

Pedal Party – Facilitating Cycle Hamilton’s Annual General Meeting

SUSTAIN 3S03: Implementing Sustainable Change



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Community Project Champions

Liana Bontempo, Cycle Hamilton Co Chair
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Cycle Hamilton Events & Communications Team at the 2023 AGM with Liana Bontempo.
Photo Credit: Connor Wood



Overview

Following the global pandemic, communities have experienced a decrease in mental and physical wellbeing.[1] Studies show that physical activity, being outdoors, and social connection can improve mental health.[2] Cycle Hamilton is a non-profit organization aimed at ‘making Hamilton the best place for anyone to get around by bike’.[3] In addition to helping people get outside and on a bike, they are also committed to building community through meetings, events, and group rides. Each year, Cycle Hamilton hosts an Annual General Meeting (AGM), to report on the organization’s initiatives, membership, and finances while also taking the opportunity to celebrate accomplishments as a community. The goal of our project was to leverage this year’s AGM to facilitate an event that would engage the cycle Hamilton community through fostering social connections between new and existing members.

Objectives

1. Plan an engaging event
2. Plan and facilitate community rides to the AGM
3. Foster a welcoming and inclusive event environment

Reporting

To achieve our first objective, we worked closely with our Community Project Champions (CPC) to secure an accessible venue and understand how to best engage their community during the AGM. We developed a detailed agenda for the event, allocating time for speeches, member recognition, Cycle Hamilton’s annual reporting, and community networking.

To achieve our second objective and increase engagement in and leading up to the event, we worked with our CPCs and volunteer ride leaders to facilitate four group bike rides from different areas of the city, including from Gage Park, West Mountain, Dundas, and McMaster. Route maps and ride start times were available on social media for everyone to access. In addition, our team created guide packages to ensure each ride leader was prepared to lead a safe and enjoyable ride. The group rides comprised 17 registered Cycle Hamilton members and their ride leaders. Many cyclists were asked at registration if they enjoyed the group ride; each had a big smile and said it was an excellent way to start the event.

To achieve our third objective, we offered food and drinks, and we provided discussion prompts at each table to encourage conversation. We provided a space for Cycle Hamilton members to share personal stories, which created a comfortable and inclusive atmosphere for everyone. In total, 75 attendees, including 13 walk-ins, attended the AGM and remained to network and socialize, demonstrating a successful and engaging event for Cycle Hamilton and members both new and old.

Collaborators

The success of the Cycle Hamilton AGM was made possible with the support of these dedicated individuals: Cycle Hamilton Co-Chair, Liana Bontempo, and Board Member, Paul Brown, who met with us weekly to ensure smooth execution of the AGM; McMaster’s Academic Sustainability Programs Associate Director, Dr. Kate Whalen, and Community Engagement Coordinator, Nathan Butterworth, who provided guidance through progress interviews and, importantly, all the Cycle Hamilton volunteers and members, as well as those new to the organization, who made this event a true success.

References

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3. Cycle Hamilton. (n.d.). Our Mission – Cycle Hamilton. <https://www.cyclehamont.ca/about/>