



CAPE COD TIMES

P'town Select Board backpedals on e-bikes

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PROVINCETOWN — All motorized bicycles — including pedal-assist e-bikes — now must ride with the flow of traffic on Commercial Street, after the Select Board approved a bylaw amendment Monday night.

The board has been grappling with bicycle bylaws, and after a short public hearing at Monday's meeting, decided to repeal an exception that had allowed pedal bicycles with motors to travel in both directions on the one-way main street.

In 1991, through a special act of the Legislature, Provincetown was granted the power to create regulations for bicycle traffic on the town's main artery. On summer days, the street can be flooded with pedestrians and cyclists headed in both directions, while cars slowly roll westward.

Provincetown Police Chief James Golden was the only person besides the board and the town manager who spoke at the less-than-20-minute hearing, saying he wasn't opposed to the change.

Officers would not patrol specifically in search of motorized bikes riding against traffic, Golden said, but the citation would likely be tacked on if cyclists were stopped for another reason and found to have a power-assisted bicycle, Golden said.

"I do not have the staff, nor do I really think they should be focusing on every bicycle that goes by them and is it being pedaled or is it making a faint whizzing sound," he told the board. "The instance where this would happen would be a secondary offense where there was already an encounter with the operator for whatever reason."

Vigilance by all parties, pedestrians or on wheels, on the busy stretch of road would help keep people safe, Golden said.

“Basic situational awareness would go a long way in making everybody safer,” he said.

Discussion about e-bikes was sparked just before summer, when Coast Provincetown started renting URB-Es, a folding, battery-powered scooter-like vehicle that doesn't have pedals and can reach speeds of 18 mph.

These URB-Es were prohibited from going against traffic, but other types of e-bikes, including bicycles with battery packs that assist riders when they pedal, were still allowed to go against traffic in town.

Monday's hearing was prompted by safety concerns and the speed of motorized bicycles, said Select Board member Thomas Donegan. Board member Cheryl Andrews also noted that as technologies continue to change, the town will have to make sure the laws keep up.

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