

Safety, Outreach & Education Subcommittee Meeting

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February 7, 2025 - Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Safety Outreach and Education Subcommittee | Meeting #1

Date: February 7, 2025

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 2:40 p.m.

Attendees:

Council Members Present

Name	Affiliation	Email
Jared Kauffman (Chair)	DART	Jared.Kauffman@delaware.gov
Bill Payne	Governor Appointed Resident from Sussex County	ublcreek@icloud.com
Robin Martin	Office of Civil Rights ADA Compliance Specialist	Robin.Martin@delaware.gov
Thomas (Chip) Kneavel	DeIDOT	Thomas.Kneavel@delaware.gov
Malasia Reid	DART	Malasia.Reid@delaware.gov
Megan Niddrie	OSHS	Meghan.Niddrie@delaware.gov

Members Absent

Name	Affiliation	Email
Brian Goff	Chesapeake Utilities	bgoff@chpk.com
Maria Andaya	DeIDOT	Maria.Andaya@delaware.gov

Support Staff

Name	Affiliation	Email
Sophie Thompson	JMT	Sthompson2@jmt.com

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to kick-off the Safety Outreach and Education Subcommittee, and review the draft subcommittee vision, goals, and actions.

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Agenda

1. Call to Order and Welcome

- a. Jared took attendance and welcomed the subcommittee to the first meeting.

2. Review Subcommittee Purpose and Goals

- a. Jared invited any comments or suggestions for the draft subcommittee goals.
- b. Goal #1:
 - i. Chip Kneavel mentioned that he thinks the goals are reasonable and clear in general, and he thinks that the group might want to add an assessment category into the goals to be able to track how effective the outreach is and bring back to the general Council. Jared agreed and said that some sort of performance metric could be helpful.
 - ii. Bill Payne stated that he has been on a couple of committees and many of them aren't making progress. He said that we need to do something different with new approaches. "What they're doing now with reflective materials and trinkets isn't working. We need to bring coats with built in reflective items to thrift shops and church bazaars where they get their clothes, and to food banks."
 1. Robin Martin agreed with Mr. Payne, mentioning that her daughter refuses to add reflective items onto her bookbag because it does not look fashionable. She suggested potentially incorporating something less obvious and more stylish, like a patch.
 - a. Jared asked about 3M stickers that are solid black and still reflective. Chip mentioned that these are very expensive and may not be in production anymore.
 2. Chip addressed Mr. Payne and asked what he is basing his statements on where he mentioned that the reflective materials are ineffective. Chip stated that he has visited homeless communities where people were still wearing reflective items from last year. He asked how we can find a metric to better track the success of these items.
 3. Jared stated that there may not be a way to assess whether someone is using the reflective item for a certain amount of time, or whether someone is homeless or not. He stated that the group needs to be open to the fact that the value of this effort is not necessarily based on an assessment.

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- iii. Chip stated that students are always covered by some type of existing program and stated that he believes that this subcommittee should focus on low-income communities. Jared agreed, mentioning that vulnerable pedestrians are not only children and that many other groups are often overlooked.
 - 1. Jared stated that a potential goal could be finding something that will actually be used, that people actually want to wear. Jared mentioned potentially going out and asking people what they would want to use and prefer to wear. Robin and Chip agreed with this idea.
 - 2. Sophie reminded the group that the Council has approximately \$20,000 to use that is untouched so far, and that alternative items rather than the usual zipper tags could be a good use for the funds.
- iv. Chip mentioned a potential incentive program where if people do wear reflective materials, they could be given an incentive, such as a gift certificate to McDonalds if they are seen wearing the item.
- v. Jared read aloud some of Maria Andaya's comments, which she sent via email since she could not attend today's meeting.
 - 1. Maria's comment for Goal #1: *"Attend community meetings/town hall meetings and give a brief speech about the urgency of the problem and what pedestrian can do to be safe. I don't think handing out brochures is enough. Most people don't read them."*
 - a. Chip said that a potential goal could be to develop partnerships with other organizations to help better spread the word.
- c. Goal #2:
 - i. Jared shared Maria's comment for Goal #2: *"Regular social media posts about pedestrian fatalities and how people can be safe pedestrians and drivers."*
 - 1. Bill Payne and Meghan Niddrie agreed. Meghan mentioned that social media is an important way to connect with people, and that the Office of Highway Safety has a social media account that posts often but does not usually post statistics. Meghan did note that some statistics are on their website even if they don't post them on social media
 - a. Mr. Payne noted that simply being provided statistics may not be meaningful to the person receiving it, especially when there's nothing describing how often something is happening per location

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- b. Jared suggested maybe showing road type with fatalities. Something to give context.
 - c. Mr. Payne agreed.
 - ii. Jared mentioned the importance of reaching out to City Council people and County Council people. "These two levels of government are examples of decision-makers to talk with. Legislators were also included in previous parts. I would also include non-elected decision-makers with my example of DelDOT. Really, I'm trying to open it up to all decision-makers who have a hand in land use and transportation decisions."
 - 1. Jared's hope for these discussions is to have an honest discussion of the pedestrian safety issue, why they exist, and aspects that go into constructing that unsafe environment.
 - iii. Mr. Payne suggested speaking to neighboring states to compare their approaches to Delaware. Chip asked Mr. Payne if he would be willing to search for other state Councils for someone in the group to reach out to, and Mr. Payne agreed.
 - iv. Jared asked if anybody has any other ideas. Chip mentioned that New York City has created a campaign to help prevent pedestrian deaths.
 - v. Mr. Payne was thinking about other states' Complete Streets Committees
 - vi. Jared mentioned that Council funds can also be used for presenters, so if the group would like to see one, we could bring someone in or use the funds to present somewhere. He mentioned that the speaker element is more to try to make people aware of the ongoing issue and emphasize it to decision-makers.
- d. Anything else for the group to form around?
 - i. Mr. Payne suggested using message signs in more areas, more than just SR 1 and I-95
 - ii. Robin: we need more education for drivers to learn what they can and cannot do, so that the focus isn't only what pedestrians should or shouldn't do.
 - 1. Jared: What kind of outreach is done for drivers at OSHS?
 - 2. Robin: Our social media focuses on messaging to both peds and motorists, (people are biking near beaches, please share the road / you are where ped safety starts), family holiday campaign messaging, and messaging to both during in-person events.

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3. Jared suggested messaging that tries to state, "Even though you're a driver now, you too are a pedestrian at many times." to reduce that 'othering' factor. Jared mentioned that this may be something to look into, and Meghan agreed.

3. Discuss Action Items and Next Steps

- a. Jared shared Maria's comment, which mentioned inviting Capt. Michael Reader or a representative of the DSP to join the Subcommittee.
 - i. Meghan mentioned that she would be able to coordinate with law enforcement through her office to extend an invitation to him.
 - ii. Jared mentioned that he is unfamiliar with Michael Reader, and Sophie shared that he has attended previous Council meetings to share his experience and perspective with pedestrians, which is why he was suggested as a potential subcommittee member.

4. Open Discussion

- a. Some of the things the former Education Subcommittee had done/planned to do:
 - i. Responding to Robin's concern of a lack of education toward driver's responsibility when interacting with people who walk or bike, Chip suggested possibly needing to make it a state requirement to include this in driver's education booklets or courses
 - ii. Maria's comment: *"Mike Wagner (member from DOE/Driver Education) tried to integrate pedestrian safety into the school curriculum such as in P.E classes. However, his efforts were unsuccessful as schools are overwhelmed with requests from various groups seeking to include their own topics in the curriculum. I wonder if this is worth revisiting. Maybe visit schools and give short talks?"*
 1. Chip mentioned that this has been attempted in the past and has gotten pushback from the Department of Education saying that it is difficult to change the curriculum. Chip said that it is important to get this message across. He mentioned "Be Safe, Be Seen", "Towards Zero Deaths", and the current campaign, 'Be DeLAWARE.' Chip and Jared agreed that Be DeLAWARE is a bit vague at what message it is trying to convey.
 2. Chip also mentioned a campaign from the Netherlands, "Stop de Kindermoord (Stop Child Murder)" because sometimes things that are direct have more of an effect. Jared agreed, and he and Chip discussed bringing this topic to the general Council to try to acknowledge that we may need a more clear, direct message about this issue. Jared mentioned that the group

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should be ready for DelDOT to be a bit uncomfortable with the message, in hopes of making some real change.

- a. Chip brought up the point that if DelDOT is not willing to acknowledge its role in creating an unsafe environment, despite being uncomfortable, we cannot ask other groups to do the same, like land-use decision-makers
 - a. Mr. Payne agreed to needing to put the subject out even if it will be unpopular with the those who drive
- b. Mr. Payne mentioned putting the message on a billboard. He stated that we need a very serious message to make change.
- c. Jared emphasized that this is a subject that we should bring to the general council. He also mentioned that he will be doing more research on other similar messages aside from "Stop de Kindermoord/Stop Child Murder".
- iii. Jared shared Maria's comment with the subcommittee: *"Planned to make short videos per topic area such as Nighttime Visibility, Using Crosswalks and Ped Traffic Signal, etc."* such as this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t2oX6zQEyU>
- iv. Jared shared Maria's comment with the subcommittee: *"The designation of October as Pedestrian Safety Awareness Month starting in 2017 came from the Education Subcommittee. Maybe we can expand this and celebrate one topic area per month? For example, "Let's Be Visible at Night Month," "Crosswalk Champions Month."*
 - 1. Chip mentioned that he thinks that this needs to be ongoing all the time, rather than during a certain month.

Action Items For Next Meeting

- a. Brainstorm ways to quantify outreach
- b. Brainstorming a message about pedestrian safety that's effective and concise
 - 1. Jared will research other similar messages that are more direct and sober (similar to Stop de Kindermoord)
- c. Mr. Payne researching other states which have a council to better understand their advocacy strategy or outreach to decision-makers. Or at least identifying them
- d. Megan will invite DSP, and contact Capt. Michael Reader. Maybe Maria can help with this connection
- e. Jared forgot to discuss how frequently the group will meet, so he will try and get another meeting set up in late March, and make a point to discuss meeting frequency.