D.C. Pedestrian Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
May 23, 6:30 p.m.
Remote Public Meeting

Attendees: J.I. Swiderski, Kathy Davin, Dalton Howard, David Tumblin, Pyrrha Hallums, James Elliott and Heather Foote. Agency reps: George Branyan (DDOT), Karen Boodlal (DDOT), Rita Abou-Samra (OP) and Sargeant Terry Thorne (MPD). Public: Eileen McCarthy (PAC emeritus).

Start: Elliott convened the remote meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves.

Voices from the Wards. The scheduled presenter was unable to participate in the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Electric vehicle (EV) cord guidance (ADA and assuring safe sidewalk passage). Elliott recalled that Anthony Cassillo (Willingham) earlier sent DDOT's draft comments to the PAC and sought its input. Elliott screened his draft official PAC comments on the DDOT guidance that he developed. (He noted that DDOT "guidance" is the correct term, since these are not DDO "regulations.") Elliott's draft opened with key principles: pedestrian travel is the oldest, cheapest, safest and greenest known form of human travel; is core to the DC transportation system; and is the key to a safe, sustainable, equitable, healthy, and vibrant future. Key comments included that: (1) Personal EVs have many of the same downsides as conventional gas- or diesel-powered cars; (2) EV charging cords in the public right-of-way degrade pedestrian safety and accessibility and are likely to discourage pedestrian travel among some user groups; (3) the guidance developed by DDOT is an attempt to mitigate these impacts; however, unless the District changes course, the impacts are likely to increase as EV adoption rises; (4) DDOT must accompany whatever guidance is finally adopted with a robust outreach and information sharing campaign; (5) DDOT must dedicate the resources necessary to enforce this guidance on a proactive basis, i.e., without relying on resident reporting; and (6) it is important to understand the EV charging cord issue in the context of transportation history in DC and nationally over the past century.

The PAC draft comment also included specific recommended edits to the draft DDOT guidance. These include, under general guidance, that EV cords must not be placed on curb ramps or in locations where a person in a wheelchair might need to execute a turn; across sidewalks on arterial and collector streets; across sidewalks near land uses frequented by older adults; and on sidewalks where the slope exceeds 10%. A final section addressed recommendations for EV cord covers to ensure they do not obstruct pedestrian safe passage. A robust, detailed discussion ensued, including on the potential greater weight of EVs, EV emissions, energy required to manufacture EVs, critiques of the view that EVs are *the* solution to climate change and the scope of the PAC advice mandate.

Swiderski moved and Foote seconded a motion to adopt the draft comment in principle, with the provisos that the comment is subject to edits discussed in the meeting and to subsequent minor wordsmithing. This is a procedure the PAC has used in the past when considering official communications. The motion passed with six votes in favor : Swiderski, Foote, Davin, Tumblin, Howard and Elliott.

Open Streets. The next Open Streets is June 4th along 7th St. in Wards 2 & 6.

NEW BUSINESS

MPD report: Sargeant Thorne reported that, of 16 fatalities year-to-date, ten are pedestrians. MPD is now conducting crosswalk enforcement operations 2-3 times a week.

DDOT report: Branyan said the Bladensburg Road Safety and Access Study will hold its first public meeting, virtually, on June 2nd from 5pm-6pm, repeated at 6pm-7pm. He said the presentation by study advisory committee member Hallums (moved up to accommodate her school meeting) covered many points he planned to make. He welcomed Thorne's report on crosswalk enforcement, and said recent operation locations include Bladensburg Rd., Wisconsin Ave., and Rhode Island Ave. There are now 25 HAWK signals citywide, with several more to be installed along Georgia Ave. Foote raised how she and BAC member Warren Gorelick had dangerous experiences while crossing at HAWK signals at Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues when vehicles drove directly towards them when the lights turned from solid to flashing red. Branyan said the problem is not with HAWK timing (solid red for seven seconds, then flashing red when cars are to proceed only if safe). The problem is driver behavior. Branyan said enforcement happened at the Cleveland Park HAWK after its 2013-2014 installation. Branyan, Thorne, Foote and McCarthy will confer on the Connecticut and Wisconsin Ave. locations where driver violations have occurred.

OP report: Abou-Samra asked that her briefing on "Streets for All" be postponed until June when the OP project grants manager can join her. She gave a brief project summary: funding has been given to BIDS to support downtown economic and public life recovery. The goal is also to repurpose roadway and other space for non-vehicular use.

PAC participation in MPD Crosswalk Enforcement. Sargeant Thorne reported that the next crosswalk enforcement will be on Georgia Ave. NW on May 31st. He will communicate the specific location a day or so in advance so PAC members can witness the operation. He will "take control" of the uncontrolled crosswalk and officers will be positioned downstream to issue tickets. This type of enforcement is conducted only at an uncontrolled crosswalk, those with no traffic signal.

PAC member report-back on committee participation

- *MPD Major Crash Investigation Unit*. Swiderski, alternate PAC representative to Beale to this Task Force, summarized typical activity, with comments by former PAC co-chair Eileen McCarthy about forthcoming reports. The Task Force meets every month to discuss aspects of two crashes typically. These may be as recent as 6-10 months ago but may be as long ago as two years. Case selection can depend on what the U.S. Attorney's office has decided or declined to do. Other participants are the BAC, MAAC, DMV, DDOT and MPD. Discussion includes potential contributing factors to the two

crashes and also, importantly, other factors that could contribute to future collisions. Comments do not necessarily need to be on the two collisions under consideration. Elliott asked about reports. McCarthy said she is still working on the report draft covering April 2017 through December 2019 and reviewed before Dec 2020. She sent a progress update to DDOT in April and recommended that some new cases be added. She has also made suggestions to DDOT on how the process could be improved.

- *Georgetown Transportation Access and Circulation Study Advisory Committee*. PAC representative Davin to the committee said it includes ANC2E, the Georgetown Citizen's Association, Georgetown BID (Business Improvement District), the hospital, the university, Councilmember Pinto's office, WMATA, the BAC. This study is a follow-up or update to an extensive 2008 study; it will stop short of major action recommendations, such as reversing traffic directions. A significant concern for residents is how to make the area more accessible while maintaining the historic character. There were several meetings; the next step is to hire a technical and a community consultant. At least three public workshop meetings are planned for the public to weigh in on any decisions. Elliott said he had attended a MAAC meeting with discussion of extended sidewalks in Georgetown and heard of MAAC on-site investigations and interest in accessibility in the area. Davin said there is no final decision on extended sidewalks but it is definitely under discussion, with pro's and con's. Davin replied to Foote's question about MAAC that that council is listed as an alternating participant. The meeting is coordinated by DDOT. Foote said she and Davin would follow up with Branyan offline.

- *Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to the Bladensburg Road Multimodal Traffic and Safety and Access Study*. Hallums, the PAC rep to this study, said it covers the 2.5 miles from Eastern Ave to Benning Rd. She has participated in one meeting with another scheduled in early June. DDOT wants community input on what the road could/should look like; challenges such as speeding; adding bike lanes; and bringing the community perspective. Hallums said she takes that road every day to work as a teacher and believes fewer lanes would slow traffic. She sees a general increase in the pedestrian population, people who are trying to cross at unsafe crosswalks.

- *Vision Zero Working Group Advisory Committee* (multi-agency). Elliott said one topic the PAC raised was the threshold for going beyond the minimum for crossing time. Branyan told PAC members that when DDOT looks at LPIs they do counts, which are multimodal. There is data which takes into account pedestrian volumes. This is normally done electronically. (Branyan said there are industry standards for traffic counts, for timing of data collection.) There was not a clear Vision Zero group response on how frequently the signals are revisited. Branyan said all modes are counted and, in the LPI studies, they look at the number of turning vehicles and those in conflict with how many pedestrians. He said there are now 900 signals with LPIs. Elliott referred to a public comment about why students relayed by Swiderski in an earlier communication on why pedestrians had so little time to cross, compared with cars. Branyan added that time of day when many want to cross needs to be a factor for consideration. Branyan said the effort is to count the heaviest timing of traffic, and that this may differ for vehicles and pedestrians. Branyan responded to Howard's question, saying signal timing data is handled by DDOT's Traffic Engineering and Safety Division. Every signal has a timing sheet that lists phases and how much time is given to each phase for every signal in the city. The timing changes fives times a day. Foote suggested a return presentation by Traffic Engineering team who presented in 2021.

ADMINISTRATIVE TOPICS

Recruitment of Program/Administrative Assistant: Elliott recalled steps the PAC co-chairs and others have already taken in recruitment. He explained that there is considerable work behind-the-scenes to manage the website, draft minutes and do social media, so the hiring of an AA is very important.

Approval of minutes: Foote said that approval of the March, April and May minutes will be handled at the June meeting.

Treasurer's report: Adams reported to the PAC co-chairs that the balance as of April 1st was $6,525. There were no credits or debits, leaving an April 30th balance of $6,525.

Legislative tracking: Elliott said that former PAC member Priscilla Magee and previously McCarthy reviewed the DC register to identify legislation and other issues and send them to the chairs. Elliott said it is an important role and a definite need. Foote expressed appreciation for Swiderski's informal legislation tracking for both the PAC and the BAC.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be June 27th.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.