

Albany Bicycle Coalition November 2021 Meeting Notes

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Albany Bicycle Coalition November 2021 Meeting Notes

On Thursday, November 18th, Albany Bicycle Coalition held a hybrid In Person/Zoom Meeting. In attendance were Special Guests Janette Kaddo Marino of Biketoga, Art Clayman of Cycle Schenectady and Kyle Hatch of NYBC. Also in attendance were Lorenz Worden, Hugh Johnson, John Gillivan, Glenn Sandberg, Rob Carle, Margaret Carle, David Pisaneschi and Ed Brennan.

Special Topic: Mayhem on Our Roads

- Janette Kaddo Marino of Biketoga was our guest speaker to kick off our discussion. Her daughter Danielle was recently struck from behind while cycling on the Green Island Bridge. Danielle and Kyle Hatch put together an online petition to urge Mayor of Green Island, Ellen McNulty-Ryan, to approve a funded plan to put a protected cycle track on the bridge. The cycle track would connect the Empire State Trail, Bike Route 9 and the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail in Green Island with the Uncle Sam Trail across the river in Troy and help resolve the current dangerous design that requires cyclists to cross four lanes of busy traffic. As of Monday, November 22nd, the petition had 866 signatures and was picked up by local Channel 13 TV news for a segment that featured Danielle. Danielle did a great job presenting the issue in the segment.
- We urge everyone to sign onto this petition, which can be found at <https://www.change.org/p/mayor-mcnulty-ryan-safe-route-on-the-green-island-bridge>
- Janette discussed her own letter writing campaign on the Green Island Bridge as well discussions she had with local politicians, including the Green Island Mayor. She believes the Mayor is coming around.
- The discussion went on to the unnerving spate of cyclist fatalities and near fatalities this past year. We agreed much of the problem relates to road design though driver carelessness is a constant factor. We need to raise the bar on Complete Streets compliance. We need to have roads designed with a Vision Zero goal to make roads safe for all users.
- Of special concern are river crossings and crossing of limited access highways, like our Interstates. It was noted that Jeremy Williams was recently hit and killed at the I87 Interchange with Central Avenue. These are huge barriers for cyclists and pedestrians. We need to make the public and politicians understand that it is unreasonable to make pedestrians and cyclists go miles out of their way to find safe crossings, if any are to be found at all. All these crossings need to be made safe. This is also a very significant

social equity problem as those without access to motor vehicles to use these crossings safely are most frequently the poor and the disabled.

- We also noted the lack of understanding and concern of DOT, police, politicians and the public (as indicated by the recent Delaware Avenue Road Diet referendum defeat).
- The attendees from the various regional bike groups agreed to jointly attack this issue. We would begin with a joint letter or statement as a starting point for a broader public and media campaign. Mr. Brennan will be working on a draft to be circulated.
- Discussion can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFrQznG_III

Reports

- **Treasurer's Report** - David reported that we had a significant drop in this year's membership dues / donations. We agreed to a new approach for the upcoming membership campaign that would emphasize different membership levels.
 - free membership
 - \$25 voting membership
 - \$100 membership level that needs a name
 - \$250 sustaining membership level
- **Transport Troy Update – E-Mail Report**
 - Pam reported that she was especially sorry to miss our guest as the Green Island Bridge issue is close to home.
 - At the TT Zoom meeting from Nov. 11:
 - Attendance, including Tess from Cap. Roots (Complete Streets Coordinator).
 - They reviewed Ramble results. Some activities saw increased attendance, others reduced (the bike ride conflicted with another local ride event). It was agreed they need someone to better coordinate media & marketing.
 - TT is working on submitting documentation to get Capital Coexist funds they have been granted.
 - The Troy Bike Rescue downtown location has closed but had a good season & plans to return next year with tweaks from this year's experience.
 - T.T. still has bike racks to install. Modifications are needed.
 - The parklet structure prototype has been dismantled & stored, it may go to Primo Botanica next year. It doesn't seem to have triggered the interest in reproduction for other sites it was hoped to generate.
 - We also had discussion of the G. I. Bridge issues and some background from James Rath.
- **Cycle Schenectady Report** – Art Clayman reported
 - An excellent plan was made public this week for signage and wayfinding in Schenectady related to the Empire State Trail.
 - This plan by Saratoga Associates was paid for by the Metroplex Authority, which will also bears the cost of implementation along with the tourism promotion agency Discover Schenectady.
 - It probably exists only because of my constant pestering of Metroplex

Chairman Ray Gillen (with whom I have a pretty close relationship from my years as opinion editor at the Gazette) about the importance of signage and wayfinding for cyclists, and the virtual lack of any of it in Schenectady.

- There is a similarly good plan for signage for the 1.5-mile trail from Central Park through Vale Park to the edge of downtown Schenectady, called the Park Connector Trail. That one is still in draft form, so can't be shared.
- The city this week put out an RFP for a cycle track along Franklin St. that will extend the Park Connector Trail into the heart of downtown. Franklin St. is a way overbuilt road for its current level of traffic -- two lanes in either direction plus parking on both sides.
- A very nice new Bountiful Bread opened in downtown Schenectady.
 - Art went there for the first time this week and noticed that the staff were wearing T-shirts with a bicycle featuring the letter "B" on both wheels -- for Bountiful Bread. Seeing a potential hangout for cyclists, starting point for rides, attraction for Canalway riders entering the city from the west, and more.
 - Art spoke to the manager. Art asked if they might be interested in sponsoring rides, offering discounts for cyclists, becoming a Parks and Trails NY certified bike-friendly business, etc., and he said "very". In fact, he said, the owner is a bike racer. Beyond great breakfast sandwiches and pastries, a real opportunity here.
- **Biketoga** - Janette reported:
 - Their bike workshop is continuing their work under COVID conditions
 - One of their members, Ed, made a well received presentation to make the group more involved with advocacy
 - A Complete Streets focus for every project in the city
 - There is \$300,000 toward bike lanes
 - They are focusing on making the Exit 14 Northway interchange more bike/pedestrian friendly
 - Their Halloween ride had over 40 people including children and costume wearers
 - They are looking forward to their "pie ride" in November
 - December 11th is their kids bike giveaway
- **CDTC Bike Ped Committee November Meeting Cancelled** (no report)

Old Business –

- **Transportation Projects**
 - **Patroon Greenway Project**
 - On November 3rd the PGP study group held their 2nd Community Event by the Kipp School by the Manning Blvd entrance to the Tivoli Preserve.
 - Weather was not conducive to a large turnout but several individuals showed up to share ideas and tacos

- Nothing else scheduled at this time.
- They are still seeking input on their website
<https://www.patroongreenway.com/> - please add your thoughts!

- **Rides**

- **Halloween Albany Rural Cemetery Ride Report** - John Gillivan reported that over two dozen attendees had a great time touring the cemetery and learning about ghostly, eerie and strange events and persons associated with Albany Rural Cemetery. A brief rain didn't dampen any "spirits".
- **Holiday Lights in the Park Bike Night** - November 28th, 4:30 - 5:15pm. \$5 per cyclist and \$10 per family. ABC members should gather before 4:30pm near the New Scotland entrance. See: <https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/upcoming-events/>
- **Cranksgiving** - Charity events were held in Troy and Albany. We encourage anyone involved in these events to give ABC advance notice next year so we can put it on our events calendar and help advertise. We hope they did well.

New Business –

- **Inter-City Bike Ride Proposal** - Ed reported that he:
 - Reached out to Transport Troy/Cycle Schenectady and Biketoga - and was still trying to organize a meeting, which looks like it will be held November 29th
 - Idea is to do four separate rides on different days for different levels of riders between our four cities Albany/Troy; Troy/Saratoga; Saratoga/Schenectady and Schenectady/Albany
 - Only way to make that happen is with full cooperation between groups and enlistment of other not-for-profit or for-profit partners
 - We will be looking to develop a base plan before looking for partners
- **Website Changes** - Glenn reported changes to our website that cleaned up our main page, eliminating some old references and relegating donation legalese to secondary pages
- **Albany County Helmet Law for E-Bikes and Scooters** - Ed noted the November 10th Times Union reported the County Legislature "unanimously passed a law, sponsored by . . . Gary Domalewicz, requiring the use of helmets for residents who ride electric scooters or bicycles. Violators can face a fine of up to \$100".
- **ABC TV** - Ed reported he is still playing phone tag with the studio manager but hopes to arrange an orientation for himself and Glenn after Thanksgiving.

Upcoming – Rides/events (Go here - <https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/resources/events/>)

Meeting Dates

– ABC meets the last [not the 4th] Thursday of each month unless there is a conflicting holiday. Upcoming dates are as follows: 12/30, 1/27, 2/24.