

**Violet Crown Sports Association**  
Meeting Minutes – September 2008

The Violet Crown Sports Association held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, September 8, 2008 at the Mangia's Pizza on Mesa Drive. Club president John Collins called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 PM.

Club president-elect David Simmons announced that the club t-shirts have arrived and are available for distribution.

John Collins announced that David Simmons will lead a committee to develop a new club jersey design for 2009. John added that he will be contacting all of the club's current sponsors to confirm their participation in the coming year.

John Bartle announced that the club will promote a cyclocross race at Webberville County Park on Sunday, November 11, 2008. The event will be part of the Lone Star Cyclocross Series. John noted that the VC event will take place one week after similar cyclocross events in New Braunfels and San Antonio.

John said that the TRC Cycling Team, sponsored by O-Box, will assist the VC in putting on the event. He added that he still needs 4 or 5 volunteers to help set up the course.

John also discussed the club's cyclocross clinic, which will be held at Zilker Park on Thursday, October 4, 2008. The clinic will be open to all interested riders. Participants will meet at Mellow Johnny's Bike Shop and ride to Zilker Park

Club secretary Jay Bond reported on his efforts to arrange a track orientation session for VC members at the Alkek Velodrome in Houston. He said that he had e-mailed Alkek track coordinator Lee Barczwski to identify some possible dates but had not yet received a response. Club member Tom Paterson commented that riding the track was a lot of fun and a good way to develop skills useful in other cycling disciplines.

John Collins announced that the club's October meeting would feature a presentation on Training with Power Meters. He also hopes to arrange for club members to receive a discount on the purchase of a power meter.

John then turned the meeting over to Nadia Barrera, Project Coordinator for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Division of the City of Austin's Public Works Department.

Ms. Barrera announced that her boss, Annick Beaudet, would arrive at the meeting shortly. She also said that club members and other interested parties could comment on the City's bike plan, as well as the bicycle-related aspects of road and bridge projects.

Ms. Barrera next discussed the City's 311 system, which would be an appropriate forum for cyclists to report problems such as debris in bike lanes, traffic signals that aren't triggered by bikes, and other, similar problems.

Ms. Barrera also discussed the City's street-cleaning procedures. She noted that "residential" streets

are cleaned six times each year, while “arterial” streets are cleaned once per month, and “downtown” is cleaned every night. She noted that problems with equipment, as well as time constraints (i.e., 2:30 AM to 5:30 AM available for cleaning) often prevented the City from adhering to its cleanup schedules. She also noted the challenges of trying to satisfy the many stakeholders, adding that in some neighborhoods, people complain about being woken up by street-cleaning equipment.

Ms. Barrera mentioned that her office was compiling a list of area roadways that are the subject of complaints. Club members mentioned several roads where they had experienced problems. So far, the list includes Parmer Lane, Southwest Parkway, and Lake Austin Boulevard.

Ms. Barrera also discussed efforts to improve the City’s network of bikelanes. She specifically mentioned the “Triangle” (i.e., Lake Austin Blvd., Enfield Road, and Exposition Drive in West Austin) and Barton Springs Road where it runs through Zilker Park.

When cyclists experience problems with debris in the road, Ms. Barrera urged them to report those problems to the City’s 311 system and to use the phrase “debris in bike lane” when making such reports. She also urged members to obtain the “Service Request Numbers” associated with their reports, adding that the type of trash determined the routing of the report. She also asked that callers wait two weeks for a response and then contact the Bicycle & Pedestrian Program if they failed to receive a response.

Tom Paterson asked a question regarding the Austin Police Department’s approach to cyclists running traffic signals. Ms. Barrera discussed the APD’s policy and urged cyclists who encounter problems with traffic signals to contact the Bicycle & Pedestrian Program. Club members cited several intersections where they have experienced problems, including 35<sup>th</sup> Street at Jefferson; Bull Creek at 45<sup>th</sup> Street; and North Lamar Blvd. at North Loop.

Ms. Barrera then turned the presentation over to Ms. Annick Beaudet, Project Manager and Bicycle Program Manager at the Bicycle & Pedestrian Program. Ms. Beaudet began by describing her program, which includes a total of four staff. She mentioned that she had just returned from a “Pro-Walk, Pro-Bike” conference in Seattle.

Ms. Beaudet observed that dedicated bike lanes where residential parking is allowed are “problematic.” She said that her program is working to address bike lane/parking issues and ultimately hoped to prohibit parking in bike lanes. She noted that they have had problems with property owners who oppose presence of bikes and stressed the need for consensus, to find a solution everyone can live with. Ms. Beaudet cited a current project on Exposition Blvd. and said that her department had received only 3 complaints from a total of 49 property owners who were notified.

Ms. Beaudet also observed that there is lots of interest in Austin cycling but cyclists are fragmented. On a more positive note, she cited “League of Bicycling Voters” Rob D’Amico, who signed up with the city as a neighborhood organization and city-wide stakeholder. As a result, he is notified about all development projects and has an opportunity to comment on cycling-related aspects of those projects when necessary.

Efforts at Domain development in NW Austin

Ms. Beaudet mentioned that she and her colleagues are currently working on a variety of projects through 2012. She added that funding for cycling-related projects may be available from a future city

bond issue.

John Bartle asked how the city's bike budget compares to the pedestrian budget. Ms. Beaudet noted that they started with \$10 million in 2003 and that the bike and pedestrian budgets are roughly equal. She added that construction of sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act is one of the city's current priorities.

Sisewalks and ADA compliance

In response to another question, Ms. Beaudet said that the Pfluger Bridge extension (over Cesar Chavez) and completion of the Lane Armstrong Bikeway are currently pending completion of site work at a high-rise project at Cesar Chavez and Lamar Blvd. She thought that the site work should be completed by the end of the year.

In response to club member Tom Linehan's question about how is Austin doing in relation to other cities, Ms. Beaudet said they city was doing "very well." She felt that the cycling community has a lot of credibility and awareness and that Austin doesn't get credit it deserves. She noted that the city did receive a "Silver" award from the League of American Cyclists, a cycling advocacy organization.

Ms. Beaudet also mentioned that Travis County Sheriff's Department bicycle education campaign, which featured billboard advertising and brochures, but she felt that "outreach" was lacking. She added that her program has approached Lance Armstrong about doing some cycling-related public service announcements and that he had agreed to do some.

Ms. Beaudet mentioned that Seattle – Cascade Cycling Coalition, which is comprised of area cycling organizations, would be a good model for the Austin cycling community to emulate. She noted that the Coalition had received a contract from the City of Seattle to make presentations to neighborhood groups in an effort to "grow" the cycling community. That effort included a year-long focus on getting more women involved in cycling, resulting in the addition of 175 new cyclists in one year.

In response to a question from John Bartle about club members providing input on the City's Bike Plan, she said that there will be a public meeting at One Texas Center in mid-October.

Club member Kurt Bauer asked about using the MOPAC (Loop One) right-of-way for a bikeway. Ms. Beaudet noted that the Union Pacific railroad, which runs between or alongside the highway, requires 25-foot right-of-way for operations and maintenance.

She added that the city is working to develop the MOKAN Bike Trail, which runs from Daffan Lane in Northeast Austin to Manor along the route of former MKT Railroad. She also described the city's plan to construct a bike lane attached to the MOPAC bridge over Barton Creek.

Ms. Beaudet also responded to Club president-elect David Simmons' question about the bike/pedestrian bridge at Far West/MOPAC intersection and Greg Hall's comments about the unusual two-way bike lane on Great Northern Blvd.

Club president John Collins closed Ms. Beaudet's presentation by congratulating her on her Silver Medal at the U.S. National Time Trial Championships.