

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
VILLAGE HALL- Council Chambers
May 1, 2014
6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Acting Chair David Mann; Commissioners Mark Benson, Jeremy Burton, Douglas Gilbert, Gail Moran, Steven Rouse

ABSENT: Commissioner Greg Marsey

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Jacob Karaca, Plan Commission Attorney; Amanda Woodall and Ron Burke, Active Transportation Alliance
Bill McKenna, Assistant Village Engineer

Roll Call

Acting Chair Mann called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and roll was called.

Active Transportation Alliance presentation – Oak Park Bicycle Plan Update

Ms. Amanda Woodall, the Director of Policy and Planning for the Active Transportation Alliance gave a presentation to the commission. The Active Transportation Alliance is working with the Village to update the bicycle boulevard and bike share system study. She said the goals of the project would be to increase cycling and safety; develop an efficient bicycling network; reduce congestion; maximize transit service and improve health.

Ms. Woodall said bike boulevards were streets that aimed to calm and reduce traffic while prioritizing bicycle travel. She said the general criteria for choosing bike boulevards were residential streets with low on-street parking, low traffic and narrow lanes. They would aim for spacing and continuity block to block and also look to destinations when choosing bike boulevards.

Ms. Woodall reviewed bike sharing systems and said they were gaining popularity throughout the world. She said when planning bike sharing systems they would look at destinations (places like job centers and transportation areas) and site locations. They would also consider the coverage area and its population and the number of bikes, docks and stations. She said the methodology for determining where bike sharing systems would be placed will include GIS analysis, crash analysis, on-bike field work and public outreach analysis.

Commissioner Moran asked if neighboring communities had expressed interest in bike sharing systems. Ms. Ron Burke, the Executive Director of Active Transportation Alliance said Forest Park had expressed some interest. Ms. Woodall said Chicago was interested in expanding their bike sharing system. Commissioner Moran asked if there was an age limit on the membership for bike sharing as there was a youth helmet law in Oak Park. Ms. Woodall said you must be 16 years old to use a Divvy bike.

Commissioner Rouse asked if they were committed to having Divvy bikes throughout Oak Park or only in certain parts of the Village. Ms. Woodall said it would be based on priority destinations, but ideally bike share systems would be throughout the village. To start, however, they would need to place clusters around key destinations. Mr. Burke said it would depend on how many stations there was funding for and the thought would be people would use it to get to transit. Commissioner Rouse suggested if a street was chosen to have chicanes or bike lanes and the neighbors didn't want it-would there be an opportunity for neighbors to weigh in. Mr. Bill McKenna, the Assistant Village Engineer, said they would be getting resident input before installing any treatments. Mr. McKenna said if there was funding available for bike

sharing systems they would first concentrate on the dense population areas and hopefully expand out from there.

Mr. Burke said the number one impediment for Oak Park residents to bike more often was safety and traffic issues. He said bike boulevards would use the low traffic, smaller streets where bicyclists feel more safe and help them get across the high-traffic, major roads in a safe way and this would help increase biking. Acting Chair Mann said he hoped the boulevards would be a connected system throughout the Village. Ms. Woodall agreed, saying the goal was to allow anyone to get around the Village safely and in a healthy way. Acting Chair Mann asked how the Village would prioritize the funding. Mr. McKenna said they would coordinate with capital improvement projects for the Village. Commissioner Gilbert asked about external funding sources. Mr. McKenna said they had been looking for any external funding sources and will continue to do so. Mr. Burke said bike boulevards could start low cost like markings or go up to the higher cost options like street treatments.

Commissioner Rouse asked if the high school was considered a higher priority area for bike sharing. Mr. Burke agreed. Acting Chair Mann said he felt there wasn't enough emphasis on biking for kids and wondered if adding more bike racks to areas would be part of the plan. Mr. McKenna said bike racks at schools was an issue that has to be addressed by the school, but the Village has added racks to public right-of-ways when asked.

Commissioner Rouse asked about bike shelters. Mr. McKenna said the bike shelters were separate from Divvy bikes as the Village received grant money to create the shelters. He said they had some funding to do some more bike shelters in the future.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Rouse motioned to approve the minutes from April 10, 2014. Commissioner Moran seconded. The minutes were approved by a voice vote upon submission.

Public Hearing(s)

None.

Other Business

Acting Chair Mann said resident Mark Gartland will be joining the commission at the next meeting on May 15, 2014. He said there will be scheduled meetings on May 22, 29, and June 5, 2014. Commissioner Moran asked about easements granted at the Chicago and Maple development and if evidence would be submitted at the hearing. Mr. Failor agreed, saying letters would be presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Failor clarified to commissioners the reason for the delay in the Planned Development applications for Chicago and Maple and the YMCA parking lot: both applicants sent resident notice via regular mail but the zoning code required certified mail. Commissioner Moran asked how they would handle testimony from the prior meeting. Mr. Failor said the Village Attorney had determined that prior testimony would be admitted into the record at the next meeting via the videotape and that anyone who did not get a chance to testify or cross examine will get a chance at the next meeting.

A short discussion ensued about noticing requirements. Mr. Failor said they would be looking at the noticing requirements as direct mailing sometimes can be more effective than certified mail.

Mr. Failor said a potential development would be coming to the Plan Commission in late summer as well as the Comprehensive Plan hearing likely in late June or early July.

Commissioner Moran said she tried to recommend Chair Linda Bolte as the most hardworking chair of a commission in Oak Park but was informed that Chair Bolte had received that honor two years ago and thus was ineligible. Commissioner Moran read her recommendation honoring Chair Bolte saying during many high-profile hearings she conducted herself with grace, a judicious manner and a sense of humor. Commissioner Moran thanked Chair Bolte for her service.

Chair Bolte thanked commissioners for their service and said the Plan Commission should be honored as the hardest working commission in the Village. She wished all commissioners luck for the busy summer.

Acting Chair Mann thanked Chair Bolte for her service and said she will be missed. Commissioners agreed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Rouse motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Moran seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Angela Schell,
Recording Secretary