

## **Newburyport Livable Streets**

# **Annual Meeting Notes, May 2, 2023**

### Attendance:

Officers: Rick Taintor (President), Alden Clark (Treasurer), Juliet Walker (Clerk)

Directors: Sheila Taintor, Judy Tymon, Ben Iacono

Members: Kitty Kracj, Owen Smith

Guests: Jared Hubbard, Art Currier, Ed Noymer, Karen Garbarino, Nick Garbarino, Tony Collins (MVPC)

- I. Call to Order
  - Rick called the meeting to order
- II. Introductions
  - Officers, Directors, Members and Visitors introduced themselves
- III. Treasurer's Report (Alden)
  - Alden presented the Treasurers Report and Budget (see handout)
  - VOTE TO ACCEPT -- Kitty motion, Sheila second, approved
- IV. President's Update (Rick)
  - Rick reviewed the President's report (see handout)
- V. Membership Update (Juliet)
  - Juliet shared number of members and explained membership requirements
  - Two new members joined at the meeting -- Jared Hubbard, Ed Noymer
  - Rick provided an update on communications, member email list and monthly newsletter, ACES column
- VI. Nomination and Election of Officers
  - President -- Rick Taintor
  - Clerk - Juliet Walker
  - Treasurer - Alden Clark
  - VOTE TO APPROVE -- Kitty motion, Judy second, approved
- VII. Other Business
  - Fundraising Discussion
    - Member Dues
      - Juliet proposed keeping member dues optional
      - Perhaps an annual appeal could be considered
      - Alden suggested using events and special fundraising strategies
      - Consider a donate button on the web page
      - Consider different levels of membership if and when we decide to have members -- including corporate
    - Grants/Other Sources
      - New England Grassroots Environmental Foundation (consider exploring next step beyond SEED)

- Art suggested we consider updating our Mission statement to include mention of environment to broaden our eligibility for different grants
  - Recommendation to get more involved with state SRTS program to open up potential funding opportunities for the City
- Member Recruitment/Outreach
  - Continue to advertise through our current channels
  - We have tabled at events
  - Ongoing partnership with schools, ACES, and the City has been helpful
- Project Updates
  - Route 1 Bridge Bike Lanes (Rick)
    - Discussion about safety benefits as well as bike and ped connectivity
  - MassDOT request re: posted Speed Limits and Storey Ave re-striping (Rick)
  - Storey Ave Workshop (Judy)
    - Suggest potentially connecting with MassDOT Complete Streets staff
    - MVPC can help with concept potentially (to connect to Three Roads)
  - Bike Racks at Library (Rick)
    - Reviving potential funding source from MEVA
  - Earth Day table with Coastal Trails (Ben)
  - Walk Audit Locations
    - Low Street between Rail Trail and Hale St
    - Future year's street and sidewalks plan
    - Kent St / Merrimac intersection
    - Storey Ave
    - Have a work session on this next time

#### VIII. Open Discussion

- Ideas:
  - Communication/outreach
  - Consider closing downtown streets for trick or treating / holiday events
  - Rail trail -- connection to Riverwalk Brewery
  - Close down more streets in downtown on a periodic basis
  - Truck routes (Toppans Ln)
  - MVPC TIP and small capital projects fund

#### IX. Next Meeting topics

- Walk Audits
- Hale St
- 2023 Work Plan

#### X. Adjournment

- VOTE TO ADJOURN -- Rick motion, Alden second

Newburyport Livable Streets  
2023 Annual Meeting - May 2, 2023  
President's Report

First annual meeting since our incorporation:

- Began discussing incorporation at our July 2021 meeting at Alden's house.
- Incorporated in March 2022; this report covers 13 months from April 2022 through April 2023.
- Received 501(c)(3) status in January 2023.

Meetings:

- Met 11 times from May 2022 through April 2023.
- Public meetings were noticed as Facebook events and in e-blasts.
- Ben secured regular meeting space in the Senior Community Center, which lets us reopen back to the public and also have internet access and screen-sharing projection technology.
- MVPC transportation staff attended our meeting in April.

Community outreach and social media:

- Email list (MailChimp): 199 subscribers with average open rate of 66%. Communications to the community have been sporadic since Covid hit. We sent one eblast in 2022 (for Parker River NWR Open Streets event) and two in 2023. Trying to get back on a monthly schedule.
- Website: Updating pages as needed but no new posts in the last year. Looking for ideas for posts and topic pages.
- Facebook: 773 followers (476 in Newburyport; 80 in Amesbury, Salisbury or Newbury). When we post we reach around 260 users.
- Twitter: 108 followers. Inactive since February due to Twitter's problems.
- Mastodon: Created an account (@NbptStreets@better.boston) to replace Twitter. Started by mirroring between Twitter and Mastodon until Twitter blocked that approach. Mastodon account is not very active yet; only 47 followers, many from other regions and countries. We'll see how it develops.
- Instagram: 189 followers. Passive – no posts in 2023.
- Need to think about how to use these tools better (or give up on one or more of them)

Outreach to City officials:

- Juliet met with Mayor's staff in July (with Rick) and September 2022 to discuss NLS priorities and assistance to the City.
- Councilor Wallace has extended an open invitation for NLS to attend and present to the Public Works and Safety Committee (which she chairs).

Advocacy correspondence:

- NLS sent a letter to Mayor Reardon concerning Complete Streets and construction projects (April 2022).
- NLS submitted comments on the Mayor's Streets and Sidewalks Plan (May 2022).

- At the request of PRNWR, NLS submitted a letter in support of the application for Federal Lands Program funding to improve resiliency on the Plum Island Turnpike including bicycle and pedestrian accommodations (July 2022). Grant was received and Ella Weber expressed their gratitude for our help.
- NLS wrote to MassDOT requesting (a) restriping of the eastern section of Storey Ave to provide accommodations for cyclists, and (b) reinstallation of a sign near Kelleher Park indicating the transition to the City's default 25mph speed limit (March 2023). MassDOT responded positively to both.
- Members submitted individual letters supporting the new lane striping on the Gillis Bridge (April 2023).

#### Events:

- Rick and Sheila assisted with Parker River National Wildlife Refuge's Open Streets event on Saturday, June 25, 2022. This was part of the Refuge's "Let's Get Outside" day and included a bike rodeo run by Judy Crocker, MassDOT SRTS Program.
  - Note: NLS is invited to participate again this year — Saturday, June 3.
- Judy and Sheila had a table at the High School Internship and Career Fair on Tuesday, April 4, 2023. Picked up 6 students to add to our email list. (For the future: have a candy or snack bowl, and updated handouts with links and contact information.)
- Rick, Sheila and Ben staffed the Transportation table at the City's Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 22, 2023. The table's theme (assigned by ACES) was "Drive Less/Bike More" and we shared it with folks from Coastal Trails Coalition.

#### NLS Projects:

- Worked on update of City's Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (January-April 2023); ultimately submitted it as Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Plan. Waiting for response/feedback.
- March 3, 2023 – Toppans Lane Walk Audit
- Storey Avenue – Judy, Bonnie, Kitty and Sheila worked on a survey of users of Storey Avenue (February-March 2023). After much discussion, we decided not to move forward with the survey and instead to plan a participatory workshop and invite neighbors and other residents.

#### City Streets:

- TSAC – Rick attended several virtual TSAC meetings, and participated in the Traffic Calming Subcommittee reviewing the streets scheduled for paving in 2023. Also joined Jon-Eric White and Dianne Gagnon on a tour of traffic calming projects in Cambridge and a meeting with Cambridge Traffic Calming Manager (August 2022).
- Three Roads – Rick continued to advocate for redesign of the Three Roads intersection, and participated in a meeting with MVPC and MassDOT (April 2023).
- Hale Street – City Engineer Jon-Eric White invited Rick to participate in drafting the RFP for engineering and concept design for the "Hale Street Complete Streets Project" (November 2022–January 2023), in proposal review and team interviews (February-March), and in proposal/team evaluations (April).