

Minutes for RBAC Meeting: July 5, 2023

7:00 – 9:00 pm, virtual Webex meeting

In attendance online: Wendy Aaronson, Bryan Barnett-Woods, Olivia Bobrowsky, Nancy Breen, Sophie Chan-Wood, Joe Gillespie., Seth Grimes, Lynda Honberg, Matt Johnson, Graham Liebow, Judy Rudolph, Shannon Brescher Shea and Jonathan Solomon.

Nancy started the meeting at 7:02 pm with introductions.

Seth mentioned WABA will be hosting a Happy Hour for Bike Advocates on Wednesday, 7/26 and hopes all will attend. Sophie will post on Meetup.com once details have been confirmed.

Nancy announced that Shannon will be presenting some ideas for youth and family cycling at the September RBAC meeting.

(1) Matt Johnson, the **Montgomery County Department of Transportation Bikeways Coordinator**, said the County adopted a Bikeway Plan in 2018 but this does not include the City of Rockville (<https://mcatlas.org/bikeplan/>).

The Old Georgetown Road bike lanes are a state project where the County didn't have any input. MCBAG will be hosting a meeting on 7/20 where the State will be talking about this project (<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/bikeways/mcbag.html>)

Joe Moges, assistant district engineer for traffic in district 3 from Maryland State Highway Administration will be speaking. The County has long-term plans to include bus lanes on Old Georgetown Road with a separated 2-way protected bike lane on the east side behind the curb.

Matt says the County is rolling out a **bikeway branding and wayfinding program**. An element is the breezeway network which is the highest quality, lowest stress bike lanes in the County. Pilot breezeways will mainly be low-stress roads, from Clarksburg to Friendship Heights thru Rockville (to parallel MD-355). They will test out the signage and wayfinding for this network.

The Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) will run from Wheaton to Montgomery College thru the Rockville Metro. There will be continuous sidewalks along Veirs Mill Road from Georgia Avenue to Twinbrook Parkway. The north side of Veirs Mill with no service road will have a shared-use path.

The Washington Grove Connector will run on Crabbs Branch to Brown Street from Shady Grove Metro. Construction to start in fiscal year 2026. Matt shared a page showing some of their different bike projects: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/bikeways/index.html>

Here is his contact information if you want to reach out:
Matt.Johnson@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov; 240-777-7237

(2) Jonathan shared a **Tour de Cookie** report (see attached) via the listserve and would like to invite Charlie Reagan from the Tree House to the next RBAC meeting. He agreed to take on the leadership as the RBAC liaison for next year's Tour de Cookie which will be on Saturday, May 4, 2024. Debrief meeting with ride marshals suggested WABA get involved with helmet checks or at least have a table presence. Sophie motioned to approve RBAC supporting the ride again for next year; Joe seconded.

(3) As part of the **City Update**, Bryan reviewed the draft letter of support he sent via the listserve for the Safe Streets and Roads for All application. This is a federal grant program for roadway safety thru an approved infrastructure bill. He is proposing intersection audit studies to help calm traffic. The results from this project may help pay for the building of these improvements in the future. With some changes, Lynda motioned to approve the letter; Jonathan seconded.

The next steps for the Town Center road diet project are to install parking meters and post and then curb separations for the bike lanes. Project finish date is possibly in the fall. The bike ride with City staff will be on Sunday, 8/27 from 10 am to 12 noon. Route can be finalized at the next RBAC meeting. Bryan is keeping a list of areas of concern.

The Pedestrian Master Plan includes some shared-use paths and will be presented at the next meeting for discussion.

Discussions on the elections will be postponed for the next meeting.

(3) Sophie is looking for ride leaders and sweeps for **upcoming August rides** and more urgently on July 25. Shannon can help if no one else is available. Nancy can help lead the August 20 Carl Henn Millennium Trail ride. She updated the Google doc spreadsheet but will reach out to some others too.

(4) Joe spoke about **contributory negligence legislation**. Bicyclists may not be 100% compensated for injuries. Bryan will connect Joe with Linda Moran who will be speaking with the Traffic and Transportation Commission in the fall. Maryland legislators will be open at the beginning in the year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sophie Chan-Wood

2023 Tour de Cookie event summary for RBAC:

The Treehouse staff appeared to be reserved in setting up this year's event after a three-year hiatus (two years of COVID and last year's weather-cancellation). This appeared to be a function of their uncertainty whether the event would still "work" after this three-year break. After running the 2023 Tour de Cookie, Treehouse staff are now confident the event is viable. Thankfully, they appear ready to take the event much more seriously next year. This is reflected, in part, by the fact that they have already held a debrief meeting.

The debrief meeting was attended by Charlie (Treehouse Director), Marsha (Event Coordinator), Keaghan (the person who managed the TdC website and other communication) and me. I learned that the event had 263 riders (174 on the Short Route and 89 on the Long Route) along with 85 children registered for the (free) Bike Rodeo. The event grossed \$22,000. There were \$20,000 in expenses, leaving a "profit" of \$2,000. As Treehouse seemed to view this year's event as a "test," they were just happy the event didn't lose money. Planned improvements, which I'll share shortly, are expected to significantly increase future fundraising totals.

I had been requested to complete a report form prior to the Tour de Cookie Debrief meeting. I used information collected during a separate Ride Marshal Debrief meeting to complete the form. The TdC debrief group focused heavily on the Ride Marshals' input. The information from the Ride Marshals was well-received and heeded. One of the main concerns raised by the Ride Marshals, and also shared by everyone at the Treehouse Debrief meeting, focused on the need to plan early-on for future events. I am fairly confident Treehouse is going to move forward on getting an early start for the 2024 Tour de Cookie. In fact, I was told they already have received general permission to use the same event location (the Carver Center) next year. This will allow route planning over the summer with a goal of having reasonably specific (but not final) route recommendations by September or October.

One idea raised by the Route Marshals was to include "helmet checks/adjustments" prior to the ride's start. The concept of perhaps inviting WABA to come to the 2024 TdC to perform "helmet checks/adjustments" was well-received. TdC is open to giving WABA a table (for free) in return at the event. This could be a real win-win-win: More people would get their helmet to fit correctly, the Tour de Cookie would likely get more participants by having this event show up on the WABA calendar and in WABA email blasts, and WABA would benefit from the high visibility being involved in the event as well as from the opportunity to advance their organization by passing out information to the biking public. One question for our group - Does RBAC have a good WABA connection to whom we could float this idea?

I also want to let you know that I have brokered an arrangement with Ride With GPS. They are going to give Treehouse an Organization Account at no cost (for yearly one-time use in relation to the Tour de Cookie). This means that all registered riders will be able to use RWGPS at the Premium Account level (for almost all features. (Club account details at the following link: <https://support.ridewithgps.com/hc/en-us/articles/9545646204315-The-Club-Account>)

Other ideas that came out of the meeting included:

- Making a brief (60-90 second) video to help riders prepare for the Tour de Cookie (Treehouse will produce this with input from RBAC)
- Create posters announcing the event; special focus on placing them in area Bike Shops
- Use shared online documents during event creation to better coordinate planning of the event
- Look into having the Rockville Bike Hub provide shop hours in the weeks leading up to the Tour de Cookie specifically focused on helping riders prepare their bikes for the ride.
- This was the first year the Tour de Cookie offered a bike jersey. The high-quality jersey they picked had an attractive design. Unfortunately, it was rolled out very late, so the incentive aspect (“get the jersey for free when you raise \$200 or more”) did not work. Treehouse liked the concept of this fundraiser and will try it again next year (but starting out much earlier)

This report would be incomplete without giving huge thanks to Wendy Aronson, Lynda Honberg, and Jake Jukabek for their work in creating, testing, and re-testing the two Tour de Cookie routes. Thanks also to Sophie and Nancy for their helpful planning input. The Ride Marshals were well-prepared and provided great supervision, helping riders feel encouraged and supported. These volunteers included RBAC members Nancy Breen, Bill Michie, Jonathan Solomon, and Dave Stinchcomb. Other Marshals included Len Deerkoski, Carol Dreher, Tom Hoopengardner, Joshua Hull Haines, and Nancy Solomon.

The 2024 Tour de Cookie will be held on May 4th with a rain date of May 5th. If RBAC decides to continue to provide technical advice/support to the Tour de Cookie, then I would be willing to continue in the role of RBAC Liaison to the Tour de Cookie, if that is what the group would like. I have already suggested consider employing a Star Wars theme since May the 4th is “Star Wars Day.”

If anyone has questions or additional thoughts, please email them to me (Jonathan) and I will get back to you when I return home from my trip.

July 5, 2023

Hon. Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: City of Rockville, Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee - Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Letter of Support

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee (RBAC), I am submitting this letter indicating our support for the City's SS4A supplemental planning application, *City of Rockville – Vision Zero Intersection Safety Audits*. Intersections can be problematic for bicyclists as there are multiple points of conflict for people on bikes and most infrastructure is designed to facilitate motorists. The proposed project will study thirty different intersections in the city and propose a variety of safety improvements that will benefit all modes of traffic. This project helps implement Rockville's *Vision Zero Action Plan* by evaluating signalized intersections and unsignalized pedestrian crossings and ensuring equity in the City's transportation improvements.

RBAC is a citizen committee authorized by the Mayor and Council and works to advocate on behalf of residents and visitors to improve bicycle facilities and policies. This includes commenting on roadway projects, promoting bicycle infrastructure, leading bike rides, and helping city staff better understand and anticipate the needs of bicyclists in Rockville.

The proposed study will identify low-cost and effective intersection safety improvements at intersections for people bicycling to travel alongside motorists, pedestrians, and transit users. Additionally, this application seeks to strengthen the collaboration with the Maryland Department of Transportation by including both city- and state-maintained intersections.

The City's *Vision Zero Action Plan* and the *Bikeway Master Plan* recommend improving multimodal facilities and considering equity for City projects. This project directly works toward implementing these approved plans.

RBAC strongly supports the City's supplemental planning application. If this project is approved, RBAC will collaborate with the City to support this project, provide comments, and participate in any public meetings as key stakeholders.

Should you have any questions about this application, please contact Bryan Barnett-Woods, Principal Transportation Planner, at 240-314-8527 or bbwoods@rockvillemd.gov.

Sincerely,

Nancy Breen, Chair
Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee