

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
October 27, 2015 Meeting Minutes
KRESA Main Campus

Attendees

Deb Buchholtz, Commissioner, Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Lysanne Harma, Supervisor, Richland Township
Marc Irwin, Public Relations, Kalamazoo Bicycle Club (KBC)
Shawn Kloha, Senior Project Planner, Stryker Corp.
Daniel McGlinn, Attorney & Shareholder, Kreis, Enderle, Hudgins & Boros, PC
David Rachowicz, Director, Kalamazoo County Parks & Expo Center
Ed Sackley, Office of State Senator Margaret O'Brien
Paul Selden, Director of Road Safety, KBC; Member, TriKats
Christopher Tracy, Partner, Honigman, Miller, Schartz and Cohn, LLP
David Warwick, Vice President, Envirologic

Participated via Email* (responded to written survey)

Kendall Klingelsmith, Director of Parks, Rec. & Sr Citizen Svcs, City of Portage

Agenda

Introductions and Welcome – Selden

Stated purpose of the meeting: to answer the question, “Is there enough critical mass to form a charitable organization (a501c3) to support making our community even more bicycle friendly?”

Background on Bike Friendly Kalamazoo: a communications network of volunteer participants/delegates from community stakeholders (for more information, see www.bikefriendlykalamazoo.org)

Chris Tracy’s Initial Comments

Chris Tracy needed to leave the meeting early; so his comments were requested first. They are summarized as follows:

- Causes that such a 501c3 could support include: Trail development, and “signature” Kalamazoo-oriented bicycling event(s)
- Cautions: such a 501c3 should supplement, and not detract from, trail development and other existing, worthy, fund raising efforts (e.g., KRVT)
- Likened such a charitable organization to a “United Way” for bikes
- Thought it might take 5-10 years to get off the ground.

Daniel McGlinn: 501c3 Overview

Daniel McGlinn stated he is willing to incorporate such a 501c3 bicycling-oriented organization, pro bono. He outlined the general steps and timing involved with such an incorporation. A minimum of three board members/directors (but as many as 7-15) typically would govern such an organization, as envisioned, although it is possible that a combination director/membership structure might be workable. In general, pros include: worthiness of proposed cause; time to get approval is running 2-3 months; attractive as an umbrella for liability and funding for causes such as a signature bike event and Kalamazoo Bike Week. In general, cons include: possible overlap / inefficiencies if another set of 501c3 organizations in the area already covers the intended purpose of this organization; and, the need to set aside costs for ongoing maintenance (accounting, possible audits, paid staff, etc.).

Main Questions Asked and Answered

Paul Selden asked participants to answer four questions in the time remaining, some of which overlapped questions asked in a survey of BFK participants emailed prior to the meeting.

1. For what causes might monies raised by such a 501c3 be justifiably used, in addition to those mentioned in earlier emails (namely, Open Roads, KRVT, Race for Wishes, AMBUCS, Kalamazoo Bike Week)? Answers included (in alphabetical order, with duplicate answers not excluded):
Area marketing efforts to promote businesses/organizations/attractions along trail way

- Bike Event to create tourism
- Bike route and lane signage
- Boost/promote/help market existing events to get them and our area more notariety
- Burdick St. - Bike Route Signs
- Education
- Education and advocacy
- Educational supplies
- Enhanced Bike lane/share the road signage, especially on urban streets
- Infrastructure
- Kalamazoo Bike Week – programming
- Kalamazoo Bike Week – Programming
- Major event - Tour de Zoo (e.g., Tour de Troit)
- Other bike-related charitable causes (e.g., AMBUCS, Race for Wishes, Tour de Taylor, etc.)
- Organized large bike event – purpose to gain exposure to Kalamazoo bike scene
- Potential fundraising for dedicated trails (but some similar entities exist; which may conflict with and be hard to determine use (political)
- Potential to be overarching recognizable bike entity – but may have as many downsides to those currently existing
- Public/Private multi use trail/bikeways (example could be promoting businesses along bikeway to purchase bike racks)
- Regional Advocacy / Promo Events
- Regional Advocacy-Promotion
- Regional Connectivity
- Rewards leading to the arrest of hit and run motorists injuring bicyclists
- Safety posters around region
- Separation of purpose from or inclusion of existing organizations is prime consideration
- Staff mentioned by Mr. McGlenn
- Standards alignment
- Survey of other groups/organizations to determine purpose overlaps
- Tour de Zoo

2. Names of people willing to serve on board at this time (if all other obstacles were resolved):

- Kendall Klingelsmith
- Shawn Kloha
- Ed Sackley
- Paul Selden
- David Warwick
- [Selden asked whether board members of various parks commissions/boards could be involved]

3. What other groups might have interests that overlap the concept of this 501c3, and should therefore be asked to participate in further discussions of this concept? Answers were (including those mentioned more than once):

- Bike Event
- Council of Governments (C.O.G.)
- Friends of KRVT
- Friends of KRVT
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- Friends of the Trail
- Habitat for Humanity (does rides all over)
- Kalamazoo Bicycle Club
- Kalamazoo Bicycle Club
- Kalamazoo Bicycle Club (KBC)
- Kalamazoo Bike Week
- Kalamazoo Nature Center
- Kalamazoo Parks Department

Kalamazoo River Valley Trails – the entire watershed (plus we adopt the St. Joe Watershed in south county)
Kalamazoo River Watershed Council
Kalamazoo Streets Departments
Kal-Haven Trail
KATS [Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study]
KBC
KRVT
KRVT
Kzoo Bike Club
Open Roads
Open Roads
Open Roads
Parks Foundation
Parks Foundation of Kalamazoo County
Portage Parks Department
Portage Streets Department
Pure Michigan – wants to create tourism – can they help?
Safe Kids

Discussion

Selden reiterated that Bike Friendly Kalamazoo could continue its work separate from the 501c3 contemplated in these discussions, but that there was reason to at least put these questions on the table, because they have been asked a number of times by various members of the greater community, and further, because Bike Friendly Kalamazoo is only an informal communications network that neither collects nor distributes funds. BFK has always tried to accomplish its goal of helping to make our community even more bike friendly through the actions of existing organizations and through the work of volunteers.

Participants underscored the need for caution, so as not to duplicate the wheel. They also suggested that the process may take years to get off the ground. One perspective was that for this very reason, the sooner the community began the effort to organize such a non-profit organization (NPO) the sooner it would be available (given that it could take several years to get off the ground). [This last sentence is an edited version of a written comment].

The organizational ability and credibility of existing groups needs to be explored as possible alternatives to forming a new group.

The area may be in need for an organization to fill in key gaps that existing organizations do not yet fully pursue (that is, for broadly making the community even more bicycle friendly). The key use of such a non-profit would be to fill significant funding gaps that are not already covered by existing organizations. It would have the built in advantage of being able to start “fresh” with perhaps a broader charter than existing organizations.

Selden asked participants whether the concept of forming an NPO with this type of broad charter had enough merit to warrant further discussion in 2016. By a show of hands and voice vote, all (but possibly one?) wanted to continue the discussion.

Next Steps

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo will call a meeting to further these discussions, some time in 2016.

Paul Selden facilitated the meeting and prepared these minutes.

Special thanks to KRESA for providing the meeting space!