



**South Hadley, MA
Bike-Walk Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, April 17, 2019; 7:00 PM
South Hadley Public Library-Trustees Room**

Attendees: Melissa O'Brien, Mariann Millard, Marilyn Gass, Larry Dubois, Nancy Bozek, Lucia Foley, Margaret Jodoin

Guests: Doris Dubois, Shannon Biven from Valley Bike Share (VBS) and Sarah Tetreault from Michael E. Smith Middle School

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

Larry moved that we accept the March 20th minutes as presented and Marilyn seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Valley Bike Share Program Presentation by Shannon Biven

Shannon discussed the VBS program and how it relates to SH and its relationship with MHC and the Town. She noted the following:

- VBS has just acquired the equipment for the 3rd kiosk in SH - at Woodlawn Plaza near People's Bank.
- Formed a relationship with the condo association at this site and station will be installed when the construction near People's Bank is completed
- VBS's relationship w/MHC is that the college is one of the station's sponsors (the Town Commons station) and w/Town is that they are the owners of the stations and bikes.
- After initial funding is rec'd (primarily through grants) to purchase the bike/station equipment and for VBS to manage the program, the ongoing annual expense for the town is about \$60/year for electricity.
- Marketing/PR is spearheaded by Shannon of VBS but works closely with the VBS Steering Committee (which includes town representatives, e.g., Mike Sullivan for SH)
- Wayne Fiedan of Northampton volunteered to be the program's overarching press contact HOWEVER publicity (e.g., press releases, demo programs) related to specific towns is handled by each town (via their steering committee representative) with some help from Shannon.
- Why there is no payment kiosk at the SHF station: Each town only asked for 1 payment kiosk given the higher costs associated with these. VBS encourages patrons to use the app instead of the kiosk because the kiosk payment method will place a \$35 hold on your credit card until the bike is returned.
- Why is Beewegan the company operating VBS? A bid went out a few years ago for make equipment and bikes for stations in all five cities/towns participating in Valley Bike Share. Beewegan won the bid and secured a 5 year contract to manage the program. After 5 years, VBS can renew the contract for management or re-bid.
- Any plans for a kiosk/station at the Big Y plaza on Willamansett St.? Not at the moment. The focus to date has been to place them in denser populated areas near employers. The program can be expanded and the town/VBS could apply for a grant to fund the next phase.
- Kiosks continue to be updated with better information and have been done so this spring and they have added more bikes.
- Bikes can be tracked on the website and app — VBS knows if a person has taken it out of the boundaries.

- A BWC member mentioned that she liked the demo VBS hosted at MHC and Shannon said that she'd be happy to host more of these.
- Shannon noted that overall, SH bike usage has been "good" with decent usage from SHF to the Town Common and some trips across the bridge into Holyoke. Usage has been a mix of recreational and employment purposes. Survey issued by VBS showed that many users have higher income levels in SH but this is likely skewed by more willingness of older folks to finish a survey and less so by younger people.
- Outreach done to other Employers? Yes, Shannon did a demo for E-Ink. She'd like to know about who are the larger employers in SH and do similar outreach/demos for them.
- How the BWC and others can help: Spread the word, share information about VBS with our email list and on our webpage. Info related to successes, how to use and recommendations on how one might bike from SH to other towns and hosting more demos. A BWC member mentioned how we could initiate a Town Reminder article on this to help spread the word. We could also poll people about best travel routes to other towns.
- Chamber of Commerce involvement? Not to date in SH; Noho downtown historical district has been involved in Noho VBS programming.
- School involvement is limited due to only kids ages 16 and up are allowed to ride the bikes provided their parents sign them up and sign a waiver. Perhaps the HS should be contacted.
- Helmets are not provided by VBS - the onus is on the user to bring their own.
- Sponsors must commit for a 5 year minimum which is good; money from sponsors goes to the town to help w/the managing/maintenance costs while the sponsor gets visibility. Getting the casino to become a sponsor would be great.
- Same bikes as Lyft? No, Beewegan makes its own bikes and does so internationally.
- Why isn't VBS in Granby? They did not express interest - similar to Hadley. At this point, Chicopee, Agawam and W. Springfield are all asking for stations. The VBS Steering Committee will ultimately decide on this.

BWC's Community Connections Trek which is happening on May 19th at Ashley Reservoir in Holyoke was discussed with Shannon and she agreed to bring the VBS bikes for people to try out and she will handle that aspect of the trek which will include biking (commemorating Baystate Bike Week) and hiking which will be handled by the BWC and possibly Holyoke's Bike-Ped committee if they wish to participate.

BWC Community Connections Trek on 5/19/19 from 1-3pm

Mariann and Nancy scouted out the route earlier that day and found that from the Elks Lodge, we would pass through a gate to the trail system which totaled a 2.5 mile, relatively flat, loop around the reservoir. The pathway is very wide which will accommodate both bikers and walkers. There are offshoot paths but the main pathway is very visible and should be easy for walkers/bikers to decipher if not being led by a guide.

This is an excellent opportunity for the BWC to promote biking as it is safe/off the road which is impossible to do in SH and will make for a very family friendly event. Thanks to Lucia for coming up with this idea.

BWC will advertise the trek in SH through email blasts, Town Reminder article(s) and through the school system. Elks Lodge should be open (Mariann will double-check) which will allow participants to buy refreshments as the BWC will not be providing any that day.

Plan is to set up on green lawn area near the gate and Mariann will check in with Elks Lodge to ensure they are okay with this.

People can bring their own bikes and there was discussion as to whether BWC would lead a biking or hiking (or both) group(s). The group ultimately decided that the BWC would lead a hike as normally done — meet at 12:45 and depart at 1pm. Mariann was going to check with Price Armstrong of the Holyoke Bike-Ped Committee in Holyoke to see if anyone from their group would be willing to lead a bike or walking tour.

The event should be added to the Baystate Bike Week calendar.

May 19 Trek Wrap-Up

Mariann will call Elks, get maps, Shannon will manage VBS portion.

Unclear if a wheelchair will fit under the gate — Mariann to clarify with Price.

Mariann will contact Bob on Holyoke bike-ped committee who does historical tours of the reservoir to see if he's interested doing one on this day.

BWC will set up near Shannon with a banner/table

Mariann to confirm that the e-bikes are not considered motorized vehicles

Mariann to see if she can get copies of the maps from the town for BWC distribution

SH Middle School Health Fair on May 30th

Sarah Tetreault, 8th grade history teacher, gave an overview of what the fair entails which will start around 9am on 5/30. All students have to participate in a civics/community project as per new curriculum requires.

This is a student-led project, they came up with the idea in which they wanted to focus on stress and health and things students can do to improve anxiety and health outcomes. BWC, if it participates, would be one of the municipal-based participants along with other private organizations that provide Reiki, yoga, therapy dogs, the food pantry, Levine Associates to explain the importance of incorporating breaks into daily routines and drug awareness/education.

Sarah indicated that students were not really aware of the walking/hiking/biking opportunities in town and thought it would be helpful to have the BWC presence there to let them know about options as well as their parents. They might be interested in forming their own biking/hiking/walking club.

As the BWC treks rarely have younger kid participation, this would be a great opportunity to get the word out and possibly younger attendance at treks.

BWC mentioned that the main safe opportunity to bike in town (off road) is probably the River to Range trail newly finished 1 mile loop which is also ADA accessible. We also discussed how the new Leaping Well Trail behind Mosier School is another excellent opportunity for cross-curriculum studies along w/passive recreation. Also Black Stevens, near the high school and Plains allows for hiking and mountain biking. Sarah was going to pass this info along to their after school program (which has/had a hiking club) and their biology department.

A BWC member also mentioned how students could potentially participate in the set-up of the Leaping Well Trail which will require trail blazes, signage, maps, naming sites, organizing scavenger hunts, take pics of trails to identify and observe habitat/wildlife/fauna/invasive species, etc. — all of which could be integrated into a class project.

Students might be interested in participating in volunteer efforts to clean up/trim/work on trails in other conservation areas as well so Anne Capra should be contacted about interest.

Sarah indicated that her class would be happy to have some reps from the BWC to come in and speak with her students organizing this fair. BWC would discuss this later and get back to her on this and will develop a flyer/info to go along with the fair announcement.

Other potential participants were discussed such as farms offering CSAs like Red Fire Farm and SH Community Garden and Barstow's which has innovative ways of composting.

KYT Event featuring BWC/Conservation

Mariann and Anne Capra will be there to speak about the new Leaping Well Trail, info on the BWC and Conservation Comm. webpage, community alerts, community clean up events, etc.

Anne Capra asked if the BWC would be willing to author an article in the Town Reminder about upcoming community clean up opportunities.

Other:

Arbor Day celebration on April 26 honoring Bill Bacis at 9:30-10:30 am behind middle school

September Go for Life Stroll: Nancy Yesu retired and Miranda Donahue has taken her place. Miranda and Leslie will come to our meeting next month to discuss further. Leslie interested in doing it at River to Range Loop Trail again. Mariann gone from Aug. 20-October 5 so this trek will happen without her.

Don't miss upcoming Weds. 4/24 Community Forum #3 on People, Prosperity, Housing & Connections from 6-8pm.

Lucia reported that the OSR update group looked at the goals & objectives of the existing OSR plan and many of them are still relevant but need to be reorganized. Judy Gooch is still holding Meetings in a Box post forum for those who cannot make that particular date but want to have input.

New SB member Chris Geraghty will be invited to the BWC June meeting as done with Jeff Cyr last year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20pm —Larry moved and Lucia seconded the motion.

Nancy Bozek will clerk at the next meeting on Wed. May 15th.

Respectfully submitted by:

Melissa O'Brien