Minutes of the

Montpelier Pedestrian Committee

Meeting of December 3, 2013

Members Present: Chris Andresen, Chair, Anne Ferguson, Eve Jacobs-Carnahan, and Jim McQueston

Others Present: Tom Aloisi, Alex Prolman, Hannah Reckhow

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of October 22, 2013 were approved.

Sidewalk Snowplow Routes

The members studied maps of the sidewalk snowplow routes supplied by the City. It was noted that the maps displayed the overall routes, but not the order in which the routes were plowed. Members provided observations from past seasons which appeared to indicate that some portions of the routes were routinely plowed before others.

The members concluded that the Committee should recommend to the City that it review and set priorities for the snowplow routes. The members then proceeded to discuss input that would be helpful to the City in this review process. In the discussion that followed, areas identified for possible priority consideration were the core downtown area, areas around schools, sidewalks on steep slopes, sidewalks in proximity to housing for mobility challenged residents, and sidewalks in high traffic areas where a detour into the street is not an option.

An example given for a reevaluation of priorities involved the sidewalk on East State Street between College Street and Betsy's Bed and Breakfast. While the lower portion of the East State Street sidewalk tends to be plowed early, the upper portion where the sidewalk moves to the other side of the street remains unplowed until later in the day. Yet the upper portion is on a slope, is a major route to schools and downtown, and is on a heavily trafficked route where there is no alternative to the sidewalk.

Eve Jacobs-Carnahan offered to communicate the Committee's suggestions to Todd Law at the Department of Public Works.

Puddles at Crosswalks in Winter

The members discussed the wintertime problem of puddles forming at some of the cuts in the snowbanks for crosswalks. While there was agreement that this was a real problem, no practical solutions were identified. The members concluded that the best approach would be to get the community involved in alerting the Department of Public Works to problem areas. The members decided on the approach of posting on the Front Porch Forums a suggestion to email Todd Law about dangerous sidewalk situations residents had observed.

[The following is what Eve Jacobs-Carnahan drafted and posted on the Front Porch Forum for Montpelier Central:

> The Montpelier Pedestrian Committee wants your help identifying winter sidewalk problems. If you see sidewalks with winter maintenance needs, please send your observations to Todd Law, Director of Public Works, tlaw@montpelier-vt.org. The types of problems we want to identify are: inadequate sidewalk plowing, ice-covered sidewalks, and icy puddles in crosswalks. Thanks for your help.]

Walk Friendly Community Designation

Chris Andresen and Eve Jacobs-Carnahan agreed to set up a meeting with the City Manager to discuss the resource issues that had been identified in applying for the Walk Friendly Community designation and the information that has been gathered about how other communities have approached completing the application.

Public Input

The members welcomed public attendee Tom Aloisi and invited his comments. He indicated that he had a particular concern with pedestrian visibility in the wintertime when it gets dark so early. There was a discussion of how to make pedestrians more visible. One idea discussed was to distribute reflective armbands or other pieces of apparel, but a concern was voiced that this might not be very effective as a longer term solution. The discussion moved on to the effectiveness of the city's streetlights in making pedestrians visible and in illuminating sidewalks. Several members indicated that the City had had a streetlight committee, but no one was aware of any recent meetings of that committee. It was decided that this would be a good topic for discussion with Todd Law to find out more about the approach the City was using in placing streetlights.

Meeting Dates

Due to the upcoming holidays and members' travel schedules, the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to held on January 7 instead of on December 24. The regular schedule will recommence with the January 28 meeting.