

THE TWO RIVER TIMES™

Two River Times Editorial: Bike Paths, At What Cost?

Written by The Two River Times.



Published on April 30, 2015

The Board of Chosen Freeholders and Fair Haven Mayor Benjamin Lucarelli seem to be at odds over a bike path throughout most of the Two River area. Mayor Lucarelli is frustrated by what he says is a negative attitude by the county although they seemed supportive of the proposal in the beginning. But Freeholder Serena DiMaso said the meeting between herself, Freeholder Thomas Arnone and Lucarelli was a “good one.” Somewhere there’s a disconnect. Arnone cautioned last week in a Crossroads Editorial Board that bike paths impacted on-street parking, and trash, leaf and brush pickup and cautioned that the idea would not be as popular when people understood the impact. Monmouth County Engineer Joseph Ettore is not enthusiastic and says there is a lot to consider before the paths are implemented in the field. All good points.

Still, with the Two River Council of Mayors firmly behind Lucarelli’s proposal, it seems a better meeting of the minds should rule here. The proposal establishes bike lanes largely on county roads running east from Red Bank, through Fair Haven and Rumson, into Sea Bright, along

Ocean Avenue to Monmouth Beach and Oceanport, bordering Long Branch and making its way back to Red Bank.

Considering people have been killed riding their bikes, including Fair Haven Councilman Jerome Koch last fall, the proposal has a great deal of merit. Cyndi Steiner, executive director of the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition, notes that studies show having designated bike lanes slows vehicular traffic. Everyone knows slower traffic means safer streets. If the matter is simply cost, perhaps that should be addressed first. The county says it would not pay for it and estimates that cost to be \$15,000 per mile according to the county engineer's estimates. Lucarelli said he too has researched cost and it's nowhere near that figure.

That may be the first step – determine the actual cost and impact. Then approach the towns to see if they can or want to pay for the bike paths.

No matter what, the issue should advance and the frustration should stop. A positive, open dialogue is the mature and sensible way to proceed. Let's just get all the facts and go from there.