

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, June 22, 2004, City Hall

ATTENDEES Alan Moore, Ron Newman, Greg Palmer, Jim G., Bhupesh, Steve, Dereck Mangus.

1. Minutes approved - Alan Moore, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm. The May 25, 2004, minutes were approved as amended.

2. New member - Greg introduced a motion that Dereck Mangus's application to join the SBC be sent to the Mayor. **Motion carried unanimously.**

3. City Report

A. OHCD reorganization - Steve announced that Jim Kostaras, new Director of OHCD, is planning changes. The department's proposed new name is Strategic Planning and Community Development (SPCD). Many "Directors" will be eliminated- no longer Transportation and Long Term Planning. There will be more team-orientated emphasis with Project Managers.

B. Community Path

Neighborhood presentation: Steve reported that more than 40 people turned out for the city-sponsored meeting of the preliminary phase 1 design (Cedar St. to Central St.) at the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) on June 15. Comments were overwhelmingly positive, no strenuous objections. Neighbors were enthusiastic about the linear park concept. Concern was expressed about having a park-like buffer between the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA)-owned parking lot and residences. There's a desire to explore ways to provide alternative parking spaces for CHA to allow room for the path, and possibly turning the lot into a park. Steve said that if that were to happen, the city would be eligible for federal enhancement (transportation) money to fund such a path-with-park project. Steve said a request will be made to the CHA, asking them to send a letter to the city, expressing support for the path design- something MassHighway (MHD) needs to see. Steve asked that people work through him on CHA-related issues, that he will be the chief negotiator. He also mentioned that the MBTA has sent the city a letter- it is "optimistic" for the path on the embankment of the commuter rail corridor. Ron mentioned that connections to the path were important comments that came up at the neighborhood meeting. Bhupesh said that renderings of the path design would be helpful as the process goes forward.

A question was asked about the landscape budget. **Action item:** Steve replied he'll find out.

Alan asked about providing for dog owners to walk their pets- is there any policy? No- this needs exploration.

Regarding KSS development plans for industrial property in the triangle adjoining the path and the Warwick St. residential neighborhood, the city plans to proceed with path plans that do not incorporate an access road. There was some concern from neighbors regarding construction access. [Note: a KSS June 23 neighborhood meeting was postponed pending traffic study completion]

School St. to Cambridge city line: The city is working out details with Vollmer Associates on the final scope of work. The contract to design this "phase 2" segment will be finalized by July 1 (contract runs for 9 months).

B. Somerville/Cambridge/Belmont path improvements - SBC and city comments were submitted to MassHighway (MHD). The city must obtain a lease for access to the MBTA busway, from Grove St. to College Ave.

C. Stop and Shop - Results of a site visit: Steve expects bike racks will go under overhang (there was some objection by Stop and Shop since they thought the bikes would be near glass but we visited the location and there was a wall). Changes made to expand pad for eastern entry racks.

The traffic plan for crossing Mystic Ave., under I-93 showed a diagonal crosswalk that did not meet ADA standards; the city is awaiting a response. There's been no response from Stop and Shop about the proposed pedestrian crossing of McGrath Hwy. at Blakely St. **Action Item:** After a discussion of the merits of the crossing, Bhupesh said he would talk to the aldermen to gauge support.

D. Misc. - MassBike plans to do "bike commuter training" for the city; Steve will let us know when. He also has calls into the Police Dept. about enforcing the sidewalk riding ban in Central Business Districts. Todd Blake has submitted a work order for sign installation, DPW has not yet started putting them up (Union Sq.)

4. Bicycle parking ordinance - Steve has ordinance examples from other cities. He thinks writing in business categories that are exempt will cut down on the number of applications reviewed. He said a "cap" on parking facilities is more palatable. Jim made a motion to accept the bicycle parking ordinance, striking C-4 in subsection 9.15.1, Amount of Bicycle Parking, exempt categories]. The motion was amended to strike the words "or educational purposes" from Section 9.2, Applicability. **Motion carried.**

Action Item: Bhupesh will ask Ald. at Large Denise Provost to submit the ordinance to the Board of Alderman.

5. Davis Sq. Task Force presentation - Bhupesh explained the proposed Davis Sq. crossing design for bicycles at June 14 DSTF meeting. Most comments were concerned with potential conflicts with pedestrians, also with motor vehicles. Greg, also at the meeting, said the the SBC is working on a plan to use existing streets for bicycle commuters and others who wish to ride through the square without dismounting. **Action Item:** Greg, Jim G., and Dereck will do a site visit and plot on-street routes. Bhupesh said he will pass along DSTF comments to Phil McDonald, MHD project manager.

6. Assembly Square - Steve said permitting for re-tenanting the existing mall is moving along quickly. Bike accommodations have been mentioned, but not shown on plans. **Action Item:** Greg and Bhupesh will review site plans for bike rack placement recommendations, before the June 30 Planning Board meeting. Steve said internal comments have been submitted on pedestrian/bicycle access. Plans for the Main Street phase of the redevelopment are not as far along, and there will be time to comment on them. Ron mentioned it is important to submit comments each time there is a public meeting and a new piece of the project is presented. Another related component is the Gateway project, at the intersection of Middlesex Ave./Lombardi Rd./Assembly Sq. Dr.- it needs follow up, as street work may be done here.

7. Bike ring parking program - Discussion deferred to the next meeting. Alan and Joel Bennett will make recommendations.

8. Clyde/Warwick sts. property - Bhupesh forwarded SBC meeting notes to KSS developers. It was decided to invite KSS to a future SBC meeting, after the second neighborhood meeting is held.

9. Letters of support- State House legislation - Alan will research the status of three bills currently on Beacon Hill that would affect bicyclists.

10. Other business

A. Alpine St. encroachment - The SBC agreed to address the parking lot issue through the city and other groups. Bhupesh will meet with the city Planning Dept. to strategize zoning relief in exchange for surrender of the encroachment.

B. Bike ban on MBTA trains during DNC - Greg will write a letter expressing concern for the total ban, suggesting that it be modified.

C. Street improvement program - Greg will distribute a list of street repaving projects for discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

SPECIAL DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next SBC meeting is Tuesday, July 20, City Hall, basement lounge.

Respectfully submitted,
Greg Palmer, Secretary