bicyclists and pedestrians."; and change the word "listening" to "considering" in the last sentence. (Zervos/Naibert).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

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

**Discussion:** Mr. Naibert asked if they should add some photos of the intersections and fences referenced in the letter.

Dr. Belz inquired if they had photos of the fences and snow berms referenced in the letter. Dr. Belz stated that he also thought that Ms. Schacher and Mr. Jacobson were familiar with the areas they referenced but Ms. Lunsford might have some photos.

Ms. Lunsford stated that she could not speak to any photos they had.

Dr. Belz stated that he thought it was a good point and the letter was a nice single page and highlighted their concerns. Dr. Belz stated that as Mr. Fox noted it did not have any ill intent.

Mr. Naibert stated that was fine and he just thought if they had some pictures, maybe they could include them, but they did not need to make a special trip to take any pictures.

**Amended Motion:** To approve the letter [to DOT and City of Fairbanks regarding sight distance issues for pedestrian/bicyclist visibility with fencing and snow berms at intersection corners] with the following revisions: change the fourth sentence in the first paragraph to read, "Another safety concern is fences that separate roadways from non-motorized pathways. When a driver is turning at an intersection, these fences obscure the driver's view of bicyclists and pedestrians as they approach the intersection."; change the first sentence in the second paragraph to read, "We also would like to point out that snow berms at intersections often cause the same safety concerns as fences by obscuring a driver's view of approaching bicyclists and pedestrians."; and change the word "listening" to "considering" in the last sentence.

**Vote on Motion as Amended:** None opposed. Approved.

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**8. New Business**

**a. Thank You Letter to Carl Heim for His Service on BPAC (Action Item)**

Mr. Fox thanked Mr. Zervos for drafting this letter for BPAC to consider.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Motion:** To submit this letter [thanking Carl Heim for his service on BPAC] to Mr. Heim. (Zervos/Bissell).

**Discussion:** No discussion.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**b. Letter to DOT Encouraging Appointment of Vacant BPAC Seat (Action Item)**

Mr. Fox explained that the main intent of the letter was to request that the Northern Region DOT Director appoint a DOT staff member, specifically an Engineer, to fill the vacant BPAC seat.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Motion:** To approve the letter [to DOT encouraging appointment of vacant BPAC seat]. (Richardson/Bissell).

**Discussion:** Mr. Zervos pointed out a typo in the second sentence of the second paragraph of the letter.

**Vote on Motion:** None opposed. Approved.

**c. Joint Seasonal Mobility Task Force/BPAC Meeting on Winter Maintenance – Late April**

Mr. Fox noted that he sent an email to Jeff Jacobson and Dan Schacher earlier this month about having a meeting in late March. Mr. Jacobson responded that he preferred postponing the meeting until the end of April since City Public Works was busy with snow removal and his Department was stretched pretty thin. Mr. Fox noted that he had not yet received a response from Mr. Schacher and thought they should wait a couple of weeks and send out a Doodle Poll.

**d. Peger Road Bicycle/Pedestrian Path**

Mr. Fox explained that the meeting packet contained drawings of the proposed sidewalk/separated path on the east side of Peger Road from the boat launch at Pioneer Park near the Chena River bridge all the way down to the Airport Way intersection. Mr. Fox stated that the project had been scored and money was available to begin the design work for the project beginning October 1, 2022. Mr. Fox explained that all they had at this time was the drawing. Mr. Fox explained that the options could be a separated path outside or within the Pioneer Park boundary. Mr. Fox explained that two weeks ago he met with Borough Parks & Recreation Department staff to discuss this project and the Pioneer Park Master Plan. Mr. Fox explained that there was a lot of planned development at Pioneer Park and the hope was that they could coordinate it with this path. Mr. Fox explained that he offered the idea of having a path on Pioneer Park property that could be maintained by Borough Parks and Recreation as opposed to having a sidewalk on Peger Road that DOT had to maintain. Mr. Fox explained that DOT did not maintain separated paths in the winter. Mr. Fox explained that the Borough approved of the idea of having the path on Pioneer Park property. Mr. Fox asked BPAC for ideas for the alignment of the path.

## 9. Other Issues

No other issues.

## 10. Committee Member Comments

- Mr. Stern commented that he wanted to point out that the State stopped winter maintenance on the Johansen Expressway path after the big snow dump and had not plowed it at all. Mr. Stern commented that they recently sent the Holder through to make a single pass between University Avenue and College Road, but they did not continue on from College Road to Johansen Expressway. Mr. Stern commented that the big problem right now on these paths is that they pushed the berms back on Peger Road and basically you have an ice skating rink on the paths. Mr. Stern stated that they are just incredibly hazardous. Mr. Stern stated that he had been walking them over the last couple days with cleats on, but he would not want to be riding a bike on these things at all. Mr. Stern stated that there was not a whole lot you could do with the melt going on, but we definitely have some safety issues.
- Dr. Belz added that he personally had studs on two of his bikes and he often felt more stable on that than he did walking on the ice, even with cleats. Dr. Belz stated that was just his experience but certainly it was not good out there right now for non-motorized transporters.
- Mr. Naibert said that he wanted to point out that he saw the snowblower on the Johansen Expressway path between College Road and McDonalds today, so they were working their way towards the Steese Highway. Mr. Naibert commented that as much as he has complained about poor plowing, it seems like they are finally getting around to that path.
- Mr. Richardson stated that maybe it was time for them to write the City and tell them there is a real issue here for the safety of people walking and biking and they need to address it - it means more funds but that's what it needs. Mr. Richardson commented then possibly the State too, but he thought that the State's problem was that they were short 20 percent of their employees and maybe if they ever get them hired they could take care of the problem that is caused right now.
- Dr. Belz stated that right now he thought their play was to hold this meeting with the Seasonal Mobility Task Force and see what came out of that conversation and decide then what the call to action was, whether that was a letter or something else. Dr. Belz stated that he would like to see something more than a letter but what that is at the moment, he was not sure. Dr. Belz stated that he did not want to go through another winter with the impacts to the non-motorized networks that we had this winter.
- Mr. Naibert commented that in reference to Mr. Sibbett's comment about Chena Pump Road and somebody walking in the street because the sidewalks were not plowed; he saw a post on the Fairbanks Reddit on social media that brought up the same issue. It might have been by that person or maybe somebody else, but he just wanted to say that the public was noticing.
- Dr. Belz commented that there were not a lot of other places to walk in some of those situations.

**11. Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn.** (Stern/Zervos). The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m. The next BPAC meeting is Thursday, April 28, 2022, 5-7 p.m.

Approved:  \_\_\_\_\_

**Nathan Belz, Chair**  
**Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee**

Date: 05/09/2022