

Cyclist signage program draws mixed feelings from Council

By Anthony Welch

Considering Manitou's parking congestion, Mayor Marc Snyder likes the idea of people using other means to visit the town, including bicycles.

Manitou Springs City Council, however, expressed different opinions at its regular meeting Tuesday night about a program that would paint road signage encouraging drivers and cyclists to share the road. Kristin Bennett, the City of Colorado Springs Senior Transportation Planner, made a presentation to Council about the "Sharrows" program. There was no action taken, as the item was presented for discussion.

The program involves shared lane markings on streets. The markings reinforce state laws on safe passing of vehicles around bicyclists, providing cyclists with lane positioning guidance and raising awareness that motorists and bicyclists need to share the road, according to Bennett.

The markings do not designate a bike lane, but let cyclists know they can be on the road and gives them a guide so they're not riding too close to traffic or parked cars. The City of Colorado Springs had contacted City of Manitou Springs staff about the proposal in May, but Planning Director Dan Folke and Public Services Director Bruno Pothier had declined.

Folke told council the main reason was the cost of installing the signage was not budgeted for. The proposal calls for the markings to be placed along Colorado Avenue from downtown Colorado Springs all the way down Manitou Avenue.

Folke said Manitou Avenue is controlled by the Colorado Department of Transportation, so the City would have to get with it on something like this.

The markings would be placed every 250 feet or so, Bennett said. Funding is being sought to pay for materials, though Manitou would be responsible for cost of installation on the Manitou Avenue portion.

Councilwoman Aimee Cox said she understood the money issue but really liked what the program is about.

"Everything we can do to let the public know bicycling is encouraged," she said. "Manitou is a difficult place to bicycle downtown. I like the idea of showing folks there are bicyclists are on the road."

Councilman Rick Barry wasn't too thrilled about the shared road markings.

"How many markings are we going to put on our street? We have a problem training people how to use a single roundabout," he said. "I'm not convinced that me educational program informing public about cyclists is robust enough so people will know what the signage means. Are we going to confuse them more?"

Councilman Matt Carpenter felt Manitou having narrow streets is more reason to have the markings. He noted that council recently approved a bike sharing program in town, and he'd like to look into funding for the "Sharrows" program.



"When you mention rules of the road, it sometimes helps to have rules spelled out a little," he said.

Bennett reminded Council "Sharrows" is something it can consider down the road. Snyder said it could possibly be considered when Council looks at mid-year budget amendments.

"I don't want our little city to get a reputation of being unfriendly to cyclists," he said.

Music Jam gets Council support

Council heard from Laurie Wood, who spoke on behalf of Partners for Healthy Choices and for Concrete Couch. Wood said her husband Steve was looking to once again host a Music Jam on the stage at Soda Springs Park on Fridays throughout the summer.

The program ran a few summers back and was successful in getting kids involved in a positive activity at the park. Wood said Steve had already spoken with Manitou Springs Police Chief Mary Jo Smith and with the parks and rec board.

"Unfortunately, not-so-positive things are going on in the park. We want to do something proactive and positive in the park," Wood said. "Part of the drive is to move the element that none of us find attractive out of the park."

The Music Jam group is looking to possibly store instruments at the facility as well. Pothier said he'd see if he could arrange that, although couldn't guarantee the security.

City Administrator Jack Benson recommended that the group fill-out reservation forms and council could waive the fee. That way, it would ensure the group has use of the facility from 3 to 4 p.m. on Fridays without conflict.

Council approves modified liquor license of Stagecoach

Dave Symonds, who took over as owner of the Stagecoach Inn five years ago, said he recently realized he didn't fill in the boundaries correctly for his liquor license. The original floor chart didn't include the patio.

Symonds told council since discovering this he's stopped serving alcohol on the patio. He requested his liquor license be modified as soon as possible because he was losing money not being able to serve alcohol on the patio. He wanted to make sure the business was in complete compliance.

Council approved the request, and now it has to be approved by the state.

"I know as a business person one sometimes pushes the envelope to make the extra dollar," Barry told Symonds. "Having said all that, thanks for being honest. I appreciate you not trying to squeeze a nickel out of something you shouldn't have been squeezing a nickel out of."

New sculpture to stand outside City Hall

Manitou Springs Arts Council member Jack Elder made a presentation on a new streetscape sculpture. "Stickman," designed by Chuck Murphy, will stand in the garden area in front of City Hall.

"I was a little taken back by the size of 'Stickman,'" Snyder said. "It has since started to grow on me. Although at 10 feet tall, it's certainly going to stand out."

Barry asked Elder if the Council can have certain pieces that have been installed for a while rotated out for new art. Elder said that's definitely an option.

Councilman Michael Gerbig expressed appreciation for what the Arts Council is doing, but was slightly worried about the number of large-based sculptures that were being presented to Manitou.

"I'm concerned we're going to get a lot of that," he said.

The Arts Council is at the mercy of the artists who want to contribute and the things they want to donate, Elder said.

"We appreciate the work you guys do and I think the process is working really well," Snyder added.

Rainbow Falls update

L'Aura Montgomery, of Manitou Environmental Citizens' Action (MECA), updated Council on the restoration of Rainbow Falls.

Montgomery said things have been moving along since the land was transferred to El Paso County nearly a year ago. The organization has obtained a number of grants to help with the effort as well.

"A lot of people are under the misconception that it's about the graffiti, but it's also about erosion and trails," Montgomery said.

Crews from Mile High Youth Corps have been working on building trails near the falls during the past few weeks. She also reminded Council of Saturday's community cleanup which starts at 8 a.m. Volunteers will blast graffiti from rocks and build picnic table pads.

Montgomery added the MECA will sell bricks to raise money. The bricks will be used as part of the floor of a pavilion to be built. The pavilion will feature a kiosk with historical information on the falls.

In other business, Council...

- Heard from Ron Ilgen, president of Pikes Peak Marathon. Ilgen is working on a new running event that will coincide with the Assault on the Peak bike ride on Aug. 28. The run will race up Pikes Peak Highway. Ilgen is expecting 500 runners to take part.

- Approved a resolution declaring a vacancy on City Council. Ward 2 Councilwoman Ingrid Richter resigned May 25. Snyder said Council would honor her for her service to the city on June 21.

- Approved the appointment of Marjorie V White to the Parking Authority Board.

- Approved a nomination of Marcy Morrison as a liaison to the Fountain Creek Watershed Advisory Committee.

- Approved the town of Calhan's request to join the Pikes Peak RTA.

- Approved ordinance No. 1111, which amends Title 17, Historic Preservation, of the Municipal Code.

- Heard a presentation from the Pikes Peak Range Riders and the Girls of the West on the 71st Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo taking place July 13-16.

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