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Active Transportation and Safe Roads Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: August 29, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Rick Stockman (Chair), Connor Houston (Co-Chair), Jim Boate (joined at 7:27 p.m.), Debbie Doiron, Bart Hawkins-Kreps, Ron Hooper, Lori Moore, Richard Oldfield, Councillor Sami Elhajjeh (joined at 8:20 p.m.)

Staff Present: Rob Brezina, Slav Potrykus and Catherine Verhoog

Absent: Hawa Mire, Brad Whittle

1. AGENDA

1.1 Additions to Agenda

No additions.

1.2 Acceptance of Agenda

Motion to accept the agenda.

Moved to approve by Lori Moore, seconded by Bart Hawkins Kreps.

CARRIED

2. MINUTES OF MAY 2, 2024

2.1 Corrections

None

2.2 Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes of May 2, 2024.

Moved to approve by Ron Hooper, seconded by Connor Houston.

CARRIED

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

3.1 New Committee Member – Debbie Doiron

Rick welcomed Debbie Doiron to the Committee. Debbie introduced herself and said that her and her family have been living in Clarington since about 2000. She is active in the community as far as bike trails, walking trails, and using all the conservation areas. She is interested in seeing all the new growth and the explosion of population and she is looking forward to helping to shape pedestrian and bicycle friendly spaces within the community as part of the committee. Debbie worked in Bowmanville as a midwife for approximately 16 years.

3.2 May 2 Meeting Follow Up Items:

3.2.1.1 Bike Repair Stands Follow Up (Jim/Connor/Ron/Rick)

Ron – The grant application deadline was missed as there was a significant amount of information needed and very little time. The Veteran's Square reconstruction project may include additional bike racks but it is not yet complete.

Rick – This subject can be brought back up again once Jim is able to join the meeting as the bike racks are a big issue with him and he may have something to say.

3.2.1.2 Holt Road/Energy Drive Safety Concerns (Jim)

Rick – This subject to be brought up when Jim joins the meeting.

3.2.1.3 2024 Bike Month Update (Rick)

Rick – I don't think that we should be trying to do something that the Region is also trying to do, so I thought we should just leave this to the Region. Do any members have an opinion on this?

Connor – As long as municipal staff know that the social channels are available for promotion and are communicating with the Region going forward.

Lori – Agrees with Connor. Lori attended one of the online meetings for the planning and the Region seems to be quite well resourced for doing this and we aren't. The Region helped the committee by providing swag for the Ribfest.

3.3 Durham Region Active Transportation Update (Connor)

Connor – There was a lot of discussion at the June 13th meeting about the rail trail in Uxbridge, which doesn't apply to this committee. Vision Zero is being updated to include breaking down collisions with cyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, and now e-bikes and e-scooters. Their data collection is being updated and shared with the Region, which includes Clarington. They have been doing it for just a year and a bit now, so Connor will provide more updates, probably at the end of the year when Vision Zero provides a snapshot of where these accidents or unintentional injuries between cyclists, walkers, pedestrians, e-bikes and e-scooters have been occurring.

Ron – What are the rules for motorized electric wheelchairs and wheelchair tricycles travelling on the roadway? This morning, he ran into a situation where there were two of these vehicles on Ontario Street travelling in each different direction. Are they supposed to be on the road or on the sidewalk?

Connor – Can't comment as he is not sure of the rules. Those types of discussions regarding exactly what is classified as an e-bike are still being held at the regional level.

3.4 Ribfest Event Summary and Future 2024 Events for AT&SRC Kiosk (Lori/Rick)

Lori – The three-day event was held in early June. Rick, Ron, Bart, Jim and Lori took turns manning the tent every day except for the Friday morning. The weather was crappy so that limited the amount of people coming in and out. There were several brochures and some swag available. The items are now stored in Lori's garage. This was a good test-run, and a need was recognized for some sandwich boards, interactive displays, maps, things like that.

Bart – Did up a very brief survey as a sort of experiment. It included asking whether the people lived in Clarington, or worked in Clarington, or have children going to school in Clarington. There were a number of people interested in what we are doing but they were not from Clarington. They were asked if they felt safe cycling or walking to work or having their children cycle or walk to school. They were also asked if they were aware of the trail system we have. All the people interviewed were aware of the trails in their area. People did say they felt safe riding.

Asking "are there safe routes to and from school and work" might be a better way to word the question. It takes quite a bit of effort for this type of survey,

but it is important to know how the public is responding and how they feel about active transportation. This would be something to look at for a future event, but he also recognizes that they were relying on people coming to their tent to complete the survey, so they are asking people to participate who are already interested in cycling and walking as they are approaching the display. We need to get some data about how people beyond the active cycling and walking community feel about the safety of using active transportation.

Jim – Asked about the active transportation public information session and survey that the municipality held earlier this year and what the results were.

Rob – Will check with staff and share the data with the committee from the survey if there are no proprietary concerns.

Ron – A lot of the people that he spoke to were from outside the area, but they commented on how beautiful it is. He related the travels of a young family cycling in Bowmanville in the Scugog Street/Highway 2/Roenigk Drive area, and the route that they took and the timing, and commented that they would have had a lot to say about the safety of their ride.

Richard – Asked if the family all had helmets on which Ron confirmed that they did. He would like to see the committee promoting the wearing of helmets and the safety aspects of cycling. He does not believe that Ribfest was the right venue for the committee, and that they should get on the ball and get to Maplefest and Applefest. Both events would be easier in terms of manpower as they are only one day events.

Ron – Acknowledged that Richard had a good point and if there is a survey that the committee would like handed out, he would be more than willing to do that from his business. A handout may be easier as a bag stuffer for the public to take with them and fill it out when they want and drop it off wherever they want.

Lori – Would like to know who would like to volunteer for Applefest.

Rick – Enjoyed participating at the Ribfest display. He thanked Lori for stepping up and organizing the Ribfest participation. It was the first event since pre-covid. He thanked Catherine for rounding up the stuff for the committee. He thanked Bart for the creativity and initiative for the survey in an attempt to connect with the community. The committee is in need of a bit more razzmatazz and he would like a contact from Communications to connect with regarding better signage, interactive mapping, etc. to try and attract the community to their display.

Rob – Will provide Rick with a contact.

Lori – Thanked everyone for bringing everything together so quickly. A need was identified for some general support stuff like utility knives, plastic containers, map displays and so on. There was a glaring deficit of bike racks at the Ribfest.

Rick – As this is not a municipal event, the Rotary Club will need to be contacted.

Lori – Will reach out to the contact at the Rotary that she had for Ribfest. She will also send an email to Rick to send out to the committee members for volunteers for Applefest on October 19th. The bells were a very big hit at Ribfest for swag, could the committee investigate purchasing some?

Jim – Double-sided Velcro tape is needed for the banner.

Rob – There is a \$2,500 annual budget for the committee that is available.

3.5 Speed Limit Concerns – Policy Update (Rob/Slav)

Slav – Provided an update on the 30km/hr speed limit and signs that were implemented on municipal roads at all elementary schools, intermediate schools, high schools, etc. within Clarington. The Region of Durham and the Province were approached about reducing the speed limits on the roads under their jurisdiction adjacent to schools, but they declined due to the higher road classifications. All schools recognized by the community were included, along with all of those from the Kawartha Pineridge District School Board, and the Peterborough, Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic School Board. To give drivers a reasoning behind the 30km/hr zone, the pentagon school area fluorescent signs have been placed on top of the 30km/hr signs and school zone reminder signs. Within some of the busier zones, a speed limit sign with an oversized fluorescent border has been used. Durham Regional Police have been handing out warnings currently, but the “back to school” program starts next week, and they will be enforcing the areas.

Bart – The background for this item on the agenda is the creation and implementation of a traffic calming policy. He is on a Neighbourhood Community Association Board, and they have been told several years in a row that there is a policy being developed but it has not yet been shared.

Slav – The 30km/hr speed limit signs for schools is not related to the Traffic Calming Policy. The Traffic Calming Policy being proposed has now been incorporated with the Strategic Plan for Clarington that is adopted by Council. Corporate-wide restructuring has delayed the process, but the policy is still being worked on.

Ron – Asked if the secondary streets behind where catwalks spill out onto are being signed as well.

Slav – Only the streets adjacent to the schools were signed. The limits were basically established for where the hotspot activities are in terms of parking congestion etc., right where you have the exposure of higher potential, higher volume of traffic, higher congestion with the vulnerable road users where you are getting kids getting out of cars crossing and running across, all those things.

Richard – Disagrees with the lowered speed limit because every time there is a traffic issue, it is just solved by lowering the speed limit 24/7. Suggested flashing lights to only reduce the speed limit when school is in session.

Slav – Where parks are adjacent to schools, which is quite often the case, the speed limit has been extended to include their frontages. The parks are used at all different times, including during the summer, so this inclusion is justified to provide greater safety. Options of doing it differently in the future, such as flashers, would have to be adopted by Council and would require Traffic By-law amendments as well.

Councillor Elhajjeh – The goal is to change behaviour and Council determined that the blinking lights didn't meet their goal. If the speed limit changed during the summer, then the people would have to be educated all over again when school started. The idea is to change behaviours to save lives and make our street safer and hopefully that is being addressed. Although the public may be actively commenting on social media, he has not received any negative emails from the public regarding the change. Council is open to suggestions and ideas if anyone wants to come to council and discuss the limits.

Slav – Public Works' received about a dozen or so complaints that have been logged into the system applauding the speed reduction, but saying that it maybe should have been 40 or it should have been a time limit. They will keep an eye on them to see if they increase once school starts.

Councillor Elhajjeh – The equation when calculated from changing a 50 to a 30 for the approximately 150 feet of the school zone equates to less than two seconds of time. I feel that it's an adequate measure to ensure that our residents have peace of mind when their kids are walking to school.

Jim – Completed a bit of an unofficial survey and pretty well most of Ontario and the rest of Canada has a 30km/hr speed limit in school zones. We are on the right track at 30 and if we can do anything else to improve it, I'm 100% behind that. He wishes that there was a provincial standard for municipalities regarding speed limits in school zones and other areas.

Connor – Thank you to Slav and Councillor Elhajjeh for the work that they are doing on this. It is great to see some progress being made in safety in our community, we really appreciate it.

Rick – Does the committee want to discuss this further in terms of the bigger issue about speed limits in general?

Jim – No, I do not need to discuss it anymore.

Connor – Speed limits no, but I think we should be informed of the policies that are being made right now regarding community safety.

Ron – I don't think that we should discuss it anymore. This is going to be a live and learn exercise and I think we should be supportive of how far they have come along with it. And I want to send kudos to staff and to say, and Council too, for moving forward with it.

Lori – Not in school zones specifically, but there may be areas where traffic calming or a decrease in speed limit may be required in some areas. We could look at specific locations.

Debbie – No, I don't think we need to discuss it further. I'm interested in seeing the traffic calming strategy as part of that Strategic Plan though.

Richard – I thought this was a general item to discuss speed limits, not the school zones, and that's always a healthy discussion.

Bart – I feel the same way, that we don't need to discuss the school zones specifically. The more general issues of speed limits in neighbourhoods and specific locations should be a standing item.

Rick – Thank you Slav for coming and giving us your insights and knowledge. It is very helpful for the committee, so thank you.

Slav – Just to add, we are looking to schedule the presentation of the policy to Council early 2025, so hopefully over the winter I'll have something ironed out.

3.6 Safety Improvements to West Beach Road (Bart)

Bart – Shared a picture of the section of West Beach Road that's been talked about over the last several years. The picture shows the bollards that have been installed in the center of the road. Bart's perception is that there was an immediate reduction in speed for most drivers along this section. This is a route right down to the major waterfront park in Bowmanville and we should encourage kids and families biking down to the beach. If it is expected to be a safe route, you can't have bikes and pedestrians mixing with cars who are travelling 50km/hr or higher. He appreciates that something was done this summer but is hoping that the committee will continue to work on this issue and have the issue addressed in a more effective way next spring/summer.

Lori – Agrees with Bart that it still needs to be reviewed and addressed as being at 50, it still remains quite a high velocity traffic through there and the bike trail comes out at a 90-degree angle and is still very dangerous. It really continues to need to be reviewed and addressed and that this isn't an adequate solution.

Rick – Suggesting adding to the next agenda for an in-depth discussion about lowering the speed limit on West Beach Road, and possibly making a formal recommendation to Council.

All members agreed to add to the next agenda reducing speed limits on West Beach Road.

3.7 Intersection Markings for Bike Lanes – Trulls/Nash/Hwy 2 (Jim/Rick)

Jim – Markings have been installed to show that where the bike lane ends 50m before you hit the busy intersection. There's now some sharrows there to indicate that the cyclist should still have kind of like a right of way on that road to go through the intersection. That's a bit of help from where we were before, but I still think that the green paint brings much more awareness from a driver's point of view.

Rob – As discussed last time, when the Region was contacted, they indicated that they will not paint designated green markings because the cyclists are operating in a shared space and those are reserved for dedicated cycling lanes that are through an intersection. So as the cycle lanes terminate at the intersection and they cyclists are required to merge with the vehicles into a single lane of traffic, there is no space essentially to accommodate a dedicated cycling land through the intersection, so they won't be installing them. If the committee feels strongly enough, they could petition the Region's traffic staff to try get something in the works for intersection modifications or improvements in a longer-term plan, but their position is they won't be doing that.

Rick – Suggested forwarding this concern to the Durham Region Cycling Coalition (DRCC) as they may have a more direct input to the Region.

Jim – Will send an email to the representative on the DRCC from the Clarington Cycling Club regarding this issue and the discussion.

Debbie – Trulls and Bloor is poorly marked and there is nothing there for cyclists at all. Along Bloor going west towards Prestonvale, it is all pretty precarious. It's all construction down there at this point, so I'm hoping that there's going to be something in the works that includes and incorporates a bike lane or two. The trail is as poorly marked in this area as it is at Nash and Highway 2.

Jim – There is a lot of bicycle traffic at the shopping center at Highway 2 and Trulls, and they were supposed to have bicycle lanes going into the center but that never happened. We need to have more bike racks at the center for people to lock up their bikes too. Whether they are bicycles or e-bikes.

Debbie – Are there future multi-use path's (MUP's) planned for new developments?

Rob – The Region is currently designing a roundabout at Trulls and Bloor which will help realign the intersection, help reduce speed, reduce fatal and injurious collisions, and incorporate MUPs which will get cyclists off the roadway and help them navigate the intersection. As part of our secondary plan development, when we have arterial roads such as Trulls and Bloor, MUP's are the default for active transportation infrastructure implementation. Lots of complexity being added to what is a legacy or older active transportation network. For instance, Trulls which has bike lanes now per our current development policy, would not have in-road cycling facilities because the speeds and volumes are too high. In the long-term perspective, it takes a lot of time and money, but the intent would be to shift these in-road facilities to off-road facilities. There is lots to look forward to, particularly in the Courtice area, in the next few years as we develop.

3.8 Bike Racks at Garnet B. Rickard Recreation Complex (Richard)

Richard – There are only a couple of little circular “bike racks” at the southeast side of the Rickard. More bike racks are needed in the right places, such as at the front entrance. The farmer's market is there on Fridays and there really isn't anywhere safe to lock up your bike. Recreation centers like the Rickard should get priority for the installation of public bike racks.

Jim – Agrees with Richard's comments regarding the municipal community centers and would also like to see more bike racks when new shopping centers are developed. He was assured by municipal staff at a public meeting that bike lanes and bike racks would be put in at the new shopping center at Trulls and Highway 2, but lanes were never put in.

Rob – He is not a planner, so he isn't aware of specifics, but believes that in modern standards for approvals of site plan applications that there is a requirement to have a designated number of biking spaces or racks. In a lot of older developments within Clarington that wasn't a consideration at the time and there's nothing necessarily to force those businesses to include these facilities unless they do a redevelopment. If there are concerns with municipal facilities, a customer service request can be submitted directly to Community Services who oversees these facilities, and they can respond.

3.9 Active Transportation Master Plan Update (ATMP) (Rob)

Rob – Due to staff losses at the municipality as well as with the consultants, there has not been too much progression on the ATMP. They are hoping to have a draft completed for a corporate review at the end of September. There should be more to speak to at the December meeting as at that point they should be finalizing the ATMP to be submitted to Council.

4 OTHER BUSINESS

Richard – Several months ago he contacted the municipality to request a warning sign for the court where his autistic grandson lives. He hasn't had a response from the municipality, and he believes that this falls under active transportation and would like to know if it's something that could be put on the agenda.

Rob – Suggested that Richard should submit his request through the customer service portal and if he doesn't receive a timely response, he could possibly follow up with Slav.

Councillor Elhajjeh – Asked Richard to resend his email to the Councillor that he originally sent his request to, and to copy him so that he can look into it and get a better response.

5 NEXT MEETING

Thursday December 12, 2024

6 ADJOURNMENT

Motion that the meeting be adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Moved by Ron Hooper, seconded by Lori Moore.

CARRIED