

Report

To: Bicycle Friendly Community Committee Members
From: Ken Gould
Date: February 22, 2009
Re: Summary Report of Bicycle Friendly Community Committee Meeting - January 8, 2009

Committee members present: Jess Askew; Bryan Day; Coreen Fraiser; Hank Kelly; Ed Levy; Gene Pfeifer III; Truman Tolefree; Mark Webre; Claibanne Williamson; & Chair, Ken Gould. Also present, committee guests: Mayor Mark Stodola & Bud Laumer, Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator: Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department

This report will be a summary of the discussions and actions taken pursuant to the agenda items considered at the Bicycle Friendly Committee meeting of January 8, 2009 (items in the order considered at the meeting):

1. Report from Mayor Mark Stodola

The committee was very pleased that Mayor Stodola was able to attend the meeting to report on the status of the development of a number of bicycle projects and bicycle amenities in Little Rock. The Mayor's report will be incorporated under the various pertinent agenda items below.

2. Update on Efforts to Secure a Route for the River Trail Along the Arkansas River Behind Dillard's Headquarters

Mayor Stodola reported on the status of efforts to secure a route for the Arkansas River Trail in the area between the Baring Cross Railroad Bridge and the beginning of the paved Titus Trail that parallels Cantrell Road in front of Junior Deputy Park. Mayor Stodola described the status of those efforts and reported that he is encouraged by the progress that is being made. The project is included in the city's Economic Stimulus Package request. The Mayor will report further on the status of the project at future meetings of the committee.

3. The BFC Committee's Involvement in Revision of the City of Little Rock Bike Plan

The BFC Committee has been asked by the Little Rock City Planning Department to present suggestions for revision of the City of Little Rock Bike Plan. Copies of the map and accompanying text have been distributed to all committee members. Committee members are

requested to review the present Bike Plan and submit comments, suggestions for deletions, additions, and other modifications to BFC Committee chair Ken Gould. The suggestions will be distributed to all committee members and considered at a future committee meeting. If possible, members should forward their comments, etc. by e-mail to all committee members and, ideally, an e-mail exchange of ideas will ensue.

4. Steps to be Taken Before Making the City of Little Rock's Next Bike Friendly Community Application to the League of American Bicyclists

Chair Ken Gould will work with Assistant City Manager Bryan Day, city department heads, and other city staff to address the comments received from the League of American Bicyclists in response to our last BFC application and present findings and recommendations from that process to the committee as soon as possible. The League awarded the City of Little Rock Honorable Mention Bicycle Friendly Community status in response to its initial application.

5. Update on Plans to Develop Spur Trail Connection Between Western End of the Medical Mile at the Baring Cross Bridge and the Train Station at Victory Street (or thereabouts)

Mayor Stodola and Little Rock City staff also reported on efforts to connect an asphalt spur trail from the present terminus of the Medical Mile at the Baring Cross Bridge to Victory Street near the Amtrak Train Station. Although the Union Pacific Railroad initially appeared to be willing to allow construction of the spur trail, they now require that the trail be located on the woody hillside to the east of the railroad tracks. That location would significantly increase the costs of building the trail over the costs to locate the trail on the leveled- gravel "ballast" area nearer the tracks. Since the UP will not consent or sell the rights to build on the level section, the city is proceeding with condemnation of the land necessary to build the trail on that section. In connection with the condemnation proceeding, a survey has been completed but an appraisal of the land required for the level - "ballast" land needed for the trail has not yet been ordered. Mark Webre stated that an appraisal will be ordered. At an appropriate time, a letter will be sent to Union Pacific Board member Mack McLarty requesting his assistance. A complicating factor is that the city does not presently have funds to construct the trail (approximately \$350,000) at that location. This project will be added to the city's "economic stimulus package" request.

6. Proposal for Bicycle Lanes on 12th Street as Part of the 12th Street Corridor Revitalization Project

Assistant City Manager Bryan Day reported that adding bicycle lanes to 12th Street would require converting the street to three lanes with a middle turn lane. The cost would be an estimated \$500,000. As part of the discussion of this agenda item, the question was raised whether the 12th Street bicycle lane project would conflict with extending and enhancing the existing paved, narrow bicycle trail that runs from behind the Sears Building near University and I-630 along I-630 to the Henderson Magnet Middle School on John Barrow Road. Following discussion during which the consensus of the committee appeared to be that both projects were worthy of development, Mayor Stodola requested that the committee prioritize the two projects for purposes of inclusion in the city's request for Economic Stimulus Package funds. The

members of the committee voting (the city staff members did not vote) voted five in favor, one opposed for requesting that the city include the 12th Street bicycle lane project in the city's Economic Stimulus Package request.

7. Consideration of the Steps Needed to Assist the City and the Clinton Foundation in Moving Toward Conversion of the Rock Island Railroad Bridge to a Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge

Committee Chair Ken Gould explained the history underlying this agenda item. The Clinton Foundation undertook to convert the old Rock Island Railroad Bridge at the Clinton Presidential Center into a bicycle-pedestrian bridge in its 2001 Response to the City of Little Rock's Request for Proposals for lease of the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Park. In its response to the Request for Proposals, the Foundation stated that: "The abandoned railroad bridge will be restored and converted to a [bicycle] pedestrian bridge connecting Little Rock and North Little Rock to encourage and promote development on both sides of the river." In the 2002 lease for the Presidential Center Park, the city and the Clinton Foundation agreed that they would enter into a separate Agreement for renovation of the Bridge.

Since the separate agreement called for by the 2002 lease had never been entered into by the city and the Foundation, on September 18, 2008 Mayor Mark Stodola submitted to the Foundation a draft of the Agreement for renovation of the bridge. At the meeting Mayor Stodola reported that the Foundation had not responded to the Agreement, and requested that the BFC Committee and other concerned community groups such as bicycle and running clubs, etc. write the Foundation requesting that they respond to the agreement. Following discussion, the committee voted unanimously, with committee member Gene Pfeifer abstaining, to send a letter to the Clinton Foundation requesting that they respond to the agreement submitted by the Mayor. The letter sent to the Foundation by the committee chair is attached to this Report.

8. Report on Conversion of Facility Near City Hall for Use as a Bicycle/Recreation Facility

Several city staff reported on the conversion of a building near City Hall into a bicycle/recreation facility. The committee commended the city on its efforts and several committee expressed interest in viewing the facility.