

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 17, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 9:37am by Chairperson Dondero. Also in attendance were committee members Bob Shields, Bill Tinklepaugh, Dennis Roberts, Rob Herb, Dick Oliver and South Bethany Police Chief Lovins. Members Beth Rosso, Andrea Sokoloff, Glenn Tom, and Kathy Wood were absent.

There were no members of the public present.

Members present reviewed the Committee's Purpose and Scope of Work as approved by Town Council. There were no relevant comments or questions.

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee discussed the current threats to bicycle and pedestrian safety in Town, and identified areas and opportunities for disseminating safety-related information to property owners, residents, and visitors. Much of the discussion centered around the new lighted pedestrian crosswalks on Coastal Highway. Chairperson Dondero and Chief Lovins reminded the Committee that the crosswalks and associated infrastructure (lights, signage, etc.) are under the jurisdiction of DeDOT and that the Town has little influence over these improvements. That said, Chairperson Dondero will work with the appropriate Town staff to contact DeDOT with specific questions raised by the Committee including the feasibility of adding some cautionary signage for pedestrians near the crosswalk buttons and of the installation of one crosswalk with flashing red lights (like those further north on Coastal Highway) that would require vehicle traffic to stop for pedestrians. It was agreed that education of both drivers and (especially) pedestrians about these crosswalks is greatly needed and should be a priority.

It was agreed that the Town should provide more educational information/safety tips regarding bike and pedestrian safety and various ways on disseminating the information were identified. Creating this material will be one of the primary tasks of the Committee at future meetings. Reminding or educating pedestrians

to walk facing traffic was identified as a high priority task. This is particularly important for narrow roadways without shoulders, which represent most of the Town's roads.

Chairperson Dondero reported that she has received comments from residents and members of Council about vegetation overhanging or encroaching on road rights-of-way that force pedestrians or cyclists to move further into the cartway. The Mayor asked the Committee to make a recommendation on addressing this issue. The Committee felt that since there are ordinances in place preventing overhanging or encroaching vegetation in ROWs, that Code Enforcement should notify offending property owners to request removal within a specified amount of time, after which public works will remove or cut back the vegetation in question.

A brief discussion ensued about speed limits on Town roads. It was noted that neighboring communities (Bethany Beach and Fenwick Island) have reduced speed limits on their neighborhood streets. Chief Lovins agreed to reach out to the police departments in those towns to understand their rationale for the reductions and get feedback on how it is working. He also noted the high number of traffic citations that the SBPD has issued thus far in calendar year 2021, many of which are speeding violations. The Chief will bring to the next meeting information from the NTSB regarding the effects of vehicle-pedestrian collisions at various rates of speed. The Committee will discuss at its next meeting whether to formally recommend to the Council a reduction in the speed limit for all or some of the Town's roadways.

Chief Lovins also wished to remind residents of the need to contact the Police Department as soon as possible when an issue needing their attention occurs. He reported that residents often wait days or weeks to contact the department about problems, making them more difficult to address. He requested that any educational information put out by this Committee include such a reminder.

The next meeting will be scheduled for some time in October or November, date to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 10:52am.