



SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 2011

MINUTES

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Community Representatives

Brian Postlewaite, Chairman
Charles Denison, Vice Chairman
Ken Carlson
Alex Epstein
Jim Gallagher
Enid Kumin
Alan Moore
Ron Newman
Tim Talun

Ex-Officio

Janice Delory, *Office of the Mayor*
William Roche, *Board of Aldermen*
Commissioner Stanley Koty, *Department of Public Works*
Terry Smith, *Traffic & Parking*
Chief Thomas Pasquarello, *Police Department*
Kathleen Ziegenfuss, *Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development*

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 15, 7:00 pm, City Hall

Community Representatives in attendance: Brian Postlewaite (chair) Ron Newman (secretary for the day), Enid Kumin, Charlie Denison (vice-chair), Tim Talun, Alan Moore, Alex Epstein, Ken Carlson

Ex-Officio members in attendance: Andrew Amey (ex-officio in place of Kathleen Ziegenfuss)

Guests in attendance: Karen Reedy (Melrose), Lauren Clayton (Somerville), Rob Hill (Somerville), Mario Chamorro (Somerville), Jeremy Mendelson (Somerville), John Hersey (Cambridge), Brandon Wilson (Somerville Historic Preservation Commission)

Procedural Business:

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm. Quorum was met.

1. **Secretary:** Ron Newman volunteered to serve as secretary.
2. **Approve Minutes:**
 - Minutes approved for the December 2010 and January 2011 meetings.

New Business:

1. New England Bike Expo at Armory
 - Rob Hill presented his plan for a New England Bicycle Expo, to be held at the Armory on May 7-8, 2011. He is working on this together with his fiancée, a web designer. He is hoping to attract at least 50 bike-related companies to the event. Somerville is an ideal place for this because it has old manufacturing machinery that has spurred current-day bicycle manufacturing. The event schedule is still in formulation. There is a Meetup group for interested people.
 - The event will use all public spaces in the Armory -- the large hall, the balcony, the art gallery, the cafe, and even the downstairs lobby. Some outdoor events will occur across the street in the parking lot of Little Sisters of the Poor. The Meridien hotel in Central Square will be the hotel sponsor, and there will be VIP events across the street at Miracle of Science restaurant.
 - He would like us to help with short bike rides from the Armory to Independent Fabrications, Taza Chocolate, and the Community Path, which he wants to do at noon and 2 pm each day. Other things we could do are host a panel, or have a table in the cafe (where other non-profit

organizations will be set up). Andrew Amey suggested that the city might schedule a SomerStreets event on Highland Ave. to coincide with the Expo. We will also invite Rob to an upcoming meeting about "how to run a bicycle ride".

- Rob's e-mail address is robinson@NewEnglandBicycleExpo.com

Infrastructure:

1. On-street bicycle parking program

- Nobody has talked to any businesses this month, and no businesses have contacted the city yet. We need to promote this program when tabling at public events.

2. MAPC bike rack program

- Andrew said that ordering the three on-street racks plus 75 regular 'Powderhouse' bike racks has not yet occurred. The city needs to find \$20K to spend on this, although it would eventually get back \$19,200 from MAPC after the racks are installed. The racks would probably not arrive until at least June. The city may commit some of the 75 racks to areas covered by Community Development Block Grants in order to speed up funding. Fifty of them are for general city use (anyone who wants one next to a business can ask for one), and 25 set aside for developers can request them and repay the city's cost for them.
- Ken passed on a request from Bow Street Flowers for a rack. Andrew said that anyone can request a rack by calling 311 or filling out a form on the city's website for requesting bicycle infrastructure.

3. "11 in 11" program (11 miles of bike facilities in 2011)

- Andrew presented a preliminary list of bike lanes and sharrows that the city would like to install in 2011:
 - Bike lanes:
 - Broadway -- Cedar St to Autumn St (a block east of McGrath Highway; beyond there is the East Broadway streetscape project)
 - Somerville Ave - Union Sq to McGrath Highway
 - Washington Street - from Public Safety Building through Union Square
 - School St – all
 - Walnut St - all (but width may be an issue)
 - Temple St - Broadway to Mystic Ave
 - Assembly Sq Drive - mandated by developer
 - Sharrows:
 - Highland - McGrath Highway to Davis Square
 - Summer - Bow St to Elm St
 - Lowell St - Medford St to Summer St
 - Medford St - McGrath Highway to Broadway
- In discussion, Brian, Alex, and Ron suggested deleting Summer Street from the list, as it currently has no paint on the road at all. Jeremy said we should be cautious about putting sharrows on narrow streets (such as Summer) where a bicycle really should take the lane.

Enid asked about painting 'advisory' bike lanes with dashed lines instead of using sharrows, but Charlie said this would require a plan to educate drivers about the unfamiliar markings, and Brian pointed out that sharrows are a standard in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Lauren asked about using upright metal "Share the Road" signs instead of sharrows; Ken replied that there is a movement towards removing such signs and instead using road striping to reduce sign clutter.

- Ron needs to find out whether Medford plans to put bike lanes on Boston Avenue, so that Somerville can coordinate if necessary on its short stretch of that street near Alewife Brook.
- There was general consensus that Medford Street, between Somerville Ave. and the Cambridge line, should be added to the bike lane list. Also, the proposed Washington Street bike lanes should be continued all the way east from Union Square under McGrath Highway and the railroad tracks to meet up with the existing Washington Street bike lanes in East Somerville.

4. Winter bike lane conditions

- Charlie wrote a letter to the Mayor on behalf of the Committee, asking that the city modify its snow plowing procedures to ensure safe passage for bicyclists, keep bike lanes clear of snow and parked cars, post temporary "no parking" signs where needed to keep people from parking far out into bike lanes and travel lanes, and clear bike racks of snow. The letter included illustrative photos of current hazardous conditions.

5. The terrible condition of Beacon Street

- Charlie said that Beacon Street is a "total disaster" right now, in such bad condition that it "won't survive until 2014" when the city tentatively plans to reconstruct it. Patching the potholes won't be sufficient. The road is hazardous not just for bicyclists but also for car drivers who are swerving to avoid the potholes. Ken said the section from Park St to Museum St is especially bad. Alex said that it's hard to submit 311 requests because there's no way to attach multiple photos of the hazards to a single request.
- Nothing can be done until the weather gets and stays warm, but the city needs a plan for what to do then. Design plan for the reconstruction are only at 25% now, only half of the needed funding is available, and it's for 2013, rolling into 2014. That's too long to wait.
- Charlie **moved** that the Committee write a letter to the Mayor asking that the city resurface "egregious areas" of Beacon Street this spring and summer. The letter will identify these areas and include photographs. **The motion passed unanimously.**
- Alex will count bicycle traffic on Beacon Street for one hour on a winter day, so that this information can be included in Charlie's letter.
- Rob Hill described a Chicago program where a business can pay \$30 towards a repair, in exchange for having the business's name advertised on top of the repair for three weeks. Enid and Charlie said that businesses could be asked to help fund resurfacing of Beacon St, maybe using an idea like this one.

Events:

1. Bicycle tour of Historic Somerville and MyRWA Herring Run

- Alan said that the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) wants to add a bicycle ride to their annual Herring Run event to be held on May 15. The event now includes a 5K running race and three boat races. Alan asked that this be combined with the annual Bicycle

Tour of Historic Somerville that the Bicycle Committee and Somerville Historic Preservation Commission jointly sponsor each spring.

- Brandon Wilson from the Historic Preservation Commission said that this would require more research about the river, and that it wasn't clear how much history can still be seen there. The goal of the Historic Tour is to familiarize people with things that they can see around Somerville, so she doesn't think the Mystic River theme works well for that purpose. Her suggested theme is to visit historic districts in the city, including those that her commission feels need to be expanded to include more properties. She wants to visit five districts including Spring Hill (with the always-popular Round House), East Somerville, Davis Square, Union Square. She also prefers a date of May 22.
- The Committee decided to stay with Brandon's idea and to schedule the Historic Tour ride for May 22.
- We may be able to provide limited help to MyRWA's event on May 15. Alan will try to arrange a one-time-only meeting on "how to organize a bike ride" with participation from the Bike Committee, MyRWA, and New England Bike Expo.

Education and Outreach:

1. Annual Report

- We have a draft, which Andrew will send around as a PDF.
- The list of initiatives needs to be made final for an inter-departmental meeting at City Hall on February 22, 8:30 to 9:30 am. Brian and Alex will attend this meeting.

2. Bike-friendly community application

- Will be submitted on Thursday, February 17, one day before the due date.

3. Bike-Ped safety campaign

- No news to report. Andrew will talk to Jackie Rossetti in the Mayor's office.

4. Bike Week planning

- National Bike Week is May 16-20. Bike-to-Work Day is Friday, May 20. Charlie suggested having a Bike Friday commuting ride that morning through the heart of Somerville to Boston's City Hall Plaza. Ken would like Mayor Curtatone to lead such a ride.
- Enid reminded the Committee of arrangements we've had with coffee shops for bike breakfasts in past years (Broken Yolk, True Grounds, others?) Brian said he learned about the Bicycle Committee at one of these breakfasts.
- Ken will put together a sub-committee to work on Bike Week.

5. Map project

- No update this month.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 15, 2011, at City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Newman, Acting Secretary