

Bicycle/Trails Advisory Committee Minutes of April 23, 2007

Members Present:

Christina Teeuwen – Chair
Richard Fisher
John Kelly
Jacqueline Grubb
Richard Caldwell
David Plewes

Staff Present:

Mark Shea, Planning
Brian Ballard, Planning
Donna Hill, Parks and Recreation
Earl Sorey, Public Works
Paul Dunn, Public Works

The meeting began at 4:35 p.m. Mr. Dunn gave an update of the Dominion Blvd. project. He briefly gave the history of the project explaining that a separate multi use path was requested by VDOT due to concerns expressed at the November public meeting. A special public meeting for the multi-use facility was held in March. 56 persons attended the meeting and comments were accepted for two weeks after the meeting. A total of 73 comments were received and approximately 2/3 of the attendees were in favor of the facility and 1/3 against. He then read out a few of the significant comments. Public Works has spoken with Council Member Adams and will speak with Mayor Edge prior to the scheduled work session of May 15th. At this work session, Public Works will lay out the two options of keeping the multi-use facility on the plans or to have City Council take future actions to take the facility out. Mr. Shea asked about a third option to have VDOT allow bicyclists on the shoulder. Mr. Dunn stated that VDOT staff has gone on record stating that this would be a safety issue but that the issue could be raised again. There was further discussion of the criteria that FHWA uses when evaluating a request to remove a multi-use facility from the plans.

The meeting continued with introductions of three new committee members. Mr. Shea distributed reduced copies of the Trails Plan and other information to the new members. The Commission requested that the connector tunnel from Oak Grove Lake to Great Bridge Blvd. be shown as an existing facility on the Trails Plan. Mr. Dunn and Mr. Sorey briefly discussed the plans for the Long Bridge widening and stated that they would forward the sidewalk widths after checking with the Project Engineer.

The next item of business was discussion of the City's open space preservation program. Brian Ballard, of the Planning Department, described the greenway concept of connecting open spaces. He also discussed the funding issues and the cluster development concept. Mr. Shea mentioned that off road trails could be planned to follow the corridors developed through open space purchases and dedications through cluster developments. Mr. Ballard emphasized that these corridors could also provide for a network of water trails as well.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of trail possibilities in South Norfolk. A safe bike route through the west side was discussed starting at Dominion Blvd. Experience riders can follow Bainbridge Blvd. to Freeman Avenue. All riders can then take Freeman east to Varsity. A route to the north would then follow Varsity, Walden, Edgewood, Rodgers and D into Norfolk. Mr. Shea asked if there were any ideas for the eastern portion of South Norfolk or if there were any rail-trail possibilities. The Committee will look into these issues further at their next meeting.

Ms. Teeuwen asked Mr. Sorey about looking into signage on Route 17 south of Ballahack to alert drivers that bicycle traffic may be crossing the road.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.