

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Directors of
The Freewheelers of Spartanburg
and
Freewheelers Cycling Association
January 7, 2025**

The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Freewheelers of Spartanburg and the Freewheelers Cycling Association was held on January 7, 2025, in the Meeting Room of RJ Rockers Brewing Company. Present at the meeting: Karl Johnson, President; Mike Bonner, Vice President; Marshall Walsh, Secretary; Jim Hines, Treasurer and Member at Large, Kelly Verdell. Also present were: Steve Verdell, Mary Higgins, Bob Higgins, Dave Coggins, Cheryl Miller, Michael Forrester, Kenneth Klimkowski, Bill Croft, Paul LeFrancois, Greg Kyzer, Sheryl Turner-Watts and Ken Watts. the President, Karl Johnson, acted as Chairman and called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October meeting were forwarded to the membership along with the notice of the meeting and agenda. The President reviewed the minutes with those present and, after discussion, the minutes were approved as presented.

Freewheelers Cycling Association

Karl Johnson reported that Larry Hart was no longer able to serve as the chairman of the ad hoc committee for the proposed alternative ride for the Assault on Mount Mitchell in May. Michael Forrester volunteered to take over the planning for this ride. Steve Verdell agreed to work with Mike on this.

Membership

As of the date of the meeting there have been 188 membership renewals. This was slightly behind last year. Karl mentioned that each year new members join during the year and the total membership increases. Karl has attempted to send person emails to each of the nonrenewing members with only limited success. Before dropping the nonrenewing members from the groups.io email list, it was agreed forward the list to each of the board members to review. They in turn will notify Karl if they are willing to make personal contact regarding membership renewal.

Safety

A request has been received from the Spartanburg Day School for a presentation on biker and car safety, but date or dates are yet available. Several members indicated a willingness to participate depending on when. Karl Johnson will provide dates when received.

Dave Coggins presented proposed Group Ride Safety Rules to the meeting (see Exhibit A). The new Rules were divided into two sections: those that were "Required" and those that were "Highly Recommended." The Highly Recommended section included ride protocols where some discretion could be allowed as well as courtesy towards fellow riders and Motor Vehicles.

Dave reviewed reviewed each item and there was a general discussion of issues that had arisen during various rides. He then offered several suggestions for additional input, final review and implementation of the revised Rules. Among other things, it was suggested that each member be requested to acknowledge reading the Rules at the time of membership renewal; that there be a separate meeting of the Ride Leaders to assure uniform adoption of the Rules; and that riders who repeatedly refuse to follow the Rules be reported to the Freewheelers Safety Chair for consideration of appropriate follow up action.

Adjournment

There being no further business and upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marshall T. Walsh, Secretary

Exhibit A

Freewheeler Group Ride - Safety Rules

Be open to Safety Feedback – we care for and need to watch out for each other.

REQUIRED for ALL Freewheeler Rides

1. **A Helmet** must be worn at all times while riding the bike.
2. **A Rear – Daytime Blinker** – Be Seen (charged and mounted facing straight back)
3. **ID with Emergency Contact info** on your person or bike
4. **Obey the Rules of the Road** (ex. **Ride Two abreast and Tight Right** – **DO NOT CROSS THE YELLOW LINE** - middle of the road; **Stop at Stop Signs & Lights**; **do not pass cars waiting at stop lights**; **do not cross wheels**.)

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

1. **Ride Group Size** – Minimum 2 and maximum 20
2. **Front Headlights** – to be seen
3. **Wear Eye Protection**
4. **CAR(s) Behind Communication**
 - **“CAR(s) BACK “** - when present.
 - **“CLEAR or CLEAR BACK”** – **ONLY** when **NO CARS** are behind.
 - **“PASSING”** – when car is passing
 - **Always - Look for yourself** - This is critical when taking a left turn.
5. **Earbuds** – **No In-Ear hearing or noise canceling devices are to worn. Bone Conducting** - operated as to not reduce one's ability to hear group communications and ambient sounds (vehicles, dogs, etc)
6. **Do Not Use Phones while Riding** – taking pictures/videos, calls. We are advocating for “Hands Free” legislation. We need to practice what we preach. Wait until stopped or use bicycle cameras.
7. **Health Courtesy**
 - **No Snot Rockets or Spitting** – Use a bandana or rotate to the back. Do not cross the yellow line to clear your nose.
 - **Do not ride with the group when sick/coughing.**
8. **Be Courteous to Motor Vehicles**
 - **Do Not engage/respond to angry motorists** - capture the incident with bicycle camera for authorities.
 - **EXTREME Caution should be used IF you wave cars around the group.**
 - **If cars are lining up behind the group**, the Ride Leader should consider having the group pull over in a safe area to let the vehicles pass.
 - **When coming to a Stop Sign**, everyone should be tight right. If a car is back - Ride Leader determines if a car should be waved around.
9. **Call Out and Pass Forward/Back messages** – Riders in the middle of the pack should echo call-outs to ensure everyone heard them. Road hazards, animals, etc. Inform slower cyclists when overtaking.

Suggested Next Steps

- **Review/Refine/Approve by FW Board and Safety Committee**
- **Discuss Communication Plan**
 - **Review with Group Ride Leaders for Feedback/Support**
 - **When to make change to Posted Ride Template (FW – sanctioned) eRide?**
 - **How to communicate to the changes and reason for the changes**
- **Include in 2025 Freewheeler Membership Communications - how to communicate Positive - Successes (we are riding safer due to you) and the Value Proposition. A few Refinements to help reduce the risk associated with incidents/accidents/concerns.**

Compliance - (recommendation)

- **REQUIRED - Ride Leaders communicate and insure everyone is following. Repeat Offenders - are communicated to the Freewheeler Safety Chair for appropriate communication - action - escalation.**
- **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED - Ride Leaders communicate to help ensure all rides are as safe as possible and to support our Safety culture.**