

Approved: May 28, 2013

Safe Routes to School Travel Plan Task Force – Meeting Minutes: 19 February 2013 (Page 1)

In attendance: Tracy Bull (Chair), Katie Cleasby, Peter Flood, Sarah Ruffell

Excused members: Principal Emilie Carter, Bill Cummings, Rick Greenier, Leslie Rothman

Mrs. Bull called the meeting to order at 3:45pm. Lacking quorum, she indicated that the meeting would be held informally.

Review and approval of meeting minutes for January 22, 2013 was tabled until the next meeting.

Mrs. Bull shared that the “notice to proceed” with the bidding process for the Safe Routes grant work between the Merrimack School District (MSD) and the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) was received on February 8th and that process was underway. The necessary paperwork is expected to be complete and submitted to Mr. Corrigan at the NH DOT prior to the committee’s next meeting. Once the NH DOT has approved the bid and contract, the final “notice to proceed” will be issued, allowing the committee to formally begin its work. She noted that the timetable distributed to committee members at the January meeting would remain the same in terms of task outline and order, but that the overall schedule would simply be pushed ahead to a start date concurrent with the final notice to proceed.

Members present engaged in dialogue relevant to Bike to School Day, which is scheduled for May 8, 2013.

Ms. Cleasby asked if the committee had formally committed to participation. Mrs. Bull explained the hope was to engage both MES and JMUES at an introductory level this year so as to tie into the Safe Routes initiative and build local awareness, which may include approaching parent/teacher organizations, but that participating was still at the discussion level right now. She further indicated that Mr. Greenier has expressed (via email) his intent to undertake a relatively basic bicycle riding observance at JMUES, potentially involving a designated starting point perhaps a mile away from the complex, and possibly back again after school. Mrs. Bull continued that it was not clear yet whether he envisioned using chaperones or assistance from the Merrimack Police Department, but that she expected to learn more from him as his plans develop. She stated she wishes to discuss with him whether or not he expects to use permission slips for those interested in participating and would also ask if he would be open to allowing including student siblings from MES as well as interested parent chaperones, as is commonly done with the “bicycle trains” encouraged by the Safe Routes program. She expressed her intent to touch base with him to that effect, and that she expects to further put him in touch with Mrs. Morales, the leader of the Girl Scout troop which was the committee’s

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guest back in November, as they are interested in being of assistance as it relates to their badge work. Mr. Flood pointed out the need to be cognizant that some feeder roads vary in relative safety aspects such as traffic volumes, road width, etc., and that all involved should be mindful of this for Bike to School Day and the Safe Routes initiative in general.

Recognizing that students at MES are of a different age bracket than those at JMUES, Mrs. Bull stated she did not necessarily expect an introductory observance for that building would be the same as the one being considered by Mr. Greenier. Since May is also Bicycle Safety Month, there might be an opportunity for safety demonstrations in Physical Education classes, bicycle helmet checks, etc. Ms. Cleasby indicated that she had materials she could avail for those purposes and would contact MES Administration to discuss potential plans further and would keep Mrs. Bull informed accordingly. She envisions the possibility of employing visual, reward-based encouragement, such as a sticker for students who bring in their bicycle or helmet. Mr. Flood suggested using a bicycle-related reward, such as a reflector. Those present expressed support for his concept, and Ms. Cleasby indicated her familiarity with a bicycle shop she could contact which might be able to help provide her with such materials. Recognizing that Mrs. Rothman and her son, a student at MES, often ride their bicycles back and forth to school, she might be able to avail him and their routine as an example for others.

It was agreed that the committee will next meet on Tuesday, March 19th, 2013 at 3:30pm in JMUES Room #121. Mrs. Bull will contact Principal McGill in order to reserve the meeting space accordingly.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.