

Newburyport Livable Streets
Meet-Up / Discussion
February 28, 2018
7pm to 9pm, The Grog

I. Attendance: Gary Gorski, Sheila Taintor, Juliet Walker, Mary McDonald, Rick Taintor

II. Outreach / Publicity

- A. Review draft press release to announce NLS. Rick T will circulate to the group before finalizing. We'll send to Daily News, Current, City Hall, and also to any groups / affiliations each of us has individually (e.g. other community orgs or committees, clubs, professional contacts, etc). Juliet W will send to schools and City Hall.
- B. Social Media updates. The new NLS facebook (@newburyportlivablestreets) page is up and running. Juliet, Rick, Conrad, Gary, Christine, and Alex have been assigned administrative and/or editing responsibilities. Please let Juliet know if you'd like to be added (or removed) as an editor. Rick T has also started a Twitter account (@NbptStreets). We also have a gmail account newburyportlivablestreets@gmail.com.
- C. Web page status. It would be good to have a web page as not all people we want to reach use social media. Conrad W and Alex D have offered to look into this for the group.
- D. Other connections. Sheila T and Elizabeth M have added our group to the Transition Newburyport and Storm Surge hosted calendar of events to help publicize local events on the topic of resilience and sustainability throughout the year and to help avoid date conflicts -- <http://grtrnbpt.wixsite.com/RScalendar>. Gary G reached out to Molly Ettenborough at the City (see below) who also put him in touch with Greg Jones (the new Project Manager for the city's planning department). Gary took the opportunity to share some info about NLS and both staff were receptive to working with the group in the future. Juliet W will touch base with Newburyport Youth Council, Middle School Clipper Crew, and High School Green Team to let them know about NLS and invite them to next meeting.

IV. Ongoing Initiatives (Report Backs)

- A. Complete Streets. Policy adopted, next step is for City to hire a consultant to work on a prioritization plan. Andy Port (City Planner) asked for suggestions, one recommendation was TEC (currently the consultant for the High Street project).
- B. Library Bike Racks. Gary G followed up with Molly Ettenborough at the City to see if she could be of further assistance for getting bike racks installed at the library. She referred him to Mike Bartlett (facilities manager). Gary G will contact Mike to go over some of the suggested locations Rick, Juliet and Gary identified when we met with the Library director in January. Juliet W send some suggested bike rack styles and cost estimates.
- C. High Street Safe Routes to School project. Juliet W re-capped a recent meeting that she attended with MassDOT staff, the consultant (TEC) that is designing the High Street

improvements, and City staff. The Mayor, Paul O'Brien, Susan Viccaro, Tim Mahan, Wayne Amaral, Jon-Eric White, and Andy Port attended on behalf of the city. Overall the City was supportive and appreciative of the project and the proposed design. Juliet W reiterated our groups interest in helping with community outreach and supporting the overall project goals of improving safety for kids walking and biking to school. Additional benefits will be a much improved street with new sidewalks and opportunities for street trees. Mayor expressed some concern that the Historical community would be opposed to the proposed HAWk (pedestrian activated overhead signal), but general consensus was that the signal design could be done in an historically appropriate way and that the overall safety benefits should be considered in balance with historical objectives. MassDOT anticipates a public meeting in March/April and anticipated construction would be Spring / Summer of 2019. Primary staff contacts for the City are Greg Jones and Wayne Amaral. Juliet W will post the design documents to the Newburyport Livable Streets shared drive (newburyportlivablestreets@gmail.com, password is streets01950) for those interested in viewing the details of the proposed improvements. Juliet W will reach out to the consultant team to confirm with they received any additional comments from City staff after the meeting.

- D. Hale Street Task Force. Gary G and Alex D have been asked by the Mayor to be on this Task Force but the first meeting was cancelled due to weather and has not yet been re-scheduled. At another City meeting of the City's Energy Advisory Committee, Sheila T also had an opportunity to discuss the concept of building a raised boardwalk shared use path along Hale St similar to what has been done up in Portsmouth at the Pease Tradeport in a wetland area. She has been invited to attend the next Task Force meeting as well.
- E. Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. A number of NLS members attended the February meeting of the TSAC including Christine W, Mary McDonald, Rick T, and Jennie D (apologies if I left anyone else off the list who attended). The NLS members took the opportunity to introduce the group's mission and purpose and also discussed snow clearing on City sidewalks and trails. There was a lot of discussion on the topic and general agreement that something needed to be done to make sure critical routes are cleared immediately after snow storms. However, the City's enforcement actions tend to have little or no impact on private property owners who violate the mandatory sidewalk clearing ordinance. At our February NLS meeting, we proposed next steps to research best practice from other communities in MA around this issue. In addition, our group should continue to advocate for the City to be more proactive in clearing sidewalks around City properties immediately after snow storms and supporting resources (staffing and equipment) to make sure this happens. We also discussed the issue with the roads under state jurisdiction (e.g. Storey Ave) and that the state has little interest in enforcing sidewalk clearing on its roadways. We determined that direct outreach by NLS to the businesses along those corridors would be a good next step -- perhaps suggesting they collectively pay for the sidewalks to be cleared by an outside contractor. We also discussed "safe sidewalk awards" as a way to highlight businesses that do an exceptional job of clearing their sidewalks. Christine W will follow up with TSAC

members to determine what resources the City needs to do a better job of clearing sidewalks and trails.

- F. Merrimac St Safety Initiative. City staff have indicated that any work on Merrimac St safety improvements is on hold until the City completes the Complete Street prioritization plan. That being said, NLS may want to focus on interim “demonstration” type safety improvements that could be done at little or no cost to the City prior to any permanent improvements are undertaken. Christine W anticipates that Merrimac St efforts by her and her neighbors will be ramping up again with spring and baseball games coming up.

V. Events / Activities

- A. May Walk/Bike to School Day/Week. Gary G, Alex D, Juliet W, and Kate Dardinski have begun discussing plans for the Walk/Bike to School Week activities in the first week of May. Mary M also offered to coordinate with the River Valley Charter School. In addition, Sheila T, Rick T, and Mary M have been meeting to discuss organizing another event(s) for the broader community to coincide with the school week. Some ideas include hosting a movie on a related topic, inviting businesses to challenge their employees to bike or walk that week, and organizing a bike safety rodeo. Rick T will be following up with the Chamber (maybe) and the Tannery Marketplace to gauge interest in participating in a business bike/walk challenge. Juliet W will touch base with City Hall on the same. Mary M also offered to touch base with the Police Department.
- B. Open Streets Event. Juliet W and Judy T have begun planning for an Open Streets Event in the South End later this year. More updates will follow at the next meeting.
- C. Other Community Events. The annual bike swap at the Tannery Marketplace is scheduled for April 15th. Discussion about whether NLS should have a table at that event.
- D. Other business. Juliet W mentioned it would be great to get members of our group certified to be bicycle safety instructors. She will research and share ideas with the group next time.

VI. Next Meeting -- Thursday, March 22 at 7pm at the Newburyport Public Library in the Children's Section