

Morgantown Pedestrian Safety Board Meeting Minutes
Public Safety Building – Training Room 1
4:30 – 5:30 PM
October 8, 2018

The Morgantown Pedestrian Safety Board's mission is to promote a walkable environment throughout the City by developing safe, attractive, and accessible walkways that connect neighborhoods and destinations.

4:30 pm Call meeting to order

I. Introductions:

Members (Quorum Present): Penny Kostka, Jessica Bellow, Matt Cross, George Lilley, Stan Cohen, Dan Shook, Jimmie Simmons,

Ex-officio: Ct. McCabe, Bill Kawecki

Guest: William Blosser, Sam Berhanu, and Seble Berhanu

Absent: Bill Reger-Nash, Jen MacDonald, Jan Derry, Janet Fraser, Maria Smith, Ella Belling, Bill Austin, and Damien Davis

II. Approval of September 10, 2018 Minutes. Motion by George Lilley second by Penny Kostka Passed by (unanimous voice vote).

III. Officer's Reports & Discussion

- Matt Cross:
 - Alta Planning + Stantec won bid for Morgantown Bike & Ped. Plan Update which the MPO will continue to oversee
 - PARKing day event went well and landscape architecture folks from WVU set up space in town (out in front of Jimmie Johns) and added benches and greenery to get people thinking more about green/open space
 - Slogan ideas:
 - Jimmie: "Light Up the Night" slogan idea for wearing reflectors at night
 - Penny: "Be Bold, Wear Gold" slogan idea for lighter clothing at night
 - Penny – there seems to be a contradiction of how the City treats landlords for WVU students vs. how they treat resident property owners
 - Jimmie suggests making a recommendation to the City about changing the diagonal parking to parallel parking on Harding Ave.
 - Bill Kawecki suggests writing a letter to the traffic commission and copy the city council (state the problem and ask for a solution and say that the board has some suggestions that could be implemented)
 - Penny makes a motion to have the Pedestrian Safety Board request the Traffic Commission to review the parking problem on Harding Ave. Penny furthered outlined the issue stating that the diagonal parking is encroaching on the street which causes a safety issue for pedestrians

trying to walk along the street as well as vehicles trying to navigate it.
George seconds this motion. Passed by unanimous voice vote.

- Matt Cross had a resident/student ask for a crossing at University Ave at Riverview Drive since it is an issue for pedestrians to safely cross here.
 - McCabe said this location has been brought up to Traffic Commission before and the issue with adding a crossing here is that there is no sidewalk on the other side and that the bus stop would have to be moved (which Mountain Line is willing to do, but only if WVU pays and WVU doesn't want to pay)
 - Kawecki mentioned the issue of inadequate sight lines in this area and asked if this would even be a safe place to add a crosswalk
 - George said that we still need to have a system to more formally document the issues that the members of the public bring forward and said that we're not the professionals to know, but are the advisors to let the Traffic Commission know where the areas of concern are with regards to pedestrian safety
 - Jimmie says the only safe way to cross is at Woodland Terrace, but there isn't enough sidewalk to stay off the road and get there safely either.
 - The main reason to cross here is to access the Mountain Line bus stop as well as the Law School.
 - Penny made motion to add this issue to the letter to the Traffic Commission as well as the issue at Harding Ave and George seconded her motion. Passed by unanimous voice vote.
- Jimmie mentioned that we need a process to address the following two questions:
 - (1) How do we record the issues that are brought forward to our Board?
 - (2) How do we return the response back to the individual that brought it forward?
- Jessica suggested creating a log to record the issues, the complainant's contact information, and the responses— perhaps in an excel or on a form
- William said the problem with all these issues is financial – where does the money come from for addressing these issues?
- Mr. & Mrs. Berhanu stated that the hearing for Leah's case is on Thursday, November 8th at 8AM. However, the trial probably won't start until later that day (maybe 9 or 10 AM) due to the jury selection process which will happen first thing that morning. The charge is negligent homicide.
 - Matt has had communication with WVU's Reed College of Media about communication programs to get the word out.
 - Jimmie's new slogan idea: "Light the Night for Leah"
- There was a pedestrian incident on Pleasant Street & High Street – no witnesses to confirm details said McCabe.
- Matt wants to have the walk signal show up immediately/automatically on concurrent crossings (especially since the concurrent and exclusive crossings vary in location downtown). Bill Kawecki said that the crossings downtown are not finished yet and suggests that we let the WV DOH know about this

issue immediately and suggests that this comes directly from the Pedestrian Board. Bill Kawecki also mentioned that the sound quality for the blind is unclear (especially around Walnut & Spruce). Matt would like to make a motion to write a letter to request the DOH incorporate this signal programming change. George suggests writing a letter to the City and to the DOH about the general issue and providing some example locations. Bill Kawecki suggests writing the letter to the state and cc the city. Jimmie makes a motion that the Pedestrian Board authorize Matt to write a letter about this to the DOH and cc the City. George seconds this motion. Passed by unanimous voice vote.

- Blue Zones has held recent meetings in Morgantown both with City Officials and with WVU leaders.
 - Dan Shook – being healthy is more than just exercise (it involves eating well, having friends, moving naturally) - don't have to be rich to live forever (in fact many financially poor communities do live longer). WVU could become the first Blue Zone campus in the world and train students and faculty on how to be well vs. just treating disease. The idea is that Morgantown would also be a blue zone community and West Virginia could be the first Blue Zone state. We need a community that fosters great built environments.
 - Matt mentioned that Blue Zones would have an impact on creating Safe Routes to School and could significantly help the efforts of our Board.
 - Jessica mentioned that the timeline will be for Blue Zones to have a Proposal for their scope of work within the next few months (perhaps end of December or early January) and present it at a public hearing.
 - Stan mentioned that Blue Zones hires local staff and there are a lot of local engagement events, a lot of assessments, and evaluations and all of this costs money (use Gallup for surveys)
 - Dan said that he believes that the money to do this initial assessment is coming from outside donor and that moving forward we would need to determine funding for the full project.
- Jesse Heady is trying to make progress forming Open Streets programs
- Penny mentioned that since we still need a formal way to document community feedback to our board, she would like to help create a template with Jessica (and deliver the final version by the end of the year). Jimmie volunteered to provide feedback on this as well.
- Dan suggested that we need our Board to integrate more smoothly with the student safety Board. Matt said he was planning on attending their meetings.
- Dan also mentioned that he is concerned that pedestrians are not looking left and right before crossing and he advocates for an educational campaign to get pedestrians to look before entering the street.
- Jessica recently changed her last name to Bellow (formerly Bladow).
- Jessica mentioned that she needs an updated email address for the new Superintendent for the Board of Education. Matt said he would help get this information for Jessica.

IV. Action Items

- Penny and Jessica will collaborate in writing a letter to the Traffic Commission (and will cc City Council) about the parking issue on Harding Ave as well as the issue about crossing University Ave at Riverview Drive. The letter will be mailed before the upcoming Traffic Commission meeting on Nov. 7th.
- Matt will write a letter about programming concurrent crossings with walk signals automatically and send it to the City of Morgantown as well as the WV DOH.
- Penny, Jessica, and Jimmie will create a template for recording public pedestrian improvement requests for documentation and follow-up purposes.
- Matt will send Jessica the recording template from the Traffic Commission.
- Matt will also coordinate with the Board of Education to help Jessica get an updated email for the new Superintendent, Dr. Eddie Campbell.

V. New Business

VI. Upcoming Events

- Walk to School Day: this Wednesday, October 10th
- October 24th: WV DOH informal workshop and public meeting 4-7PM at the Monongalia County Ballpark, Suite 3 to discuss potential changes to the roundabout adjacent to the WestRidge Business and Retail Park
 - <https://www.dominionpost.com/2018/10/06/doh-fears-i-79-interchange-wont-be-able-to-handle-traffic/>
- Trial for Leah Berhanu: Nov. 8th at 8AM (will start with jury selection; so, trial might not start until 9 or 10 AM)

VII. Ex-Officio Reports

- **MPO Bill Austin:** Absent
- **City Engineer Damien Davis:** Absent
- **City Council Jenny Selin:** Mayor Kawecky left before report could be given
- **Police Captain McCabe:** left before report could be given
- **Rail Trail Ella Belling:** Absent
- **Mountain Line Maria Smith:** Absent
- **Traffic Commission Matt Cross:** No time to present an official update

Next meeting: November 12, 2018, Training Room 1, Public Safety Building, 4:30 – 5:30 pm.