

SOMERVILLE BICYCLE COMMITTEE

Alan Moore, Chair Ron Newman, Vice Chair Greg Palmer, Secretary
Jim Gallagher Jenifer Kaminsky Asher Miller
Bhupesh Patel
Mike Buckley, Office of the Mayor Denise Provost, Board of Aldermen
Jim Hodgdon, Police Todd Blake, Traffic and Parking
Stephen Winslow, Housing and Community Development (OHCD)

MEETING MINUTES Tuesday, May 25, 2004, City Hall

ATTENDEES Alan Moore, Ron Newman, Greg Palmer, Jenifer, Bhupesh, Steve, Jim Hodgdon;
Dereck Mangus, Bob Nesson.

1. Minutes approved - Alan Moore, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The April 27, 2004, minutes were approved.

2. Interviews - Two prospective Committee members were introduced:

Bob Nesson is a filmmaker; wife is graphic designer;
born in Norwood, lived in Brookline, Cambridge; owns house on Berkeley St.;
bike commutes to Allston, year round;
has produced video for MassBike on police education;
likes to race bikes;
interests: raising awareness; mainstream bicycles via education; bike riding problems such as wrong way riding;
feels he's overextended- activities include STEP (Green Line & transportation); PBS; Progressive Democrats.

Dereck Mangus is an art major at UMass/Boston Art, finishing studies;
from Hudson, Mass., lives on Bartlett St., Winter Hill;
has produced video for cable about Critical Mass;
Interned at the Globe- graphics;
interests: Community Path.

We asked that both come to June meeting- Bob can't. The Committee (SBC) expressed interest in involving him in activities. After the June meeting, the SBC will forward our recommendations to Steve, who will relay them to the Mayor for nomination.

3. 3rd. Annual Historic Tour by Bicycle - Co-sponsored with the Historic Preservation Commission, over 40 people rode on a cool day, with threat of light rain that did not materialize. Ron said more advance planning needs to be done next time- maps had to be printed at the last minute; in publicity, encourage helmet use. There was brief discussion about whether to charge for the ride, as was done this year and last, but not in the first year; inconclusive.

4. City Report

A. Community Path

Cedar St. to Central St.: A design for the path alongside the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA)-owned parking lot was reviewed. Some parking may be shifted over into the wooded, overgrown lot at the end of the property. MassHighway does not want the path built in the middle of the parking lot- it must be separate from car traffic. The proposed path width is 10 feet wide. Alan asked if it could be 12 feet, which is the standard width for paths. Steve replied that it's a pinch point where it passes by the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) housing. Bhupesh said dimensions should be consistent throughout the path corridor. Greg asked about the embankment: would it be

cheaper to do work there now and get more width? No, any major work there must wait for the proposed MBTA Green Line extension, which is just beginning to be studied. A neighborhood meeting to judge local reaction will be held at the VNA on June 15th. Steve said a letter from the Mayor's office is being prepared to make request to MBTA to lease land for the path.

School St. to Cambridge city line: 2 contractors were interviewed- Edwards and Kelsey, and Vollmer Associates. Vollmer was selected to design this segment. Steve thanked for Ron and Bhupesh for their help interviewing. The contract is to begin July 1, and will run for 9 months.

Green Line study: The city will issue a Request For Proposals (RFP) for a consultant to set up a Peer Review to shadow the MBTA's Green Line study, to help the city to respond to the T study when it is completed.

B. Somerville/Cambridge/Belmont path improvements - MassHighway (MHD)'s May 13 public design review meeting of the 25% plans was well attended, with many very positive reactions. SBC comments were sent to MHD via OHCD. Some issues brought up at the meeting: Davis Sq. crossing- Bhupesh showed sketches showing enlarged crosswalks which were discussed with Traffic and Parking previously; separating bikes from motor vehicles- it was agreed by the group that a slightly raised path area was preferable to being flush with the street, and that it must have a strong demarcation around the plaza. Other comments at the meeting were from Cambridge regarding the Alewife area, and the connection to Belmont's street system across Brighton St.

C. Stop and Shop - Steve says Stop and Shop will go before the city Planning Board one more time for final approval of traffic plans. There was discussion about providing a pedestrian crossing at Blakely St. and McGrath Hwy., where new access turn lanes are to be constructed. **ACTION ITEM:** Alan will write a letter to OHCD, requesting a pedestrian crossing there.

5. Clyde/Warwick sts. property - Developers KSS held a neighborhood meeting on May 19 at the VNA. A dense residential project is proposed. Neighbors are very concerned about traffic access through narrow streets. KSS supports the Community Path, but wants to explore using part of the path right-of-way as dual use: road and path, at least for construction, if not permanent. Several abutting residents said they want the path, not a road, behind their houses. Joel Bennett of Friends of the Community Path, spoke about the path as a park, and that there may be other access opportunities for roads, but there's only one path in a linear park. Bhupesh agrees, and says we can support the benefits that developing this old industrial site will bring while holding firm on the right-of-way for the path, not a road, and use existing roads, including the Lowell St. bridge. Steve mentioned that that KSS must figure out a development that fits without using the path. **ACTION ITEM:** Bhupesh will write a letter on behalf of the SBC to KSS.

6. Mystic River access

A. MBTA easement - Bhupesh expressed concern that the T may renege on allowing an easement along the Charlestown bus depot property at Sullivan Sq. to allow extension of the path along the river, connecting Draw 7 Park in Somerville to Route 99 in Boston. He said a letter is being written for to be signed by various groups. It was agreed that the SBC should sign the letter when it is written.

B. Mystic Crossing - Plans are to have a kick off meeting with the state Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for designing a crossing of the Amelia Earhart Dam. Issues to be resolved include the amount of access vs. cost of access.

C. Wellington Bridge (Rte. 28) Undercrossing - There's been no response to a grant application from DCR. Steve will continue to follow up.

7. Alpine St. encroachment - A parking lot adjoining the small office building at Alpine and Cedar sts. encroaches on the freight spur/proposed Community Path, right-of-way, potentially limiting using the full width for the path extension. SBC will sign a letter drawn up by various groups (Somerville Conservation Commission, Groundwork Somerville) that will be sent to Mayor asking that the MBTA cancel the lease of land/lot that encroaches.

8. Bicycle parking ordinance - Discussion was tabled until the June meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

The next SBC meeting is Tuesday, June 22, City Hall, basement lounge.

Respectfully submitted,
Greg Palmer, Secretary