

SAN JUAN ISLAND TRAILS COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Bike Paths Subcommittee meeting - July 20, 2009

The June 20, 2009 Bike Paths meeting was called to order by Tracy at 5:10 p.m. in the Whidbey Island Bank. In attendance were: Glen Gullickson, Liz Illg, Kyle Loring, Melisa Pinnow, Wendy Pinnow, Tracy Roberson, Leslie Veirs and Karl Westeback. Tracy reported that there were no minutes from the last meeting on June 15th.

Attendees introduced themselves and then explained their **bike-related concerns**. Issues expressed dealt with **safety** concerns (island roads with no shoulders, lack of fog lines, and automobile and truck drivers failing to obey speed limits) plus bicycling as a means of transportation, especially when commuting to work. Glen wondered if the county could include a 2-3 foot shoulder with all road improvements (for example the recently completed Pear Point Rd project), thus improving the safety of bikers, walkers and drivers.

Discussion turned briefly to our **Scenic Byways** designation. We are fortunate to have Liz Illg as the Scenic Byways Coordinator, and an active Trails Committee and Bike Paths member. Liz mentioned the idea of an upcoming (in a year or so) Bicycle Summit which would be a countywide event. Liz also mentioned that in August the Town Council will be addressing their Transportation improvement plan, bicycle advocates are encouraged to attend council meetings, email or contact council members to share their ideas and let their wishes be known. One road improvement project is the Tucker Ave project that will happen in the coming years.

Tracy urged Bike Paths members to get involved in **Trails Committee leadership**, such as becoming a member-at-large of the Steering Committee. She also said that there has been some talk about the potential of a multi-use trail through the new hospital project. This trail could potentially connect with the existing airport trails and become the beginning part of the Pipeline (now called Valley View or Valley Farms) trail. She suggested that we may want to look into the possibility of widening and improving the section of the Airport trail between town and the Terminal to accommodate bicycle access. Liz volunteered to informally monitor the section of trail into town in regard to bike usage.

An ad-hoc committee of The Trails Committee has been formed to promote the **Pipeline Trail** which would possibly follow the new water pipeline from town to Wold Rd. Steve Ulvi represents Bike Paths on this committee, and other interested individuals, including farmers in the area, are encouraged to join this group. The Trails Committee is hoping that this trail will be a multi-use trail. The town has said that it will not pay for this trail, County Public Works has been supportive. Trails committee member, Bob Anderson of Star Surveying is in charge of the Surveying work that is currently happening for the Town on this project. First they will identify the existing easement and pipeline location, in order to determine if new easements will be needed or the new pipeline can be placed within the existing easement. The current easement does not allow for public access. Survey results should be available later this fall. The time frame for this six million dollar water pipeline project is 2010.

Discussion then focused on **trails going through private property**. Wendy asked about the process of contacting land owners about trail access, and expressed interest in contacting people who she knows. Tracy indicated that it could be advantageous to have long time islanders (like Wendy) involved in the process; certain land owners may be more receptive regarding granting of an easement, if approached by someone they know. Liability concerns were expressed by Wendy; the Land Bank is currently working on legal easements for the Cattle point trail project. Kyle mentioned a statute in Washington which protects people who have granted permission for trail type access on their property. Glen said that the county can post a disclaimer. It was suggested that a plaque could be posted stating that an easement or permission had been granted on the property. Farm routines should also be respected, such as closing a trail which goes through a sheep farm during lambing. The Bike Paths

Subcommittee could pick up litter and provide porta-potties, if needed. Composting toilets might be an option to consider for trails in the future.

Kyle stressed the importance of the **Nonmotorized Transportation Plan** to our committee. Tracy said that the county has a very small budget that in the past has been used for pedestrian footpaths, and bicycle pull-outs and signage. With the current state of the economy, the problem now is finding funding for nonmotorized projects, as we are limited because of budget cuts. She stressed the need for our committee to act as a voice for bike transportation. Shannon Wilbur, County Transportation Planner, and Rachel Dietzman, Public Works Engineer, were named as valuable transportation resource people in the islands. Kyle expressed the need for a vision and a consistent set of goals for the Bike Paths Subcommittee, especially since the Bike Club part of our committee no longer exists because of lack of support.

Tracy reviewed the results of the **Bike Paths Projects Survey**. Top priorities currently are:

1. Pipeline (or Valley) Trail connecting Friday Harbor and the Trout Lake Watershed
2. Expanding shoulders on designated roads and pending road projects
3. Multi-use trail to Gravel Pit and Jackson's Beach (through Buck property)
4. Bailer Hill, Westside, West Valley and Mitchell Bay Road safety improvements

The **Golf Course Multi-Use Trail** was discussed. The new section of trail has been marked out by Steve Ulvi and Mark and Cinda Pierce, it is part of the Cattle Point Road Trail, which will be primarily a foot path. The Golf Course trail is located on a county easement which will allow non motorized access avoiding the dangerous curvy part of Golf Course Rd. The county has some money set aside in the budget to work on this project this year.

There was discussion about how the Bike Paths committee could best accomplish our priorities going forward. In order for our voices to best be heard, and to reduce the time demands on everyone's busy schedules, it was decided that the **Bike Paths Subcommittee will merge back with the Trails Committee**. All Bike Paths members are encouraged to attend the regular monthly Trails committee meetings. Bike Paths subcommittee meetings will be held quarterly to evaluate progress and focus on bicycle specific issues. The next Bike Paths Subcommittee meeting will be Monday October 19th at 5 pm. E-mail reminders will notify members of meetings or other important events.

Leslie mentioned that **Melisa might offer a broader and more youthful perspective** to the group, and that her attendance and interest were appreciated. Melisa expressed interest in a long term commitment to volunteering time, and has friends who will probably become involved in bike-related projects.

Biker education was the next topic of conversation. Kyle suggested "Rules for the Road on Bikes". The Chamber could get involved in educating bikers on safety issues of island biking. Various opinions were expressed on the "Critical Mass" idea and its effectiveness. Maps are used in Portland and Seattle with large groups of bikers. A good resource for bikers is the Adventure Cycling Map. Melisa said that a link to Facebook might get others involved. Articles could be written to promote biking. Tours such as the Tour de Lopez could be organized. Awareness could be raised with loaner bikes, B & B's supplying bikes, and having more bike racks around town. Chuck and Paul of the bike shop in town are also good resources.

Notices of Upcoming Events:

1. Thursday, August 6th at 5:30 p.m. - TIP (Transportation Improvement Plan) Meeting - Town Council Chambers (Suggestions can be emailed or brought forth at any time)
2. Sunday, August 9th from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. - Trails Committee Potluck Picnic at Peter Morrison's house (See Trails Committee minutes for details.)

3. Wednesday, September 9th at 5:00 p.m. – Trails Committee meeting at Whidbey Island Bank

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m...

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Veirs, Secretary