

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting minutes

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

Online

Present: Neal Baxter, Abigail Johnson, Austin Holik, Raina Urton, Julia Curran, Barbara Olson, Harmony Anderson, Peter Vader, Donna Hemp, Paul St. Martin, Christopher Hoffer, Aaron Berger, Tamir Ali Mohamud, Matthew Steinrueck; Matthew Dyr Dahl, Millicent Flowers, Chris Kartheiser, Heidi Schallberg, Emma Pachuta, Suzanne Murphy, Sonja Burseth, Jordan Kocak, Eric Bauer, Mackenzie Turner Bargaen, Rattana Sengsoulichanh; Emma Myers-Verhage & Greta Kurtz, guests

Resolutions:

#1-The Pedestrian Advisory Committee supports the proposed medians on Lyndale Avenue South at West 25th and 27th Streets to partially ameliorate the most severe risks to life and safety for pedestrians crossing this wide, fast street. We ask that a solution be added to alert right-turning vehicles from side streets to the presence of sidewalk users to their right.

Adding medians to Lyndale Avenue South is a stop-gap measure that must not delay or impede the 4-to-3 travel lane conversion called for by the PAC and many others. We further call on Hennepin County to obtain general authority to design and post at the city-wide speed limit of not more than 25 miles per hour.

#2-The Pedestrian Advisory Committee supports the proposed design for midblock crossing(s) on 1st St N. We support the compressed timeline from proposal to implementation.

#3-The Pedestrian Advisory Committee prefers Option A, the two-way bikeway on University Avenue, but does not support either option. The decision to maintain three travel lanes in each direction, contrary to PAC and Minneapolis staff recommendation, uses right of way that could be reallocated for innovative pedestrian and bike solutions. This decision is not suitable for a dense and walkable urban corridor. However, given the alternatives, a two-way protected bikeway reduces the need for bicyclists to cross multiple highly traveled streets to travel west. The City of Minneapolis should withhold municipal consent for any design with three travel lanes.

#4-The Pedestrian Advisory Committee believes that the City, along with Public Works, acted in opposition to policies when it removed the barriers at the memorial at 38th and Chicago in order to open the street to private motor vehicle thru traffic.

1. Opening the street to traffic without including any safe pedestrian spaces is asking for a pedestrian injury by a moving car. The current design of the intersection with the memorial does not allow people to safely move, or engage, with this historic place. This action defeats the policies of Complete Streets and Vision Zero, to establish and respect public spaces.

2. Vibrant pedestrian community spaces are what the Transportation Action Plan and Minneapolis 2040 point to as the future of our public spaces. Removing a community space in this way is antithetical to how the City and Public Works should operate, based on its policies and our collective future as a city.

There are many ways to bring safety, harmony, revenue and beauty to this place that has been a healing gathering space for so many. We are disheartened by the ongoing actions of the City and Public Works, and we hope to see a reversal of this decision soon, with investment given to the community in ways that are not dangerously car-centric and that honor the history and significance of this place for the future.

Chair Abigail called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM, and read the official notice about on-line meetings.

Millicent called the roll; 10 voting members and 15 agency members were present as the meeting began.

Approval of the June Minutes

Abigail moved the minutes for the June meeting; Aaron seconded. Approved.

Orientation and Welcome—Matthew Dyr Dahl

Matthew opened with a warm welcome to all members, new and returning. The format for the next part of the meeting was to introduce the members of the committee to each other, and to acquaint new members with the functioning of the PAC.

Our new members—Harmony Anderson, Raina Urton and Austin Holik—were asked to address three questions: what are you most looking forward to about serving on the PAC, what brought you to the PAC, and what is your favorite (or least) place to walk in Minneapolis. Returning members were asked to state their names and their agency institutions.

After introductions, Matthew discussed the purpose of the committee and the importance of the resolutions we send to the City Council and to Public Works. The members of the Executive Committee talked about their roles, and the work of each subcommittee.

Election of Officers

We proceeded to elect officers for the year.

PAC Chair

Neal nominated Abigail Johnson for chair of the PAC; Barb seconded. Approved.

PAC vice chair

Peter nominated Christopher Hoffer; Barb seconded. Christopher declined the honor.

Abigail nominated Raina Urton; Christopher Hoffer seconded. Approved.

Secretary

Abigail nominated Neal Baxter for secretary of the PAC; Barb seconded. Approved.

Co-chairs of the Programs & Policies Subcommittee

Julia Curran nominated Peter Vader for co-chair; Neal seconded.

Hoffer nominated Julia Curran for co-chair; Abigail seconded. Both approved.

Co-chairs of the Infrastructure and Engineering Subcommittee

Paul St. Martin nominated Christopher Hoffer for co-chair; Neal seconded.

Aaron nominated Barb Olson for co-chair; Peter seconded. Both approved.

With the result that for 2021-2022, Abigail Johnson is PAC chair, Raina Urton is vice chair, Neal Baxter is secretary, Peter Vader & Julia Curran are co-chairs of the P&P Committee, and Christopher Hoffer & Barb Olson are co-chairs of the I&E subcommittee.

Report of the Infrastructure & Engineering Subcommittee—Barb Olson

We heard three presentations at our June meeting. The first was about the proposed medians for Lyndale Avenue at 25th and 27th Streets. The work will include ADA-compliant ramps, enhanced lighting and striping. We liked the medians but were disappointed that the road will keep all four lanes of traffic.

Matthew and Mackenzie both commented on the importance of design speed in setting expectations for a roadway.

Jordan: Hennepin County has not made posted speed of its roads a legislative agenda. This reflects an interest in sharing a common agenda with its sister counties, most of which are rural. Posting a 25 miles per hour speed limit has not been a priority for the county.

Barb read a resolution (#1 above); Neal seconded.

Next, we heard about the mid-block crossing project on 1st Avenue North. This is a long stretch of street without a formal pedestrian crossing. The project fixes this problem.

Barb read resolution #2 above; Neal seconded.

Third, we heard a presentation about the University and 4th Avenue bikeway, which plan we did not support. The three-lane road is too wide and encourages speeding.

Barb read a resolution (#3); Abigail seconded.

We voted on all 3 resolutions in one roll call; all three were approved.

Finally, Chris Kartheiser brought to our attention a few changes in the design of the planned medians proposed for Lyndale Avenue North. These medians will affect 7 intersections between 22nd and 40th Avenues North.

Report of the Programs & Policies Subcommittee—Peter Vader & Julia Curran

The committee discussed a few short agendas at our June meeting. These included new member orientation, the new quorum for our meetings (per the City Clerk's office), and the annoyance of detour and other warning signs that find their way onto city sidewalks. Peter allowed that we will pursue this issue of errant street signs more at coming meetings.

The committee brought forward a resolution for the PAC's attention concerning the intersection of 38th & Chicago, which Peter read; Neal seconded. Discussion followed.

Hoffer: George Floyd Square is an historic place and should be preserved as one.

Sonja: Does the resolution affect transit?

Abigail: Bus service has not resumed through the Square yet. If Metro Transit has any information to share about how transit users feel about the detours and whether buses should proceed through the Square in the future, the PAC would gladly see it.

Neal: I ask that any poll asking neighbors about the detours or resuming service through 38th & Chicago should require respondents to state whether they use the transit service.

The resolution was approved.

Announcements

MD: The Mayor and the City Council have extended the local emergency until September. That

suggests a return to in-person meetings in the coming fall. Whether a remote option will also be available, we don't know yet. This option costs money in equipment, and what-not. Expect in-person meetings after Labor Day.

Peter: The parklet added next to Smoke in the Pit (at 38th & Chicago) is delightful!

Abigail: So is the parklet adjacent to the Dollar and Up store at 37th & Chicago. Also, the PAC usually has an outdoor walking meeting in September. We will arrange a social gathering soon.

Neal moved to adjourn: Peter seconded. Approved, and adjourned at 5:56 PM.