

Arlington County Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)  
Virtual Meeting  
Wednesday, August 12, 2020 7 P.M. – 9 P.M.  
Minutes (approved with corrections September 9, 2020)

**Present:** Eric Goldstein, Chair; Chris Yarie, Vice Chair; Pamela Van Hine, Recording Secretary; Ian Blackwell; Jim Feaster; Elizabeth Gallagher; Gail Ginsburg; Eric Goodman; Andrea Walker; David Patton, Bicycle & Pedestrian Planner; Mary Dallao, WalkArlington Program Manager

**Guests:** Rochelle Kaufman; Patrick Kenney; Christine Ng, former PAC member; Gordon Chaffin, Street Justice; Gillian Burgess, BAC Chair; Chris Slatt, Transportation Commission Chair; Staff: Valerie Moseley, Bureau Chief, Transportation Planning & Capital Projects Management; Leah Gerber, Active Transportation Coordinator; Erin Potter, Community Engagement Specialist DES

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. and welcomed PAC members, staff, and guests to the first virtual PAC meeting, held through the County's Microsoft Office TEAMS interface -- our first opportunity to meet since the Coronavirus pandemic began in mid-March. The Chair reviewed how the meeting would be run virtually, and staff D. Patton and E. Potter provided additional guidance. Unlike County Commission meetings, Committee meetings do not need to be recorded or live-streamed. However, members of the public can attend by registering through D. Patton. The Chair verified PAC members' attendance; D. Patton introduced V. Moseley and L. Gerber in their new County roles. Both spoke briefly, and we welcomed them.

**Guest Comments:** R. Kaufman and P. Kenney shared their support for improved pedestrian infrastructure and access and curiosity about the PAC. G. Chaffin reminded the PAC about his online transportation newsblog. C. Slatt encouraged the PAC to work collaboratively with the Transportation Commission and to bring issues to the Commission for their support and input.

#### **Chair's Report:**

- *Joint BAC-PAC meeting:* The Chair suggested holding a joint BAC-PAC meeting in either September or October. The meeting would focus on equity issues, and the Chair would like to invite Samia Byrd, Chief Race and Equity Officer, Deputy County Manager, to speak. PAC participants supported his plan, and G. Burgess noted that she looks forward to this important joint discussion.
- *PAC membership and officer appointments:* The Chair reminded PAC members that PAC appointments are up at the end of this year. Members who wish to be reappointed should let the Chair and D. Patton know as soon as possible. Also let them know if you would like to run for a PAC office.
- *Review and approval of the [draft March 11, 2020 PAC minutes](#):*
  - **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft minutes as submitted. The minutes were approved unanimously by PAC members present.

#### **General Updates:**

- *[General Budget and CIP](#) (E. Goldstein):* Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the process and project funding for both budgets had to be reimagined. The approved CIP is for one year only and focuses on emergency funds needed. According to G. Burgess, the sidewalk inventory is still in the approved budget. P. Kenney asked what this was, and the Chair explained that it is a conditions inventory, not a repair or building program, and it will give the PAC much needed information on the quality and locations of sidewalks in the County.
- *[Signing ADA 30th Anniversary Pledge](#) (E. Goldstein):*
  - **Motion:** PAC attendees approved the Chair to sign-on to this pledge.
- *[Neighborhood Complete Streets](#):* E. Goodman, the PAC NCS representative, reported that the three current NCS-reviewed projects and proposed [Program Guide](#) and [Project Ranking](#)

[Guidelines](#) have been approved by the County Board. The Chair also noted that the APS also supports.

- *Age-Friendly Community*: J. Feaster, outgoing Chair of the Commission on Aging and long-term PAC member, reported that the County has approved the [Arlington Age Friendly Plan 2020](#) and signed on to be an Age-Friendly Community in this AARP-WHO program. He also noted how much the recommendations are aligned with pedestrian safety and comfort and encourages everyone to review the document.
- *Site Plan Review Committee*: P. Van Hine and I. Blackwell, the PAC co-representatives on the SRPC, updated the PAC on new virtual SRPC processes. Although the CPHD staff is only committing to one virtual SRPC meeting per development, staff are providing several pre-SRPC meeting online opportunities for comments. Developers have the option of a pre-planning online presentation with the community, followed by at least two online sessions with YouTube videos from staff and the developer, key documents online, and a link for providing online feedback to CPHD staff, who compile the comments into a massive matrix. The good news about the virtual process is it gives the impacted community an opportunity to be involved. P. Van Hine is currently involved with two projects in Crystal City: 101 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Block M, between 20<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, Crystal Drive & Clark-Bell. Both projects have significant pedestrian issues. I. Blackwell is currently working on the Ames Center project, whose SRPC started just before the pandemic hit. The proposed building will be split into two buildings to support the pedestrian corridor through Rosslyn.
- *Vision Zero*: The Chair, Vice Chair, and E. Goodman all serve in varying capacities on the Vision Zero [External Stakeholder Group](#). They have not met recently; meeting is scheduled now for mid-September, possibly pushing back the deadline for completing the Action Plan to early 2021. Police are analyzing crash data to identify high risk areas, hot spots, and priorities for action. Public engagement is scheduled for later this fall, September-October.

**Upcoming meetings:**

- *NVRC virtual Safe Walking Summit* is next Wednesday, August 19. M. Dallao will repost information for this important – and free -- pedestrian safety networking and educational opportunity.
- *US DOT Summit on Pedestrian Safety* : This summit, originally scheduled as an in-person meeting in April, was rescheduled as a workshop series over three days. Video presentations from the meetings and background materials are here. Please add your recommendations to the [pedestrian safety matrix](#) before August 31.
- *Livability 22202 Route One Workshop*: P. Van Hine, a member of the Route One Working Group, promoted this first Livability 22202 workshop on Route One on Wednesday, August 26, at 7P.M. Details will be available through the [Livability 22202](#) website.

**WalkArlington Update:** M. Dallao, the Program Manager, reported on several recent projects:

- *Safe Routes to Schools (SFTS)*: APS is evaluating how to transport children to school safely when schools reopen. During the pandemic, each bus could only carry 11 children, so drivers would need to go on multiple trips, so APS seeks alternative transportation modes to using buses and driving. One approach is to expand the walk zones to reduce the demand for busing, but expanding these zones requires understanding how walkable they are for school children. The [Arlington County Commuter Services](#) active transportation team is performing walk audits for 16 priority schools. By late August, PAC members can have the opportunity to check out the routes and provide feedback. A pedestrian GoogleDocs will allow pedestrians to enter specific comments on conditions. Some needed improvements may be implemented through radical urbanism; some issues, like totally missing sidewalks, are not quickly fixed safely. Issues should be reported to TE&O. A. Walker asked how we could help children get to school, and Ms. Dallao mentioned walking school buses, as well as reviewing route conditions.
- *Other WalkArlington activities*: M. Dallao promoted a new app that offers walks, similar to the printed Walkabouts - find both through [here](#). She encourages users to upload an evaluation after trying a walk. *Events*: She also mentioned the pandemic walking series and some of the virtual walking webinars, such as the very popular one on mindful walking and talking – with a

walking psychologist. She alerted us to an upcoming 8-week walking challenge that will start in October and that will record participants' initial behavior and behavior changes at the end of 8 weeks. She noted that the usual walks are not being held; A. Walker noted that her walking group is still walking – with appropriate precautions.

**Pandemic Response:** The Chair led a wide-ranging discussion on the County's response to the pandemic and its impact on the PAC and pedestrian safety and access. Topics included:

- the unfavorable County response to the multi-Commission request, led by G. Burgess, to open up some relatively empty streets during the pandemic to give cyclists and pedestrians room to exercise and travel outdoors. (A joint request from the Aurora Highlands and Crystal City Civic Association presidents, with specific recommendations, was also turned down.);
- the recently enacted [emergency ordinance](#) about pedestrians risking a \$100 fine if they do not maintain a 6' social distance from others on posted streets;
- the lack of opportunity until this meeting for the PAC to meet or provide a meaningful way to give input into pedestrian safety issues during the pandemic; and
- the need to promulgate a plan with the County Manager that will allow the PAC to fulfill its mission to advise the manager on pedestrian issues going forward.

Comments: G. Burgess said that it was totally appropriate for the PAC to respond to the emergency ordinance. C. Slatt noted that the Transportation Commission would address the ordinance at their August 27 meeting and encouraged PAC participation. He said someone from DOT would present, and he hoped to have someone from the County Manager's office present as well. A. Walker volunteered to speak for the PAC at the TC meeting.

**Motion:** PAC members moved to support Andrea Walker to speak on behalf of the PAC about the Emergency Ordinance at the Transportation Commission meeting on August 27.

Most comments were about the ordinance: that it was too broad – and could apply to lots of normal, legal behavior, such as walking down the street with your family or waiting for a bus. It also said nothing about masks. Members pointed out how all of these issues are related, and E. Gallagher specifically pointed out the inconsistency in lack of funding/support for opening the streets, but staffing and funding could be found for enforcement of the ordinance. Finally, as noted, pedestrians cannot maintain 6' social distances because sidewalks are typically 6' or less wide. Members also expressed concerns about possible inequitable enforcement. The County should be designing sufficient space for pedestrians – and patrons waiting – not penalizing normal behavior, especially when pedestrians have no choice. V. Moseley, when asked, gave her insights, though much of this is handled through TE&O, not planning. Change cannot be immediate, need to work with other services, e.g. emergency services. D. Patton said during this time of upheaval, it's time to re-think how we do everything, change behaviors, and work collaboratively to achieve a better environment.

The Chair recommended sending two letters: a more urgent one about the Emergency Ordinance and a second one about the broader issues raised. E. Goodman agreed to draft a PAC response to the emergency ordinance and work with the Chair on a draft letter on the broader issues: disappointing County responses – immediate and long term - to request to open streets and to prevent overcrowding on sidewalks; why can't we open streets like so many jurisdictions have, especially in Vision Zero communities; how can our street infrastructure be designed to be more resilient to future disastrous conditions; how can equity be served (e.g. transit riders, essential workers); and how can PAC best provide guidance to the County Manager. G. Burgess says BAC will work with PAC, especially on the broader letter.

**Motion:** A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved by PAC members present to have E. Goodman draft an urgent letter to the County Manager about emergency ordinance, and E. Goodman and E. Goldstein draft a broader letter to the County Manager about effective PAC engagement. A draft of this second letter will be presented by the Chair at the September meeting of the PAC.

**Appropriate Role of Equity and Enforcement in the Transportation Network:** The Chair confirmed that the PAC supports discussing equity and enforcement at an upcoming BAC-PAC meeting and that we wanted to invite Samia Byrd, Chief Race and Equity Officer, Deputy County Manager, to present on

County [equity activities](#). He then led a brief discussion of these issues: needs of multi-family residents for outdoor space, while single-family homes have yards; transit riders; people who have to walk because they have no other options; essential workers; SRTS as equity because schools serve a broad area; inequitable role of enforcement on pedestrians; why does ACPD track crashes rather than DOT staff? Developers provide new pedestrian infrastructure in high-demand, expensive areas, while lower income areas are ignored; role of reporting problems to increasing inequity: pedestrians in wealthier areas understand the system, know whom to contact and how to report problems; so problems are addressed unevenly. TE&O is working on how to be more proactive in maintaining infrastructure without relying so much on complaints.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:56 P.M. The next PAC meeting will be Wednesday, September 9, 2020, 7 P.M. Watch for meeting announcement, with draft agenda and information on how to participate virtually.