



SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FINAL MINUTES

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Community Representatives:

*Ken Carlson, Chair
*Tom Lamar, Vice Chair
*Enid Kumin, Secretary
Alex Anderson
*Emily Balkam
*Mark Chase
Alex Epstein
*Alex Frieden
Kevin McGrath
*Alan Moore
Brian Postlewaite
*Brandon Stafford
*Ian Woloschin

Ex-Officio:

Skye Stewart, Office of the Mayor
Maryann Heuston, Board of Aldermen
Commissioner Stanley Koty, Department of Public Works
Terry Smith, Traffic and Parking
Deputy Chief Stephen Carrabino, Police Department
Mike Tremblay, Office of Strategic Planning and Community Dev.

Day/Date: Thursday September 7, 2017

Time: 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Location: Police Department/ Washington Street

*Present at meeting

Procedural, General Business & Updates (20 Minutes)

1. Introductions. Guests: Jim Ricciuti, Liza Burkin, Ted Lester, Sky Rose, Jeffrey Shwom, Tom Bertulis; Lena Webb, Katie Pierce (see # 4, below).
2. Acting Secretary: Enid
3. VOTE: August Minutes. Approved.
4. New membership applications: Lena and Katie. Confidential vote [post meeting note, Lena and Katie were approved unanimously]; results public at October meeting.
5. Vision Zero Rollout (9/6/17) and next steps

Vision Zero Rollout went forward with an announcement by Mayor Curtatone (and others, including Maryann Heuston) on Wednesday morning, September 6 with follow-up in the evening at the September Bike Talk. There will be more to report next month. In the meantime, according to Mike, the City website will feature Vision Zero as early as Friday, September 8, and otherwise next week. An advisory committee including SBC reps will help oversee Vision Zero. To do: collect a variety of data (mission statement, wikimap, op ed piece by Mayor Curtatone, etc.) and get it out on the internet. Ken will share Vision Zero slides up on SBC FaceBook pages and on the SBC Box account. Mike said OSPCD would need SBC members to collect data and advocate for Vision Zero. It is OK to share slides from the September 6 Bike Talk.

6. **Burning Questions/Concerns** [see 5 "E"s spreadsheet (updated by team leaders) first – answers may be there]:
Enforcement: Alan commented on the need to enforce parking restrictions along the bike path parallel to the Orange Line in Assembly (near boathouse), where construction workers have been parking. Mike will contact Traffic

and Parking (on Friday, 9/8) about this issue.

Mike provided supplemental information about the upcoming ped-bike count, week of September 25 (two weeks from Labor Day) and possibly the following week as well. Volunteers are needed for morning and evening counts. Adam will forward the signup sheet and Brandon will send out a special email using the SBCNews mailing list. Ken will forward signup sheet to all guests attending September bike committee meeting. All are encouraged to get the word out to other potential volunteers as well. Mike said OSPCD is going to try to increase ped-bike counts to twice a year, 55 or so locations. Data collected will include direction of ped/bike movement, age, gender, number of people on bike. (Most intersections will not include age and gender.) Transportation survey planned for spring. Looking to capture changes in bike use at selected locations.

Ken will update 5E's Spreadsheet to sync it with ongoing committee projects.

Joint ride, SBC with Preservation Commission, is scheduled for October 8, with rain date October 15. Alex A. and Encouragement Team are working on ride planning. Alan reported that we will hold off on the "Fluffernutter Ride" until next year.

Ian proposed bike lane/path winter maintenance as an October agenda item.

Focus Section I – Beacon St

Tom L. raised concerns about delay on completion of Beacon Street construction. Mike reported that Brad is working hard to push MassDOT to get Beacon Street finished this construction season, as scheduled. Beacon Street is a MassDOT project, so Somerville has to push MassDOT. Maryann Heuston said she has not heard complaints from her constituents about extending construction hours to Saturday. She wondered if extending construction hours to Saturday – or even Sunday – might be helpful. Mike indicated that challenges with transferring Eversource utility poles and other facilities from one side of the street to the other was the source of much of the delay. Some other work can go forward in the meantime. The Planning Dept is hoping to hear good news from Eversource next week.

Ken thought the inbound segment of the cycle track from Park Street to Washington Street would be easy to open up. The cycle track just needs an extra layer of asphalt. We don't want to continue to send people down Webster if it can be avoided. Mike thought that it should be possible to get the referenced section done. Ken said it was important, and would show good faith. Ken noted that Beacon Street construction was no longer just a bicycling issue, but was also interfering with handicap access and was generally imposing negative impacts on residents and businesses.

Ken and Maryann Heuston agreed that it was important for the City to hold contractors' feet to the fire. Maryann wondered about assigning supervisors from the DPW to Beacon Street. Other comments went to checking that contractors properly disposed of piles of dirt, made temporary walkways as necessary, and prioritized the Beacon Street contract, not other work that they might be undertaking elsewhere at the same time. Maryann and Mike planned to continue brainstorming ideas post SBC meeting for an appropriate Somerville staff person (from ISD?) to check construction sites on a routine basis. Ian commented that cars were traveling much too quickly on Beacon. Ken noted that some stop signs at the end of streets into Beacon (Sacramento, for example) were missing and required replacement.

Focus Section II – Wrapping up Union Square Early Action

Stretch between Washington and Union Square: Eversource has agreed to do surface recoating. Mike reported that Brad said this would happen sometime in September-October; there should be plenty of time before winter to re-stripe the street.

Somerville Avenue to Washington Street: more work to be done on northern than southern side. Less complicated work (tree-planting, for example) on Somerville Avenue will be done spring of next year if not done this year.

Focus Section III – Webster Ave Protected Bike Lanes

Tom emphasized the importance for safety reasons of completing protected bike lanes along Webster Ave this year.

Webster from Cambridge towards Prospect: Mike noted that the SBC had been instrumental in development of a plan that the contractor can work with. He provided a CAD drawing of current proposal, said the City had to make a decision on timing. Current proposal calls for maintaining travel lanes at current widths and replacing parking with protected bike lanes (each 5 ft with 2 ft flex post buffer). No change of center line planned.

There is one official crosswalk, another painted by “enthusiasts.” Near Norfolk St, the bike lane will not be protected so buses can pull over to the curb. Near Tremont Street, still have a handicap parking space issue on the Cambridge-bound side of road. Planning will determine what to do depending on the affected individual’s mobility and need for access to a vehicle or other accommodation(s).

Mike reported that to get away without parking on Webster involves finding spots for 20 vehicles. The plan is to encourage residents to park in the garage next to 80 Webster or to park on side streets. With respect to SBC parking research, Tom noted that most of the people on Webster Avenue are required to buy a permit to park in the garage. There is plenty of capacity in the garage -- at least three times as many spaces in the garage as needed to park cars for every car currently parking on Webster. Some of the cars on Webster may be there because auto body shops are using the spaces.

Mike said that it may be necessary to work out an arrangement with the garage owner. The garage operator has indicated an interest in providing parking access to the general public. Mark commented that parking spaces were already being leased in the garage, so expanding the practice would likely rest with the Zoning Board. Going forward might also depend on whether residents with cars were willing to pay \$150 for monthly garage parking privileges.

Mike said that the philosophy of zoning by-laws in development would be friendly to this plan by unbundling living space from parking requirements. He noted that providing an alternative option for parking would make parking removal much more palatable. The Traffic Commission expects the ward aldermen to conduct outreach for every kind of parking change/removal. It’s essentially out of the OSPCD’s and SBC’s control and in the hands of the Traffic Commission, according to Mike. Mike noted that this was one reason why OSPCD and SBC eagerly awaited Lena Webb’s appointment to the Traffic Commission. (The SBC has nominated Lena Webb to serve on the Traffic Commission.) Alderman Heuston said that she chaired the committee that appoints members and would do her best to push through Lena’s appointment.

Mark thought that the garage parking proposal for Webster had a very high chance (95%) of success if the City decided to go ahead with the idea. He thought the plan would be win-win: something that would please the parking operator and that would work out well for the City, too.

Lena and Ken both voiced support for using the parking garage as Mark and Mike suggested. Mark raised the question of whether there should be a public meeting, and if so, what the format and timing of the meeting should be. Maryann noted that this case was different from previous attempts to find parking alternatives (Star Market on Beacon, for example) in that the garage operator was interested. Maryann Heuston observed that several things would have to happen at once. For one thing, the City would have to make sure that streets cleared of Somerville parkers were not filled by parkers from elsewhere (as part of valet parking by Cambridge businesses, for example). Maryann and Ken favored having a public meeting specific to the Webster neighborhood in late September before the next Traffic Commission meeting thereafter. Ken asked Mike to confirm that a meeting would occur in early October. Assuming such a meeting went forward (resulting in parking in the garage and no parking on Webster), a protected bike lane could go forward this fall.

Mike said that concurrent with the garage and meeting arrangements, it would also be necessary for Eversource work to get done. As far as striping goes, Eversource just has to re-stripe the center line. There's about 1500 feet of buffer = about 150 flex posts. The City has to be sure it has a contractor who can do both striping and flex posts – not just for this project, but as part of the whole City effort in conjunction with Vision Zero. Mike didn't think it would be necessary to get a stamped engineering drawing because Webster has a relatively straight cross-section. He reported that drawings he already had could, with some basic improvements, get Terry's approval. Maryann asked if money had been appropriated for the on-call contractor. Mike reported there was a budget in T&I, but he had to check on what was left. It might be possible to borrow some money from Engineering. Mike said he would have to get back to Maryann on that point. A decision was made to form a task force (co-led by Maryann and Ken) to look into having a public meeting, going before the Traffic Commission, and ensuring the availability of funds and a contractor for road striping and flex posts. Tom and Alex F. also volunteered for the task force. Mike anticipated being involved as well. Mark said he would speak to the garage operator again. He also suggested that anyone who knew cyclists on Webster should reach out and encourage them to get them involved.

Focus Section IV – Medford St Bike Lanes

Medford Street, for part of the section from Somerville Ave to the Cambridge city line, is up for resurfacing. Dimensions are similar to Webster, but there are fewer parking spaces involved, and almost no residential parking demand. Mike reviewed drawings. Plan: 5 foot bike lanes, 2 foot buffer with bollards, flex posts. Alan did street measurements. The section under the bridge is the most uncomfortable -- gets tight at the end of the project (Cambridge line).

There are approximately 8-10 legal parking spaces to remove. These spaces are essentially not used overnight. The auto body folks use a number of spaces during daytime hours, as do some construction vehicles and employees who work at 61 Medford St. There was two-hour parking (outbound, Cambridge side) previously used in the evening by La Hacienda Restaurant nearby, but La Hacienda is now closed. Maryann said there is a new development there (it's been approved), but parking for the development is all set in any case. Mike expected that this information would satisfy the Traffic and Parking Commission. Medford Street is on the repaving list for FY 2018.

Mike reported that Engineering Director Rich Raiche said he hopes to get a large part of the work done this construction season. Hopefully work would include Medford Street. Mike said we can ask Rich to prioritize it (Medford). Would be great even without the facilities to get Medford resurfaced, but would be that much better with the bike lanes.

Ken thought Medford was for sure on the list, but Mike said that Rich was still working off the 2015 list. Sometimes takes a bit of extra time to start. Now there's a contractor in place, the project can get going. Ken said that one of the arguments in favor of Medford was that with Beacon the mess that it is, we need to give people multiple options for getting around.

Mike said traffic analysis shows a lot of traffic passing through Union from Somerville and Medford to and from Kendall Square, so that's more reason to make the route safe.

Alan asked if Mike knew why the resurfacing was only going to Warren and not to the city line. Mike said he didn't know, but thought the answer must have to do with the fact that each road segment is analyzed separately and a decision about resurfacing made based on the analysis. So the decision must have been that conditions were not as bad continuing along Gore Street (Another possibility is that a development is going in and that affects plans.)

Ken observed that the roadway section in question is now smooth. Mike said that he thought there might have been some utility work done there, so maybe the section was patched up afterwards.

Ken noted that the meeting was due to wrap up shortly and asked what Mike needed from the Committee to be ready by the 21st. Mike said some to-scale engineering drawings might be needed but that he would prepare some CAD drawings for this purpose. Mike also said he wanted to get the contractor issue straightened out. Ken said that we needed last year's counts to support the Webster plan as well. Mike said that data would be OSPCD's responsibility to provide, but that he would appreciate an e-mail request to get Webster on the Traffic Commission agenda. Deadline would be September 18th to get the item on the Traffic Commission agenda in two weeks (September 21).

Alan asked whether we could get restriping on Medford even if there were no resurfacing north/west of the railroad tracks. Mike will look into this. Mark said it was important to get some citizen support. Mike said letters are helpful. Tom mentioned that a number of people who live or work near the project area are eager to see it happen and that no one is parking there overnight now. Sky said the northbound lane approaching Somerville Ave is problematic – that as cars turn right, they might cut the corner close -- and asked to have bike lanes replace sharrows, even if it meant no marking on the southbound side. Mike said he would check on options, that he did not currently have roadway dimensions at that section. Mark suggested trying a 5, 10, 9, 9 configuration. Ken thought it would be helpful to have a green striped bike lane at the mouth.

Last call

Ken wanted a quick review of items for the September 21st Traffic Commission meeting. Mike said Medford and Hancock would be covered. Not Park Street. No paving has to happen on Park. So Park will just be done in the fall.

Tom said that he would maybe send out an e-mail on early action.

Mike noted that Katie and the Education Team should come up with something on two stage left turn boxes – Somerville onto Webster and Prospect onto Somerville Ave.

Ken said the two stage left was useful, but at Prospect only a few bikes can squeeze through. He would like to see a ten second traffic signal lag so cyclists don't face oncoming traffic.

Ian asked, as a point of information, whether it was possible for advisory bike lanes to continue into a protected bike

lane (with green paint). Mike said there was no reason why this could not happen and that he thought it was a good idea. Ian also commented that with the two-stage left at Prospect and Somerville, he was finding problems when cycling with his bike box whenever a bus came up behind him. The bus waits behind him, then sweeps around. Ian said that if he continues straight ahead on Webster, he risks getting right-hooked. Mike will pass a note along to the MBTA about this issue.

Mike reported that Adam would be out the night of September 7 with MBTA operations personnel to see if a shared bike/bus lane would work on Prospect Street northbound. Maryann wondered about the parking signs now out on Prospect, said she was getting complaints. Mike said he would look into fixing or temporarily adjusting the parking signs to reflect current conditions. Mark thought knockdown bollards might work for the bus in a shared bike/bus lane. Mike said we would have to watch and see if cars were respectful of the shared lane. The plan is to test the idea for a while, then on the basis of test results, make a decision about what to do and for how long.

Mike said he would send out an e-mail covering some of the planning items detailed in the meeting.

Adjourned at 8:01.