

Cleveland Heights, Ohio
Transportation & Environmental Sustainability Committee
Thursday, July 28, 2022, 7 p.m., City Hall
Notes made from audio recording by Pat Hanavan
[questions in brackets reflect poor sound quality]

Attendance (surmised from audio):

Committee	Sam Bell, chair
	Laura Marks
	Kathy Petrey
	Catalina Wagers
CH City Council member	Josie Moore
[Others may have been in attendance]	

Meeting called to order at 7 p.m. by Sam Bell, chair.

1. Approval of minutes of last meeting: Moved by Laura Marks, seconded by Sam Bell; approved.

2. Updates or reports from City staff: Sam reported that a letter was sent to the mayor and staff requesting staff presence or detailed written response to questions to be received by July 22 for inclusion on the agenda; only one response, from planning director Eric Zamft, was received July 27. Catalina asked if there had been a reply on questions of parking; Laura said she went to the last Planning Commission meeting, where the recommendation was not voted on but was passed on. With no staff present, other questions were tabled.

3. Chair's remarks: Sam said the committee continuing its work without receiving any support from city staff was like whistling in the dark; only council members Josie Moore and Gail Larson have been helping to forward the committee's recommendations. Sam expressed dismay that there has still been no action by the City to **protect the home at Taylor and Fairmount**; though the city and ODOT say there are no solutions available, there are two round bollards near the Heights High softball field on Goodnor Road that do a good job protecting a fire hydrant there. He noted that the home on Fairmount had a guard rail when the current owner bought it; by removing and not replacing it, the city has effectively taken the use of the home from the resident; Sam saw this as the city exercising eminent domain, which demands compensation for the loss of the property; he suggested the homeowner engage legal counsel.

4. Committee-initiated:

--Bus-stop audit: Catalina reported no further progress on the survey while Charlie Mosbrook is traveling. Laura said she had written up a report summarizing the results in the survey spreadsheet and making recommendations for some of the most urgent needs--trimming trees that are blocking signs, lack of shade, etc. The group will continue to meet.

--Coventry crosswalk report: Catalina and Laura walked Coventry from North Park to Euclid Heights Boulevard, looking at and photographing each intersection, and have written a short report with recommendations. The original request from a resident was for a crosswalk at Berkshire. There had been a light at E. Overlook, but it was deemed unnecessary after Coventry School closed, leaving no crosswalks on that stretch of Coventry. Laura said the area looks residential, but Coventry is heavily used. She and Catalina recommend at least one crosswalk at every intersection and placement of two speed tables, one near E. Overlook and one at [Clarkson?]. Police data on traffic speed and numbers is needed. Sam said that it would have been helpful to have Sgt. Speece present. **Laura moved, Sam seconded a motion to request City Council to receive the Coventry Road crosswalk and speed table report and adopt its recommendations; motion passed.**

--Sidewalk repair: Kathy suggested that the City use ARPA funds to set up a revolving fund for sidewalk repair, as described by Howard Maier in his detailed memo. The City would engage a contractor to repair sidewalks and assess property owners for the cost. City staff and City Council had objected that the City couldn't afford to front the funds for the repairs, but using ARPA funds to seed the project would allow repairs to begin. Kathy said information was needed from the City regarding how many blocks they would inspect and how much it would cost to replace or repair that number of sidewalks. The City could assess property owners over 5 years instead of 10; but in Shaker Heights and Lyndhurst, according to Howard, almost all property owners paid in cash within 30 days of completion of the work. Having the City contract for the repairs would cost less per property owner because of bulk rates, and property owners would be saved the time, money, and trouble of getting their own quotes and supervising the work. Laura noted that the work would also be done to a consistent standard. Sam said he had emailed the idea to council member Tony Cuda to present at a public meeting on the city's use of ARPA funds which was held simultaneously to this committee meeting. Kathy pointed out that the city's sidewalks are not in good repair; Kathy herself and numerous friends have tripped and broken bones; she said that poor sidewalks cause Cleveland Heights to be downgraded in residential desirability ratings. Catalina asked who would do the work; Sam responded that planning department inspectors would identify the needs and the public works department would oversee an independent contractor doing the work. Council member Josie Moore said she would ask about this idea in City Council.

--CH Green Team update: a. Recycling: Catalina reported speaking at the recent street fair with Coventry neighborhood renters who were frustrated not to have recycling bins available to them. They asked if there was a central repository for recycling dropoffs. Sam said there may still be a large recycling receptacle in the parking lot behind Stone Oven, but that public recycling containers often get a lot of trash, making the contents unrecyclable. Laura suggested that a large bin be placed near Coventry. **[Josie?] suggested that an ordinance could require landlords to provide recycling bins.**

b. Single-use plastics ban: Catalina has been working on this, but with restaurants struggling during the pandemic, said perhaps now is not the right time for legislation. Laura suggested that the Green Team could work with individual restaurants. Catalina said that [Louie's?] is already using alternatives and perhaps the Green Team can find and learn from other places that are

doing so. [Josie?] asked if other municipalities have bans; Catalina said that she is researching that. Laura suggested looking at ordinances from other cities.

5. Community/resident-initiated:

--Rexwood Road request for speed table: Sam said the request is for a speed table, not a bump; normally a police representative would be present to take the request. Laura said that last time Sgt. Speece attended a meeting, he said the City does have one and would try it. Sam recommended **placing a speed table at about the middle of both blocks of Rexwood** to maximize the slowing effect. Sam said that he had asked for police data but had received none; Sam said the police told him that the mayor had prohibited them from sharing any data with the committee. Laura suggested that perhaps a resident could request that data. Sam said a public records request could require disclosure of the data if it exists; the committee has received such data in the past. Kathy said an organized version would be more helpful than the raw data, but FOIA would not require that. Sam said the committee had successfully dealt with raw data in the past.

--Request for noise controls on leaf blowers: Sam said he received a written request for noise controls from a resident who had previously lived in New York City and Los Angeles and complained that Cleveland Heights is noisier by far, all day long; as a clinical psychologist, the resident said he could testify to the detrimental effects of prolonged exposure to such noise. Sam reported that the mayor had said at a League of Women Voters forum that he won't consider controls on landscape equipment. Catalina suggested the mayor might be open to requiring mufflers on existing equipment, as opposed to a switch to electric equipment. Kathy added that noise and roadway damage was also being caused by very large trucks on residential roads such as Lamberton; she asked if the City has done a noise study on decibel levels of truck noise (similar to the study done at the High School band room) in locations such as sidewalk seating areas on Lee Road. Laura said that Councilperson Cuda had received a request from Stone Oven that noise such as loud music from motorcycles be reduced by enforcement. She added that truck noise and fumes are often noxious at the Noble Road garden. **Kathy will speak with the City's law director to find out what load limits exist on city roads and what process there is for enforcement.** Sam asked that that information be forwarded to the police and the mayor.

6. Old business

--No-idling policy: Sam said he had introduced a no-idling policy for City vehicles when he first joined the committee and thought it had been adopted by the City; however, he was unable to find it on the City's website. He said he had received complaints from residents and observed himself that City vehicles are idling with either no operator inside or with the driver talking on a phone. Although some work trucks need to idle to power equipment, most do not and should not be allowed to idle unattended for more than 60 seconds, he said, pointing out that vehicles get 0 mpg when idling; a gallon of gas weighs 7 pounds, and burning it produces 3 times that weight in carbon dioxide. Laura said she had reported a truck idling on Monticello

while the operator was using a mower on the median, far down the road, and Joe Kickel, assistant public works director, told her such observations should be reported. Laura said idling is a huge driver of climate change, drives up gas prices, affects air quality, and throws off waste heat. She added that computers need power, but spare batteries can provide it; Sam noted that running a vehicle to charge a cell phone is especially wasteful. [Josie?] asked if other cities have no-idling ordinances. Sam said many do, particularly for business and residential districts and especially at schools. Catalina said Cleveland's no-idling policy for city vehicles [was adopted in 2016?] and lists exceptions. Sam said cities such as Portland and Boulder have general no-idling ordinances; he said there need to be exceptions for, e.g., refrigerated or concrete-mixing trucks. Catalina said North Olmsted, Maple Heights, and South Euclid also have general no-idling ordinances. **Sam moved, Laura seconded, that Cleveland Heights adopt a similar policy or ordinance as the mayor or City Council see fit; motion passed.**

--Speed-limit reduction: Sam said the committee has asked City Council to declare the entire lengths of Taylor Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard not through highways and reduce the speed limit to 25 mph; he said the mayor has said he intends to do so by proclamation, but Kathy said the law is clear--it must be done by City Council ordinance, not mayoral proclamation; she added that the mayor does have the power to introduce an ordinance to Council. Kathy said that members of City Council have questioned whether residents want this change and asked for this committee to do a study. Josie said that a committee of citizens can't be asked to undertake such a study without the support of City staff. Josie suggested that the Council's Public Safety Committee might support bringing an ordinance forward. Kathy said that it is not good policy to base public safety decisions on the preferences of a majority of citizens.

7. Special statements:

--Howard Maier submitted a special statement dated July 26, commending City Council and the Mayor for recognizing TESC as a valuable resource; asking that the committee receive a more formal place in the City's decision-making process, whether by ordinance, Council resolution, or mayoral proclamation, so that recommendations be considered and tracked and results reported; welcoming assignments from the Council and mayor; stating the need for city resources, not as voting members but to provide vital input and records; asking that members be appointed who are representative of the whole CH community; asking that members be limited to residents of CH; and recommending that further discussion be held regarding how the City benefits from the time and talents of TESC members.

--Laura Marks made a special statement agreeing with much that Howard had said and appreciating the dedication of TESC members. **Laura submitted her resignation** from TESC, saying that while Howard expressed hope that things will change, she did not share that hope. She said she will continue to serve the city, but not as a member of this committee. She said that she couldn't continue to do the amount of work she had been when it was ignored and rejected.

--**Kathy Petrey** said Laura's resignation was a great loss to the committee, and while she shared Laura's frustration, she was not yet at the point of resigning. Kathy told Josie, as the only representative of CH government present at the meeting, that it had been hurtful to hear what the mayor and Councilperson Mattox said about members of this committee, and that it was hurtful to hear how the staff feels. Josie pointed out that the mayor and Councilperson Mattox are not authorized to represent the feelings of staff, so staff's feelings on the subject are unknown.

--**Sam Bell** made a special statement that, like Laura, he is unable to continue work as part of this committee at this time. He said it had been an honor to serve with such a dedicated, bright, and creative group of fellow citizens, but that **he must resign**.

--**Catalina Wagers** said that the way the committee is currently working doesn't make sense, and that she would think about this and talk with remaining members of the committee. **Kathy Petrey** said that Laura, with Heights Tree People, and Catalina, with CH Green Team, show that a lot can be done outside of the city government structure. She noted that, other than the Complete and Green Streets initiative, the committee has not had many referrals from Council or the mayor, and that maybe non-governmental entities are a better way to accomplish its goals.

8. Meeting adjourned by Catalina at 8:36 p.m.