



09/05/2006

Series of West Windsor walks to review areas for improvement

By: Courtney Gross , Staff Writer

Alliance seeks to bring bicycle and pedestrian safety to the forefront

WEST WINDSOR — In an attempt to bring bicycle and pedestrian safety to the forefront of the township's agenda, the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance is hosting a series of walks to get public input on how the township should improve its roadways.

The first of the series will be 6 p.m. today and will focus on the notorious Alexander Road S-curve, the group's president, Ken Carlson said. The curve, between Canal Pointe Boulevard and the Delaware & Raritan Canal, has no bike lanes or sidewalks, and has often been the site of accidents.

In September 2005, Rebecca Annitto, a 14-year-old Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart student, was killed in a car accident on the S-curve.

The alliance, formed from a township task force on pedestrian and bicycle safety, would like to encourage a dialogue between township officials and residents by hosting the walk and garnering feedback on the township's process for improving roadways.

Making often-congested corridors more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly tops the list, Mr. Carlson said.

"The idea is to draw attention to areas where bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety are in question," Mr. Carlson said.

By bringing the community together and focusing on one area at a time, residents can give the township suggestions on what they think should be done to improve the safety of roads in West Windsor, the president said.

Members of the alliance said a major concern with the roadway is lighting. This month, township officials said, two overhead lights will be installed on the curve.

The township also just finished redoing the yellow and white striping along the curve and is embarking on a three-year study to improve the conditions of the road, which connects West Windsor to Princeton Township.

In this year's budget, \$35,000 has been earmarked to evaluate the road from Canal Point Boulevard to the Princeton Township border. In 2007 and 2008, \$125,000 will be set aside for that stretch, township officials said.

The walk, Mr. Carlson said, could help the township brainstorm improvements.

Having done trail walks in the past, Mr. Carlson said the Alexander Road trek would be the first alliance-sponsored tour of areas in need of improvements in the township. The alliance has invited numerous township officials, he added.

Susan Conlon, the alliance's second vice president, said the walk is a great way to bring together ideas from two neighboring townships, West Windsor and Princeton. Also, she added, the walk will highlight the existing problems that remain on the roadway.

"Now that an engineering study is going to go through, it's a good time to get feedback from people," Ms. Conlon said. "We'll do what everybody else does now, we'll walk on the grass," she said of the existing conditions.

The alliance plans to host a second walk 8 a.m. Oct. 10, beginning at the intersection of Sherbrooke Drive and Princeton-Hightstown Road, Mr. Carlson said. The walk will examine the difficulty of commuting on foot to the Princeton Junction train station, he added.

"The idea of the walks is not to point fingers, or lay blame," Mr. Carlson said. "It's to be positive and point out solutions."

Tonight's walk will begin at the Princeton Turning Basin Park on Alexander Road, located between the bridges over the canal and Stony Brook.

For more information on the alliance, visit www.princetononline.org/wwbpa.

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