

Albany Bicycle Coalition Meeting Notes for December 28, 2023

Zoom Attendees: Pam Bentien, Ed Brennan, John Gillivan, Jill Hainson, Hugh Johnson, Mike Maloney, Mark Maniak, Andrew Matrai, Darlene McGraw, David Pisaneschi, Glenn Sandberg, Ira Share, Peter Thomas

Special Topic - Mayhem on the Roadways

- **Albany County Bike-Ped Deaths 2023, That We Know Of:**
 - October 9, 2023. **Raymond McCabe, 57** - Cyclist Route 378
 - November 8, 2023. **Unidentified Pedestrian, 67** - I 787, Exit 2
 - November 11, 2023. **David Herskind, 49** - Central Avenue
 - November 12, 2023. **Timothy Smith, 62** - Troy-Schenectady Road
 - November 22, 2023. **Mark Schimmer, 67** - Central Avenue
 - November 27, 2023. **Joseph Crandall, 62** - Cyclist Central Avenue
 - December 20, 2023. **Unidentified Pedestrian** - Washington Avenue
 - December 22, 2023. **Unidentified Pedestrian** - Watervliet Avenue Ext.
- **Manual on Uniform Transportation Control Devices (MUTCD) 11th Edition Changes & Why Should We Care - with special reference to Central Ave**
 - The Federal Highway Administration has a short video introducing what the MUTCD is and what some of the updates concern:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-YxtGn8cL4>
 - Ed discussed how the old section 2B.13 regarding speed limits emphasized the 85th percentile rule by which **“When a speed limit within a speed zone is posted, it should be within 5 mph of the 85th-percentile speed of free flowing traffic”** and how this rule has been relied on by our State DOT to limit reductions in speed limits.
 - Ed quoted a section from the 2015 DOT Report on Central Avenue (State Route 5) in Colonie and how the 85th percentile rule was used to justify leaving the speed limit on that persistently deadly corridor at 40 mph.
 - The 11th edition section 2B.21 de-emphasizes reliance on the 85th Percentile rule, particularly on urban and suburban non-freeway arterials. **“When setting a speed limit, a range of factors such as land-use context, pedestrian and bicyclist activity, crash history, intersection spacing, driveway density, roadway geometry, roadside conditions, roadway functional classification, traffic volume, and observed speeds can influence the speed limit determined in the engineering**

study. The engineering study will determine which of the recommended factors will prevail in setting the speed limit."

- The new MUCTD 2B.21 also notes, **"To achieve desired operating speeds, agencies often implement other speed management strategies concurrently with setting speed limits, such as traffic calming measures, geometric design features, speed safety cameras, and increased enforcement."**
- Ed reminded us that road studies on the Colonie section of Central Avenue west of Rt 155 to Niskayuna and the Albany City section of Central Avenue are due to take place in 2024 and that we will need to show up and work to see that they deliver safer roadways.
- John Gillivan said he would check on the status of the Colonie study and also said he was working with others in the Village of Colonie on a "Slowdown Campaign" and has himself reached out to engineers in our DOT region.
- **Other Central Avenue Efforts**
 - The Albany Times Union published Ed Brennan's Commentary "[There Are No Accidents on Central Avenue](#)" on 12/3/23
 - Our next Ride of Silence scheduled for Wednesday May 15, 2024 - will be returning to Central Avenue. We hope to get media and public attention focused on the need to improve safety there and inspire people to get involved in the Central Avenue road studies.
 - We are working on getting a ghost bike installed where cyclist Joe Crandall was recently killed on Central near Elmwood in Colonie
- **NYS Safe Streets Coalition Update** Ed reported our statewide coalition (NYSSSC) has its slate of bills online with a link that will let you generate a message to your State Senate and Assembly Member to support the bills.
 - Automatically ask your state reps to sign on! <https://transalt.org/safe>
 - The NYSSSC is also pressing NYS DOT to update their policy on last year's 25 mph legislation. A letter was signed by over 100 elected representatives and stakeholders from all around NY. The current policy requires onerous, time consuming and expensive engineering studies by municipalities that may just wish to lower their speeds by just 5 mph for public safety.
 - All are invited to participate in coalition efforts to get our State bills passed this year - let us know if you want to help out on any of the following days by e-mailing albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com:
 - Jan 23rd Lobby Day
 - Feb 17th (Albany Caucus Weekend)

- May 7 NYSSSC Day of Action
- **Albany City Ordinance Proposals**
 - On the agenda of the Jan 4th Albany Common Council Meeting: Mr. Hoey has introduced a resolution to ask NYS DOT to help and not hinder municipalities that want to reduce their “area” speeds to 25 mph under the law signed by Governor Hochul last year
 - Specifically, the resolution states “the Common Council of Albany, New York calls on NYSDOT to reevaluate this regressive policy which skews the intent of this important legislation and dilutes its life saving potential”
- **Albany DGS Comments of Frank Zeoli.** Ed reported that our Albany City Deputy Commissioner of DGS addressed his Normans Kill Neighborhood Association in early December.
 - Mr. Zeoli explained that the City’s road repaving schedule was determined each year based on a number of factors, including
 - Road Conditions, based on their observations
 - Equity, to make sure all Albany’s neighborhoods received fair attention and also social equity based on historic neglect of underserved communities.
 - Mr. Zeoli also commented on the planned merger of Traffic Engineering & Road Planning functions. He noted that the actual work would still be done by DGS and those planning the work would still reside for now in DGS quarters, though the chain of command might be changing.

Reports

- **Capital Streets Reported**
 - They are officially a 501(c)(3) tax exempt org
 - Their two amazing **Cranksgiving** events in November, collected over \$1500 and 600 lbs of food
 - They have a Public Projects Tracker Page
<https://www.capitalstreets.org/project-tracker>

Transportation Projects

- **Cherry Avenue Extension Meeting** Report - Peter, John V., Lorenz and Ed joined over 50 attendees meeting at the Bethlehem Town Hall. Peter reported:
 - The contractor revealed their current plan to establish trails along Route 85 in Slingerlands connecting the Rail Trail to the traffic circle at the intersection of Route 85 and New Scotland Avenue.
 - The monies are allocated, the project will be happening

- Future connections along New Scotland Avenue to the Normans Kill boat launch and along Blessing Road were also mentioned by the Town Supervisor.
- We had a brief discussion of the pros and cons of “bike box” planned to facilitate cyclists turning left from Cherry Ave Extension onto the new bike trail entrance at Kenwood
- Peter recommended submitting comments to promote a connection to the Pine Hollow Arboretum
- See the presentation and submit comments by Jan 31st at <https://cherryaveextpath.com/>
- **County Rail Trail / SE Connector Updates -**
 - Mark noted there is a fair amount of glass, gravel mud and debris on the South End Connector along 787. He didn’t think DGS has been cleaning it for at least a week. Hugh said he would get in touch with DGS.
 - Peter noted the County has added cones and more fill to address the part of the trail experiencing subsidence.
- **Albany High School Area Traffic Calming** - Chester was not able to attend our meeting but has continued to work with the PTSA to try to address safety concerned around the High School and throughout the length of Washington Ave.
- **Menands Bridge Replacement** - Ed noted the new NYSDOT draft report is out, see:
 - Website: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/troymenandsbridge/reports>
 - Comments should be submitted by Jan 31st
 - Bridges and their approaches must be made accessible and safe for vulnerable road users!
- **Sand Creek Road Study** - John G. reported the firm working on this study will be revealing their preliminary proposal Jan 10th at 6:30pm at the Village of Colonie Recreation Center
- **DOT Reimagining 787 Effort** - PEL stage - public comments
 - The website is: <https://787.dot.ny.gov>
 - You may also send comments to: 787@dot.ny.gov
- **Clinton Ave & Ten Broeck**
 - Bike lanes from Broadway to Ten Broeck completed!
 - closes bike lane gap from Clinton & Ten Broeck bike lanes to Albany Skyway & and the Corning / Empire State Trail

- <https://www.albanyny.gov/2202/Albany-Pedestrian-Experience-DRI---Clint>
- **Brevator Complete Streets Project -**
 - Per DGS, the project is to start Spring 2024
 - Envisions multi-use trail along East side of Brevator
 - Doesn't address Washington and Western Intersections - City is apparently leaving those issues for future road projects . . .
 - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2177/Brevator-Street-Improvement-Project>
- **Manning Boulevard Improvement Project**
 - Albany's Bike/Ped Plan Calls for Protected Bike Lanes - This is Not Part of the DGS Proposal
 - Send in Comments for Traffic Calming & Bike Infrastructure Please!
 - <https://www.albanyny.gov/2201/Manning-Boulevard-Improvement-Project>
- **Colonie Connector / Airport Option Update -**
 - The newly named Albany County Trail Advocates is preparing 1 page memo to share with Empire State Trail Mgmt, PTNY and Others

Other Business

- **CapitalNYBikeMap.com**
 - migrated to ArcGIS Nov 1
 - Continues to grow with New Scotland Lanes and Clinton Ave extension to Broadway recently added
 - Tivoli Preserve trails to be re-evaluated come Spring
- **Outreach in 2024**
 - We have decided to forego ADK events due to their high cost and limited opportunity to network with Albany County residents
 - Will concentrate more on local farmer's markets
 - Will look into coordinating with other bike-ped partners for events like Troy Farmer's Market
- **Annual Donation Appeal** - Ed will see to updating our Archives of Meeting Notes for the last year to facilitate compiling of our year in review for the annual appeal
- **League of American Cyclists Slow Roads Save Lives Campaign**
 - Pledge here to slow yourself down when driving in your neighborhood:
<https://bikeleague.org/take-action/slow-roads-save-lives/take-the-pledge/>
- **New York State Transportation Master Plan**

- Survey <https://publicinput.com/j1748>
- <https://nystransportationmasterplan.com/>
- **New York State Active Transportation Survey!**
 - <https://nysdotwalkbikeplan.com/>
- **Holiday Lights Ride/Spinners Trivia Night** - We agreed to meet at Crestwood Plaza in Albany at 5:45pm Tuesday, January 2nd. We will ride out at 6pm to see some neighborhood holiday lights and return to Spinners Pizzeria and Pub for their Trivia Night - all are invited to come along for the ride and/or Trivia (Trivia is 7 to 9pm)
- **T-Shirts** - Ed reported we still have a limited quantity of t-shirts available. Anyone interested should e-mail albanybicyclecoalition@yahoo.com
 - Performance T-Shirts \$26 3L, 1M
 - Standard Cotton T-Shirts \$18 3L, 1M
- **Upcoming – Rides/events** (Go here - <https://albanybicyclecoalition.com/resources/upcoming-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: 1/25, 2/29 (a leap meeting), 3/28

Treasurer's Report - David reported he is back from Florida and that ABC finances are still in the black. The Treasurer's Report was approved. We noted Chester, while not at our meeting, e-mailed some helpful recommendations for improving revenue.