



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
PEDESTRIAN & TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

Date: Thursday, April 16, 2020

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting using GoToMeeting: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/539724445>

Community Representatives:

*Ted Alexander
*Ginny Alverson
*Jessica Bellow
*Emma Blaxter
Georgy Cohen
*Laura Evans
*Jessica Ferguson
*Rauvin Johl
*Paola Massoli
*Audrey Orenstein
*Vitor Pamplona
*Zach Rosenberg
Julia Toof
*Emily Vides

*=present

Ex-Officio:

Katjana Ballantyne, *City Council*
*Alexandra Kleyman, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*
*Justin Schreiber, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

Guests: Brad Rawson, Service Director Mobility Division, OSPCD

Call to order: 6:35PM

Brad began by saying that when the mobility team envisioned the formation of the PTAC, he expected he would introduce himself to the group once we were further along in our meetings and tasks, but with COVID-19 affecting every decision, he came to answer our questions about how the town is handling the virus.

The town has built up services for 311 and the primary goals for the town are limiting new infections, keeping those on the front-line and essential business workers safe, food delivery, and anti-displacement. The city is involved in assuring grocery delivery and supporting IT for teachers.

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There are new bans on showing apartments, the laws around fundraising have eased up so individuals can do crowd funding to donate to small businesses.

Construction has tapered off which means some projects including the high school may be delayed so there is a lot of consideration going into that.

The city is balancing giving residents more space to walk in, [by removing parking lanes, or widening sidewalks], against creating space for people to congregate. They are evaluating pedestrian routes that get residents safely to the market or drug store. They want to create a “network plan”, not just random closed roads. They are looking for a network that crosses the long parallel E/W streets and is not also parallel to the Community path. They are in the design phase and they are looking at traffic changes due to COVID-19 against data collected over the last 10 years.

They are considering how to educate residents about the network, they are trying to encourage people to use sidewalks and not the very busy Community path. They are working with other cities to see how plans are working out for them. The mayor is in touch with surrounding cities through a consortium.

Laura asked about changing the lights to recall and Brad said that changing lights is challenging, it is being considered and a 3rd party signal specialist might need to be involved.

Ginny asked if any upcoming road changes have been considered for sight impaired residents. Brad said Yes, on the whole, but quick changes due to COVID may be done sooner.

Paola expressed concern about the density of pedestrians and walkers on Cedar street because it functions as an entrance to the Community path.

And as a last note, Brad mentioned that the financial crash is hitting Somerville as well. Usually a financial crash takes months to affect a town, but this one is more immediate. Workforce is intact through the end of June and he asked for input and cooperation in navigating budgeting for the next cycle.

Procedural Business:

1. Introductions - skipped
2. Zach reviewed best practices for a virtual meeting.
3. Acting Secretary - Audrey Orenstein - requests that members respond to Acting Secretary Signup
4. **Vote** March 26, 2020 meeting minutes
 - a. Audrey made the motion, several seconded

Subcommittee Organization:

Zach presented an idea of how our committee could be modeled after the Bike Committee with a few branches: List of subcommittees to propose: Education and Encouragement & Engineering and Evaluation

Jessica B suggested Policy as a branch
Ted suggested Enforcement as a category under the Policy branch
Zach will send out a survey to see who is interested in working on which committees

Logo and Social Media:

Audrey presented her concept for the logos. There was a positive response to the larger banner logo and some discussion on the square one. Audrey needs to do more research and design. The overall concept of incorporating the different color lines of transportation was accepted.

Emily Vides has graphic design experience and offered to help out.

We have grabbed SomervillePTAC on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In a future meeting we will discuss how to use the platforms.

City Update

1. COVID-19 Update
 - a. Covered by Brad
2. Routes 28/38 project update - Put on hold until a further meeting
 - a. Ali referred to her slides to talk about progress and delays
Paola asked what should happen next with her letter.
Zach responded that a group under the Engineering and Evaluation subcommittee could organize to tackle the letter.
3. Vision Zero Update - Put on hold until a further meeting

COVID19 Response Discussion

Zach asked if the town is closing streets for pedestrians
Justin responded that it is still being figured out

Emma asked if green spaces will be closed as the weather gets better? Most parks are currently open with signs reminding people to socially distance.

Other Business

No new discussion

Online Meeting Addendum

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. C. 30A, s. 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, as well as Mayor Curtatone's Declaration of Emergency, dated March 15, 2020, this meeting of the PTAC will be conducted via remote participation. We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels (SCAT).

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