

**Student Commission Meeting  
Thursday, October 22, 2015**

**Present: Donna Beels, Mike Bonnici, Les Cook, Kristi Hauswirth, Lynda Heinonen, Lydia Lytle, William Lytle, Carol Makkonen, Dave Nordstrom, Travis Pierce**

**Guests – Glenn Anderson, Hancock City Manager and Eric Waara, Houghton City Manager**

**Bike Path Discussion**

Will welcomed and thanked the City Managers for being willing to meet with the Student Commission to discuss bike paths in the community and on the Michigan Tech campus.

He explained that initially the discussion had started with bike paths on campus but it was realized quickly that this is a larger issue because students are biking from the surrounding communities to campus. The number of students using bicycles has grown a lot over the years so it's an issue that is important to the many students who bike to campus each day.

Will commented that sidewalks are designed for foot traffic and roads are designed for cars so bicycles can't efficiently or safely travel on them. So there has been discussion on how getting to campus on a bicycle could be improved (possibly using 7<sup>th</sup> avenue or a route to the SDC).

Will commented that bicycle needs are three-fold:

- 1) Recreational
- 2) Commuting Needs
- 3) Shopping/Economic Needs
  - o Students would utilize the Hancock/Houghton downtown but it's hard for them to get there on a bicycle

Will also commented that there are approximately 50-100 students who bike to campus in the winter months and while he doesn't expect the cities to accommodate winter bicyclists entirely he thought if they could have distinct rules or marked areas it would improve safety.

Will commented that he thought it would be 5-10 years to design and implement a system that would be effective for bicyclists.

**Hancock – Glenn Anderson**

Glen reported the following:

- The City of Hancock does have an active "Bike/Pedestrian committee (for the past 2 ½ years) and they are in the process of drafting a "complete streets" proposal
- There will be a re-construct of the downtown in 2016
  - o Hancock Street will be a "two-lane" road
- The first bike path is scheduled for 2017
  - o It will run from Gino's Restaurant to Holiday Gas Station
  - o They have the verbal approval from MDOT
- The DNR trail is their recreational trail for biking and walking

- The reality is that MDOT or the City of Hancock do not have the resources to complete grandiose projects
- In the past, there has been discussions to add additions/railings to the bridge to make it more bike friendly but they have not gone through
- Front Street in Hancock will be widened by 4 feet in 2017

### **Houghton – Eric Waara**

Eric reported the following:

- Coming off the bridge is the “choke” point for Houghton
  - Bicyclists need to walk their bikes from the Downtowner to Citgo
- They have great paths along the waterfront but how to get the traffic from the lakeside to campus level is the problem
  - Some bicyclists come up Lake Drive (Dee Stadium to Citgo)
  - The City owns property by Super 8 but UPPCO has their sub-station in the middle of it
- Working on a possible nine-mile bike loop in Houghton
- They will be re-doing 7<sup>th</sup> avenue so they could possibly make it wide enough to accommodate bicycles
- They are working on how streets are signed
- Streets are signed for cars but bicyclists should follow the same rules as cars

### **Other comments included:**

- The biggest challenge for commuter bicyclists are the bridge and the Yooper Loop
- Utilizing 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be appealing for bicyclists

### **On-Campus Trail**

The proposed on-campus bike plan was distributed and reviewed. The path would loop around campus and would be parallel with the road. There would be offshoots that would go to major bike racks. This would keep bikes from the center of campus. Questions/comments included:

- Would bikes be banned from the center of campus? Will commented that if traveling on the outside of campus was faster they may not need to be banned.
- Will students use the bike paths or would they continue to use their usual route? Will commented that he felt that if you provide an easier, simpler, and safer route it would be used.
- Future highway construction would allow for possible expansion of the southern leg of the bike path

### **Next Step**

Will commented that all parties recognize that bicycling will continue to grow and it is on the Cities and MDOT’s radar.

Les commented that the University will continue to have conversations about this and will pull in Kerri Sleeman as the Facilities Management Executive Director.

### **Bike Pedestrian Committee**

Eric reported the Bike and Pedestrian Committee meets a few times a year to keep concepts rolling and to make sure it remains part of the big picture for the City. This allows them to incorporate projects if the opportunity allows.

Les asked Eric to invite Will to these meetings.

### **Transit**

Will reported they have been thinking of coming to the City of Houghton to ask if they could add a credit card swipe to their busses in exchange for expanded service. The bus service available is not always convenient especially for the students living in Daniell Heights.

### **Uber/Lyft**

This was looked into as a carpooling option but currently the area is too small. The local Uber is Barkboard.

### **Fun Suggestions**

- Zipline from Mt. Ripley to MEEM
- Gondola from Franklin Square to Mt. Ripley

### **Other**

Dave thanked the City of Houghton for the sidewalk around McGinnis Drive.

Les commented that a student suggested putting sidewalks and better lighting on Fairview Street.

### **Updates**

#### **Sustainability Strategic Plan – Will**

This will be discussed at the November meeting.

#### **Van Pelt and Opie Library Food and Drink Policy – Carol**

Carol reported that the food and drink policy has been being enforced for about 1 ½ weeks and the students seem to be complying with it better than previously. She will report back during the spring semester. The policy reads as follows:

*To keep the library, its furniture, computers and materials clean; to minimize distractions for all students; and to satisfy the majority who want food restricted to specific areas; please comply with the policy.*

- *Food can be eaten only on the library's first floor: in the café, near the café, and both reading rooms.*

- *Food cannot be eaten at the computer workstations or in the group study rooms.*
- *The IT labs and lounges do permit food.*
  - *<http://www.it.mtu.edu/computer-labs.php>*
- *The Keweenaw Commons at the MUB permits food, including deliveries from the vendors from the community and is open 24 hours/day.*
- *Securely covered beverages are allowed anywhere.*

### **Library Cell Phone/Computer-facilitated Talk Policy**

Carol reported the students are complying with the Library Cell Phone/Computer-facilitated Talk Policy. The policy reads as follows:

*To keep the Van Pelt and Opie Library atmosphere conducive to study, collaboration and library research, please place phones on vibrate and consider the impact on others when using computers for Skype and similar forms of talk.*

*Considerate, phone friendly locations are:*

- *Café and seating near the café on the 1st floor*
- *Stairwells*
- *Library lobby*
- *After-hours entrance, west side (Opie Library)*
- *First and 2nd floor group study rooms only*
- *The 3rd floor is for silent study. The group study rooms on the 3rd floor are not soundproof.*

### **Issues**

Les reported that he and Lynda met with Nate Peterson and Dallas Linville from USG to discuss the two groups working together to make sure all of the student issues are addressed.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 12 at 2:00 pm in Ballroom B2&B3, Memorial Union Building.