

Delaware Pedestrian Council | Meeting #2

April 24, 2024 - Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Delaware Pedestrian Council | Meeting #2

Date: April 24, 2024

Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Council Members Present

Name	Position	Email
Maureen Kelley	Alternate for Nicole Majeski, DeIDOT Secretary	Maureen.Kelley@delaware.gov
Sharon Bryson	Alternate for Nathaniel McQueen, Office of Highway Safety Director	sharon.bryson@delaware.gov
Carol Shrader	Alternate for Ben Shrader, Chair of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities	bshrader@risede.org
Thomas Nickel	DeIDOT ADA Title II Coordinator	Thomas.Nickel@delaware.gov
John Sisson	CEO of the Delaware Transit Organization	John.Sisson@delaware.gov
Dr. Kevin Spence	Executive Director of League of Local Governments	deleaguelocalgovs@gmail.com
Michael Smith	Governor Appointed Resident from New Castle County	michaelsmithecon@gmail.com
Lloyd Schmitz	Governor Appointed Resident Representative with a Visual Disability	lloydschmitz@gmail.com
Omar Noor	Governor Appointed Resident Representative with a Developmental Disability	Omar.Noor@delaware.gov
Brian Goff	Governor Appointed Resident from Kent County	bgoff@chpk.com
William Jiron Jr.	Governor Appointed Resident Representative with a Physical Disability	bigwillie1@msn.net
Bill Payne	Governor Appointed Resident from Sussex County	ublcreek@icloud.com

Members Absent

Name	Position	Email
Kara Colpo	DOS ADA Title II Coordinator	Kara.Colpo@delaware.gov
Antoni Sekowski	Alternate for Charuni Patibanda, NCC Land Use General Manager	antoni.sekowski@newcastlede.gov
Jeffrey Starkey	Director of Land Use and Planning for City of Wilmington	jstarkey@wilmingtonde.gov
Kris Connelly	Alternate for Sarah Keifer, Kent County Director of Planning Services	Kris.Connelly@kentcountyde.gov
Jamie Whitehouse	Sussex County Planning and Zoning	jamie.whitehouse@sussexcountyde.gov



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DeIDOT Support Staff

Name	Organization	Email
Kelly Valencik	DeIDOT	kelly.valencik@delaware.gov
Pamela Steinebach	DeIDOT	pamela.steinebach@delaware.gov
Maria Andaya	DeIDOT	maria@andaya@delaware.gov
Brad Eaby	DeIDOT	brad.eaby@delaware.gov
Angie Hernandez	JMT	ahernandez@jmt.com
Sophie Thompson	JMT	sthompson2@jmt.com

Guests

Name	Organization	Email
Paul Moser	DeIDOT	Paul.Moser@delaware.gov

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to conduct the second Delaware Pedestrian Council meeting. The following items were discussed:

1. Introductions

Kelly Valencik called the meeting to order with an opening welcome at 1:02 p.m. She provided an overview of the agenda. Angie Hernandez led the roll call from 1:02 pm – 1:05 pm.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

Kelly Valencik made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Michael Smith moved to approve the minutes from Pedestrian Council Meeting 1. Sharon Bryson seconded the movement. Bill Payne requested to abstain, since he did not attend the previous meeting.

3. Public Comment

Kelly Valencik provided an opportunity for members of the public to share questions or comments. No questions or comments were stated by the public.

4. Review Fatal Pedestrian Crashes in Previous Quarter

Kelly Valencik provided an overview of fatal pedestrian crashes by quarter. Quarter 1 of 2024 had three fatal pedestrian crashes in New Castle County, one fatal pedestrian crash in Kent County, and one fatal pedestrian crash in Sussex County.

5. Pedestrian Council Website Updates

Angie Hernandez provided an overview of upcoming website updates which will be implemented in the near future, including meeting agendas and minutes, links to various pedestrian resources and programs, and Council Chair contact information. Angie also presented the new Delaware Pedestrian Council Logo, which depicts three pedestrian figures (one walking, one using a cane, and one using a wheelchair) crossing a Delaware-shaped crosswalk.

6. **Focus Areas Brainstorming**

Angie Hernandez shared an overview of the focus areas of the meeting, including a discussion about the agency Council members, the Council's annual reporting requirements, a review of Council member feedback, a discussion on overlapping areas of interest, a budget discussion, and the potential for subcommittees. See below for more information.

a. **Annual Council Report**

The Delaware Pedestrian Council is required to submit an annual report of the Council's activities and recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and the Director and the Librarian of the Division of Research of Legislative Council. This report will need to be prepared by the end of each calendar year to demonstrate council activities and progress for the previous year.

b. **Potential for Subcommittees**

Based on the Council Member Survey and the discussions with the council, potential subcommittee topics may include a 'Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee', and / or a 'Local Government Outreach and Coordination' Subcommittee.

Angie then introduced the brainstorming activity planned for this meeting, discussing the importance of the role of agencies on the Council. She introduced John Sisson, the CEO of Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), who provided an overview of his responses from the Pedestrian Council Agency Survey and explained how DTC accounts for pedestrians as part of their programs and ongoing efforts.

Comments from the Council:

- Bill Payne suggested that bus stops could be moved closer to the crosswalks to encourage safe crossings rather than mid-block crossings.
 - John Sisson mentioned that the Council needs some thoughtful discussion on solutions to prevent mid-block crossings, and other things we can do to improve the pedestrian network.

Pamela Steinbach asked the Council for another Agency Member to share their responses to these prompts. Sharon Bryson volunteered, sharing information from her experience with the Office of Highway Safety (OHS).

Sharon shared that the Office of Highway Safety is currently working at a county level with the emergency medical community, as well as the Chair of Chief's council to ask where they see specific problem areas (pedestrian, speeding, DUIs). She also mentioned wanting to increase focus and understanding of injury crashes and near misses rather than just fatalities to help prevent incidents.

Sharon also suggested starting a data committee within the Pedestrian Council to look further pedestrian facts that lead to crashes. This committee could better focus their time to the data specifically, and report back to the larger Council.

- OHS has funding available through NHTSA for traffic records, so if there is information not currently available that would be helpful to the Council, we could make a recommendation to gather additional information or improve Delaware's traffic records.

Comments from the Council:

- Bill Payne suggested adding more crosswalks due to Delaware's growing population.
- Carol Shrader from the State Council for Persons with Disabilities stressed the importance of considering wheelchair users when discussing crosswalks and pedestrian safety. Crosswalks are of very little use without a cutout (curb ramp) in the sidewalk.
- Lloyd Schmitz commented that we need more crosswalks and accessible intersections. Placing bus stops and crosswalks more than a mile apart is not accessible.
- Tom Nickel stated that the Department of Transportation currently designs every crosswalk to be accessible. DeIDOT's Transition Plan is addressing the backlog of inventory of inaccessible pedestrian facilities. So far, the plan has taken down about 40% of non-accessible curb ramps and eliminated more than 30% of barrier curbs at crosswalks.

7. Council Budget

a. **FY 2024 Budget**

Kelly Valencik introduced the topic of the Pedestrian Council Budget. She mentioned that there is \$13,770.06 in the budget, to be spent by June 15, 2024. The invoice for these funds must be processed by May 31, 2024. The suggested method to spend the budget is to allocate the funds to support DeIDOT's new 'Be DeLAWARE' campaign by providing pedestrian safety items such as reflective bags, lights, and other similar items to help increase pedestrian visibility. These materials will be dispensed to pedestrians throughout the state. The Pedestrian Council members will all be able to collect a large quantity of these materials to distribute in their own communities or to pedestrian focus areas that their group or organization would like to target to increase pedestrian safety.

- The council agreed to use the FY 2024 funds for the above-stated purpose.

b. **FY 2024 Budget**

The 2025 budget was also presented to the group at \$20,100 for supplies and \$1,000 for travel. These funds must be spent by June 15, 2015. Some suggestions on who to spend the funding includes taking pedestrian-related training or bus tours of pedestrian safety installation projects or concern areas with the Council and DeIDOT staff, pedestrian safety materials and supplies, and mileage reimbursements.

Kelly asked for other spending suggestions from the council.

- John Sisson mentioned that he can provide buses for any bus tours the group may be interested in.
- Michael Smith suggested creating a study investigating reducing speeding activities and preventing distracted driving, potentially working with a consultant to implement this effort.
- William Jiron Jr. recommended speaking at public schools to increase pedestrian safety awareness. He mentioned that students will spread the word and emphasized the importance of getting people off the roads and onto bike lanes or sidewalks.

- Angie asked Mr. Jiron Jr. if there are options for lights to attach to wheelchairs to help with visibility. Mr. Jiron Jr. mentioned that he has been fighting with the Veterans Association (VA) to provide headlamps on motorized wheelchairs, but the organization did not want to give them out because they do not want to encourage wheelchair users to go out at night. He encouraged that the Council consider providing these types of safety equipment in the future for motorized wheelchair users.

The group was not able to reach a consensus on how to spend the FY 2025 budget, so Pamela suggested that the Council further discuss next year's budget during the July Pedestrian Council meeting. Bill Payne provided a motion to support this, and William Jiron Jr. seconded the motion. No Council members rejected the motion, which then passed.

8. Chair Election

To satisfy the Council's quorum voting requirements, the majority of members must be in attendance (not including vacant positions). Thomas Nickel nominated Maureen Kelly to be Council Chair via an email sent to Kelly Valencik before the Council meeting. There were no other nominations from the Council. Mrs. Sharon Bryson made a motion to start the vote for Maureen Kelly as chair, which Mr. Goff seconded. The group voted unanimously to elect Maureen Kelly of DeIDOT as the chair for the council. There were no objections or abstentions.

9. Next Meeting Date

Kelly Valencik shared that the next Council meeting will be held in approximately 3 months, either on Thursday, the 25th of July, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM **or** on Friday, the 26th of July, from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM. The group preferred the Thursday meeting option, and tentatively agreed to hold the next Council meeting on Thursday, July 25th from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Additional planned meeting dates include Wednesday, October 23rd from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM for the Fourth Council Meeting of 2024, and the options of Thursday, January 23 from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM **or** Friday, January 24 from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM for the first meeting of 2025. John Sisson mentioned that he cannot attend a meeting held on October 23rd due to a conflict.

10. Council Questions

Kelly Valencik provided an opportunity for Council members to ask questions or provide comments. No questions or comments were stated by the Council members.

11. Closing Remarks

Bill Payne made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:42 p.m. All agreed.