



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday February 11, 2008 at 7:30 a.m.
City Hall Conference Room A

The Safe Routes to School Committee met on Wednesday, February 11, 2008 at 7:30 a.m. at City Hall, Conference Room A

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Christina Westfall Chair brought the meeting to order at approximately 7:35a.m.
- II. ROLL CALL:** Christina Westfall, Chair and Traffic & Safety Representative, Debbie Finnigan, Traffic Engineer, Robert Lister, Superintendent of Schools, Rebecca Emerson, School Board Representative, Police Commissioner John Golumb, Police Commission Representative. Also present was Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director, Kirsten Barton, Tom Morgan, and Carol Chellman, Parents.
Absent: Detective Chris Cumming and Jonathan Bailey.

- III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:**
MOTION made by John Golumb to accept the minutes of the January 28, 2008 meeting as presented. Seconded by Rebecca Emerson. Motion passed

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) Travel Plan: Encouragement - Discuss and implement a plan for school assembly or kick off event – The Chair referred to page 5, Encouragement which describes plans for events such as walking school buses, rolling bike train, school assemblies, walk-a-thons, etc. and will try today to come up with a plan for school assembly or some sort of a kick-off event, walking school buses, bike trains as part of the travel plan. Discussed having a kick-off event this spring, having a survey again before school year is out. The kick-off date to be April or May in order to get the survey out for feedback before end of school year.

Debbie Finnigan stated the National Walk to School Day is October 8th and would the Committee want to consider this as well.

Dr. Lister stated getting the survey done prior to end of school year not a problem and suggested doing it sometime right after return from April vacation or before.

Dr. Lister also referred to involvement of PTA's, PTO's and asked what their involvement is and how much they will help us with this.

Kirsten Barton asked if the Chair had attended the meeting.

The Chair responded she did not get on their Agenda and will contact the Vice-President.

Kirsten Barton stated that they had met separately and one of their questions is how can the parents be most helpful and what can we do? There are parents that expressed interest and would like to meet.

The Chair stated that when other representative positions are set up on this Committee we have the representation and will utilize each School's representative to get information for the travel plan with pictures of what it looks like at arrival, how their getting there, when they're being picked up, where the problem areas are, areas that are working. A way of brainstorming, bringing ideas to the table, so that we can reach everyone. This is our goal and working towards. The Chair asked Ms. Barton to let her know when the meetings are as she would like to attend.

The Chair stated it doesn't necessarily have to be a kickoff, it could be a school assembly and will decide today what exactly we want to do given the time frame we have to get it done. The travel plan needs to be done as part of the Grant process.

The Chair suggested doing some sort of biking education that the SRO's may want to work with.

Dr. Lister suggested a walk-a-thon on a Saturday or bike rodeo. Combining this with Children's Day was discussed, advertising in schools that on Children's Day there will be some kind of activity, exhibit, presentation and advertise with PTA's, PTO's, Community Newsletter and then do the surveys.

Tom Martin 1240 South St. is a believer of combining this with other events and not singling out, and referred to events like Portsmouth Criterium as a great opportunity, do bike safety checks, bike inspections.

The Chair asked if the Bike Rodeo just did bike helmets or do they teach rules of the road.

Tom Martin responded they are taught hand signals.

Dr. Lister likes to idea of combining this with something rather than an isolated incident, involvement of Police, PTA's, PTO's, Schools, Public Works.

Dr. Lister suggested a one-time sub-committee meeting with someone from each of the organizations, such as representatives from Police, PTA, Children's Day and schools to meet prior to the event and discuss possibilities and come back here. Dr. Lister doesn't feel the assembly is such a good idea, feels having the kids outside as opposed to being talked to.

The Chair asked about doing walking school buses and rolling bike trains at our kick-off event October 8th?

Dr. Lister asked if we are thinking about doing this at all schools or just one?

Kirsten Barton responded that at Little Harbor would like to do this and asked who would be responsible for what? There are forms that need to be filled out with a background check.

The Chair stated that at Little Harbor and Dondero have a walking program that the teachers do.

Dr. Lister suggested keeping it simple.

Rebecca Emerson referred to motivation and what are other people doing, we know safety is a part of it.

The Chair stated that motivation factor is a part of it and Det. Cummings had a lot of good ideas utilizing SRO's, talked about giving out little things, bracelet, bike flag, etc. as part of the incentive part. This can be discussed more when we get into the incentive part.

The Chair stated she has had feedback from parents that 7:30a.m. meetings don't work for them and that's why they don't come and asked if we should have it later or evenings and suggested 9:15 a.m. All agreed. Elaine will check availability of Conference Room A.

MOTION made by Rebecca Emerson to have the next committee meeting to be attended by Police, Representatives from PTA's, PTO's, Schools and Dr. Lister will have one of the Principals present and Children's Day. Steve Parkinson will be present to have any logistic questions at the March 10th meeting at 9:15 a.m. Seconded by John Golumb. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan will contact Pro Portsmouth, Barbara Massar.

Robert Lister reiterated sequence of events, advertising and getting word out an on-going process, maybe doing the walking bus at Little Harbor (the Chair would like this at all schools), something between now and the end of school year, surveys to be done at the same time, Children's Day plan, thinking about May 4th through October 8th which is National Walk to School Day, maybe approach Recreation Dept. for something for them to do during summer. There is a big gap between May 4th and October 8th which is an opportunity for us to lose a lot of ground.

Rebecca Emerson suggested a practice walk to school in June and another in September, practicing for the National day.

Dr. Lister stated the Recreation Dept. has a lot of activities during the summer and suggested having someone from the Recreation Dept. come to the March meeting.

The Chair asked if we want to partner with Children's Day.

Tom Morgan suggested perhaps having the bikes inspected for a 5-point inspection, perhaps a SRTS sticker for them after being check as safe to ride to school, which would be a comfort factor for parents.

Rebecca Emerson asked if at the beginning of the school year are the bikes still registered by the Police.

The Chair responded they are suppose to.

Debbie Finnigan stated that at last year's bike rodeo the Rotary Club gave out helmets.

Dr. Lister suggested involving pop-a-wheelies, it is dangerous not to involve the businesses in some way.

Rebecca Emerson suggested contacting the people involved with the Criterion, they also kids' race, bicycle and helmet check, pump up tires, etc. to get kids ready for the big race. Also stating the benefits of how much pollution you save, money saved, more time to spend with their kids, calories burnt, the pros and cons.

The Chair stated the next step is to have the March meeting and figure how we can enter and add to their plan.

The Chair asked if we want the Recreation Dept. at the March meeting or at a later meeting.

The Committee's response was at the next meeting.

The Chair stated another part of this is the rules of the road and suggested we do this at Children's Day.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

(A) Update on new committee members – The Chair stated hopefully this will happen at tonight's City Council meeting, changing the two City Council seats to Little Harbor and St. Patrick's Schools and add New Franklin, Dondero and Middle Schools and will get representatives from the schools.

Kirsten Barton referred to previously talking about a student from the Middle School.

The Chair responded we also discussed their having a committee of their own to do the same thing we are doing and then have them give us their feedback, what their issues are, what's important to them.

Rebecca Emerson felt this was great and then have one of them come to our meeting or one of us go to their meeting.

Dr. Lister will speak with John Stokel for his thoughts on how to recruit kids.

The Chair stated she heard from Carol Chellman who asked to represent Little Harbor on the Committee. As we have a representative for Little Harbor and for reason are unable to have a representative from each of the other schools, then we will talk at that time.

Ms. Chellman stated that she had contacted Step Up Seacoast to see if they would somehow show support for the Grant, they are having a meeting later this week and requested she update them on SRTS.

Dr. Lister stated he was on that Committee and one of the things we came up with a while ago was walking maps around the City and seacoast and perhaps they can help us with the bike route and perhaps do something similar with bike routes.

The chair stated that the scavenger hunt suggested by Rebecca Emerson she be considered at a later time, kids love that type of thing.

(B) Update on Status of School Route Memo and Survey - The Chair asked the Committee where they stood with the School route memo and survey and suggested looking at the maps that Debbie Finnigan had prepared. Debbie Finnigan asked what the Committee wanted on the map, a larger map showing two mile radius or a smaller map showing one mile radius. It was decided to use the one mile radius for each of the schools with an 8-1/2 x 11 separate colored map for each school with street names.

Steve Parkinson suggested zeroing in on each school.

Debbie Finnigan asked if the Committee wanted a city-wide map for St. Patrick's School as many of them come from outside the City, or a mile radius?

The Chair suggested a mile away from the school as we are trying to get them to drop the kids off rather than drive all the way in and have the kids walk the rest of the way.

The Committee was pleased with the maps and thanked Debbie.

The Chair asked for a time frame when these could go out and Debbie Finnigan will speak with Jason Wide and then e-mail the members.

Dr. Lister would like to pass them out the Monday everyone comes back from February vacation if possible, which would be March 3rd. Debbie Finnigan believes they can be done by February 22nd the Friday prior to vacation. The return date for the surveys to be returned to the main office. is March 7th.

The Chair will pick up the surveys from Dr. Lister and bring them to the next meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The Complete packet is on file at the Public Works Department.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2008 at **9:15 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted

Elaine Boucas
Recording Secretary