Safe Routes to School Subcommittee, Minutes

July 22, 2020

In attendance via Zoom: Paul Carlson, Kristy Daphnis, Alison Gillespie, Melissa Regan, Miriam Schoenbaum.

We discussed the coming year and possible advocacy strategies given COVID-19 school closures through at least January. No one is going to school.

We decided that we would target construction planning as a possible avenue towards bringing safety to the transportation process at schools, especially for those who walk or ride bikes.

Delegate Jared Solomon (D-18) has put forth a bill that would make it mandatory that a pedestrian safety review be conducted as a part of all new construction around schools. The bill passed in the House, but the legislative session was abruptly ended due to COVID-19 and so it was not voted on in the Senate. ACTION ITEM: Melissa, Kristy and Alison will meet with Delegate Solomon on Thursday, July 23 to discuss how we can possibly get the bill to pass this year and ways we can help that process. (Update, note that this meeting was held, and Delegate Solomon asked us to help him find 8 panelists from other counties who could testify along side of the MoCo contingent this year. He asked that we do this by Sept 1.)

ACTION ITEM: The group will try to figure out how the construction process works and where/at which points we can advocate.

We also decided that we’d like to build tools and apply advocacy measures that would broadly help all students or parents at all schools to advocate for their own communities as opposed to taking on things for schools.

As a part of this we decided we’d like to draft some materials for the coming year, including:

-templates/how-to guide for walk audits that parents could use themselves and submit to DOT or SHA or others

-advocacy guides

-how-to guide for riding to school safely

-video projects, perhaps made by volunteering high school students, on how to ride or walk to school safely by yourself, how to ride the Ride-On bus safely

-we should also try to promote pedestrian and bike safety to parents as the year begins and use MCCPTA messaging to keep parents aware of planning issues, etc.

Action Item: Alison will ask parents in MCCPTA to send Eli Glazier walking routes for the Pedestrian Master Plan. <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/pedestrian-planning/pedestrian-master-plan/pedestrian-shortcut-map/>

**John Hoobler Zoom Meeting Coming**

On Wed July 29 the committee plans to meet via Zoom with John Hoobler from MCDOT. Here are questions we would like him to answer(ACTION ITEM: Melissa will need to lead this meeting because Alison has a work commitment that cannot be moved):

1. Walk audits were apparently done at each school. There’s a lot of confusion about what these are. Can we please get details about them? Is there a link online or a written description of what this project is and its scope?
2. What is the criteria for working with a particular school?
3. Are we in “round 1” or “round 2”? What are the rounds?
4. Are parents given any documentation ahead of time about these audits? How are parents and staff included in the process?

**Complete Streets**

Kristy attended the hearing on the county’s proposed Complete Streets Guide, which took place earlier in the month. She reported out that in the guide’s street typography, schools should be included but are not mentioned as a street type. This should be consistent across the entire county, and should be analogous to the other types of roadways and should include parameters for:

-speed

-sidewalk requirements

-bike routes

-ADA accessibility

Kristy also noted that the guide is particularly important because if it is well written it can become an advisory document for MD State Highway Administration and MCDOT in the future.

ACTION ITEM: Alison will watch the hearing and write a letter that summarizes the committee’s feedback. This letter must be submitted by July 30.

**MCCPTA Rules and Regs and Expectations**

Cynthia Simonson recently sent around a list of expectations for committee chairs. It was noted that we remain only an “AD-HOC” committee at this point, but that we seem to be expected to attend all board meetings regardless. ACTION ITEM: Alison will again ask Cynthia for clarification of expectations and also ask about becoming a full-fledged committee. She will cc the committee.

Vision Zero Feedback Needed

Wade Holland, the MoCo Vision Zero Coordinator, sent a letter to our committee asking for feedback. ACTION ITEM: Alison will forward the letter (see attached to these minutes) so that we can respond to him by the deadline of August 7.