

SOMERVILLE BICYCLE COMMITTEE

Joseph A. Curtatone

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Dept. of Public Works
Stephen Winslow, Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development

Bob Trane, Board of Aldermen
Terry Smith, Traffic & Parking

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 18, 2008, 7:05 p.m., City Hall

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Jim, Ron, Charlie, Doris, Brian, Alan, Enid

GUESTS: Anthony Baldor

EX-OFFICIO: Steve

1. Minutes. The Committee approved the October minutes.
2. Guests. Anthony Baldor attended. He lives in Union Square and is on the Conservation Commission. He is an active cyclist and is exploring other opportunities for civic participation.
3. Issues around Bicycling on the Sidewalk. Police have begun ticketing cyclists riding on sidewalks in business districts where this is prohibited (e.g., Union Sq., Davis Sq.). Jim favored fair enforcement of laws. He said the Committee should do something to be sure that people were aware of the rules. Others agreed on the importance of clarifying the rules and ensuring good communication all around. Alan will invite the Police Chief to an SBC meeting to discuss the issue.
4. Pedestrian Crossing Signals. Charlie said he would like to see concurrent, automatic phasing of pedestrian crossing signals (pedestrian gets signal to walk with traffic/at same time). Steve said this model is used in Cambridge. City transportation officials Terry Smith and Sergiu Luchian will likely meet with their Cambridge counterparts in the near future to discuss the Cambridge experience with concurrent phasing and to go over technical details. Jim asked the cost of replacing a signalhead. Steve said it's about \$1100 for the fixture and installation, including wiring. The Committee decided to table discussion until more information about options becomes available.
5. Somerville Avenue/Beacon Street Design Status. Brian developed a design for bike accommodations from Cambridge into Somerville at this location. Cambridge has given its approval. Terry has said that the City will institute the design if MHD does not. An important element of the design is permit parking on the south side of Somerville Avenue just past the MBTA station and before the intersection of Somerville Avenue and Beacon Street. This will prevent motorists from ad hoc addition of a second travel lane.
6. Davis Square Path Improvements. Steve said the plan calls for no change in the amount of parking behind Rite Aid. There will be a dashed bike lane and a pedestrian walkway connecting the Community Path to the busway area.
7. Union Square Transportation Working Group. Alan is participating in the USTWG. The first meeting was held a few weeks ago. The City has a consultant for a \$450,000 study and traffic redesign. The Group was set up through Union Square Main Streets. Jim noted that MAPC has revised parking rules for bicycles that will require expanded bicycle parking in Union Square as part of the redesign.

8. Community Path. Alan distributed a draft letter to the Mayor and Monica Lamboy which he proposed as an addendum to a previous letter sent to the Mayor and Ms. Lamboy by the SBC. He noted that the previous letter urged that the City ask EOT to include design and/or construction of the Community Path alongside the Green Line Extension. The letter Alan suggested sending as follow-up would provide information regarding a proposal for a light-rail line in MD/Washington, D.C. Alan said that the EIS for the light-rail project covered design and funding for the extension of an existing rail line in the same corridor as the proposed light-rail line. The Maryland/D.C. proposal was therefore a model for integrated design of the Green Line and Community Path Extensions. A number of Committee members suggested changing the letter to highlight the similarities between Somerville's project and the MD/Washington, D.C. project. In lieu of signing off on the letter, the Committee encouraged Alan and Steve to continue making the points of the draft letter in meetings with EOT and City officials.
9. IKEA (Assembly Square) Multi-Use Path. A draft letter (by Wig Zamore of Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership) to support construction of the IKEA Multi-Use Path was not yet available for the Committee's review. The deadline for submitting comments on the Path might come before the December SBC meeting. If so, Alan said he would most likely submit personal comments as a Somerville resident.
10. Ordinance Change Status. Steve said he would run the ordinance changes by the City Solicitor and the Police. He said this step precedes getting the changes on the agenda at a Traffic Commission meeting.
11. Lombardi Way Redesign. The Lombardi Way redesign has a sidewalk, but only on the east side of the street. There is concern that removing the west sidewalk will result in people walking in the bike lane. Ron said he would be speaking with Carrie Dancy (of East Somerville Main Streets) within the next week or two to get a sense of the neighborhood's reaction to the redesign.
12. Kensington Street. Steve announced that plans call for installing pedestrian-actuated flashing signals at Kensington Street by September 2010.
13. Alewife Brook Multi-Use Path. Brian and Alan gave a presentation of plans for the Somerville side of MA DCR's Alewife Brook Trail. The Alewife Brook Parkway crossing is to be near Boston Avenue and an existing bridge. Brian said he would like to see the Somerville segment made 12-foot-wide and extended to Boston Avenue. He also favored bicycle loop detectors as well as push buttons at crossings and placement of crossing signals as far from the roundabout as possible. Other design elements considered included addition of a sharrow system through an existing parking lot, installation of a 12-foot-wide path by Dilboy Field, and the selection of path surface materials to maximize both riding quality and permeability. Steve said that a decision would be made on surface materials at a Somerville Conservation Commission meeting the following Tuesday. He expected water garden (stone dust and stabilizer) and boardwalk options would be among those alternatives explored. Committee members shared Brian's vision of the path as a key link in the Cambridge-Somerville-Arlington-Medford bicycle transportation system. They also agreed that Alan and Brian should relay the essence of the Committee's discussion to DCR.
14. Bicycle Facility Guidelines. Brian indicated the bicycle routes that he thought deserved priority attention next year: extension of Willow Avenue bike accommodation to Broadway; Cedar Avenue done as the pair to Willow Avenue; Mossland done to extend Cedar; Elm Street, from Somerville Avenue into Davis Square; College Avenue (sharrows?), to connect Davis Square with the new Broadway bicycle lanes; Bow Street in Union Square, to act as the logical pair to the one-way section of Somerville Avenue; a connection of Somerville Avenue to Broadway (maybe via School and Walnut Streets). Steve said that Terry has indicated that in March he would like to start work on Elm and Mossland, to be followed a little later by work on Broadway. Brian asked for comments on his draft guidelines by the December SBC meeting.
15. Other. Steve said that the Board of Aldermen passed Alderman Gewirtz's resolution thanking the Committee for its great work organizing the recent Tour de Somerville.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next meeting is 7:00 p.m., December 16, 2008 at City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Enid Kumin
Secretary