



SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 2011 MINUTES

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Community Representatives:

Alex Epstein, Chairman

Charles Denison, Vice Chairman

Jim Gallagher, Acting Secretary

Ken Carlson

Enid Kumin

Alan Moore

Ron Newman

Brian Postlewaite

Tim Talun

Ex-Officio:

Janice Delory, Office of the Mayor

Bob Trane, Board of Alderman

*Commissioner Stanley Koty, Department of
Public Works*

Terry Smith, Traffic & Parking

Chief Pasquarello, Police Department

***Sarah Spicer, Office of Strategic Planning and
Community Development***

(Bold italics = in attendance)

Day/Date: Tuesday October 18, 2011

Time: 7:00-9:00pm

Location: City Hall, basement employee lounge

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM.

Procedural Business:

1. Guest Introductions

Guests in attendance: Lauren Clayton, Luke Rogers, Daniel Wolf (residents), Erin Green (Emerson student), Franklin Crump, Gabrielle Gereau, Brian Zicelli (Tufts students).

Several guests noted their reluctance to ride their bikes on roadways. The MassBike commuting course was recommended by members as a way to learn skills and feel more comfortable.

2. Membership: old & new members update

No update.

3. Approve Minutes: September 2011

Minutes approved unanimously pending a few edits.

Events:

1. Tour de Somerville Bike Ride, October 15 - recap
The theme was Arts in the 'ville. There were stops at 7 art-themed locations, starting at 10:15 and ending around 12:45. Thanks to the Somerville Police for protecting the riders and to Redbones which provided refreshments at the end. About 70 riders participated. The maps with locations will be posted on the SBC website and we are looking for good pictures to also display. We hope the Somerville Arts Council can also use the map, for Open Studios and other events. Thanks to Ron and Enid who organized the ride. And for future reference, using Seven Hills Park for refreshments after the event required permits from 4 different departments and the Board of Aldermen.
2. Illuminations Bike Ride – preliminary planning
Brian has volunteered to organize this ride, which runs in parallel with the ride on the trolleys to illuminated locations around the city. The event is scheduled for December 17th. Brian will work with the Arts Council. More details at the next SBC meeting.
3. SCA/350.org bike ride from Union Sq - recap
The ride was held on September 24 from Medford, thru Porter square, to downtown Boston. Several members participated and the ride was successful.
4. SomerStreets, October 23 – Somerville Ave plans
This event will have a Halloween theme. SBC will have a table, and there was a discussion of possible locations, materials to be distributed, and volunteers. Alta Bike will be there to talk about the Hubway bike sharing program.

Infrastructure:

1. Beacon Street – interim goals discussion
The Committee has submitted a letter outlining its position on Beacon Street to the Mayor, to DPW, and to Transportation and Infrastructure, who are aware of the issues. The road surface on Beacon Street currently is in very poor condition. Beacon Street is also the most heavily used bicycle corridor in Somerville. The result is a bicycle safety problem, and those conditions are the most commented by bicyclists in Somerville. Reconstruction of Beacon Street is currently listed in the Transportation Improvement Program for FY2013, meaning those problems will continue for at least 2 more years. The SBC would like the City to do something to improve conditions before then, but so far the City does not currently have the funds for improvements prior to the federally-funded reconstruction project.

The SBC has suggested temporary repaving of the sections in the worst condition. A partial repaving

2. On-Street Bike Parking and Bike Rack update

Two bike corrals have already been installed, outside of the Diesel Cafe in Davis Square and Bloc 11 in Union Square. The response so far has been very positive and there has been positive media coverage. Only Boston in this region has anything similar. A third location, in front of True Grounds in Ball Square was approved by the Traffic Commission. It will probably be installed starting with next year's program, which will likely begin in late February. A fourth location, possibly in Union Square near the Farmer's Market, is also possible next year. The City is considering the purchase of up to 6 additional corrals through the MAPC bike infrastructure program.

For the new bike racks, 54 locations and installation will begin as soon as possible. All of the new racks will be in place by March at the latest.

3. Bike parking inventory map – No update

4. 2011 bike lane/sharrow updates and issues, especially Bow Street and Temple Street. Bow Street has recently been repaved, and will be re-striped to include a one-way bike lane. Temple Street will also be re-striped – the City proposes sharrows, but the SBC believes there is room for, and recommends, a bike climbing lane in the uphill direction with centered sharrows downhill.

5. Hubway status

The City is planning for 8 Hubway stations throughout Somerville, starting next spring.

6. Lowell Street to Washington Street Community Path design, public meeting review went well. Access to Green Line stations from Path was a major consideration.

7. Union Square bike accommodations

Now that most of Somerville Avenue has bike lanes, the SBC discussed how to complete bike access into and thru the remainder of Union Square. There is a Transportation Plan, but most of the improvements don't yet have funding. The SBC's priorities for improvements will be part of the Interdepartmental meeting discussion.

8. McGrath Highway short-term improvement recommendations

The SBC had a walk thru recently and there will be recommendations soon. The roadway is also being studied by an MIT class and we will find out their recommendations as well.

9. Interdepartmental Bicycle Meeting

The meeting between SBC representatives and City departments will take place on November 4. We discussed short, medium, and long-range priorities. We voted to make interim improvements to Beacon Street, before the repaving project, our top

priority. The second priority is Union Square, in two parts. Developing the last piece of a continuous on-street connection along Somerville Avenue, between Prospect and Webster Sts, is the short-term priority. For the medium-term, developing a good bicycle connection along the Webster/Prospect corridor is a priority. A Complete Streets policy for Somerville is a third topic for discussion at the meeting. The SBC would also like to develop a Somerville Bicycle Plan in 2012 and will have an outline to present at the meeting.

Policy:

1. Enforcement policy
No update.
2. Bicycle plan [6 E's and BFC feedback response], input to Comprehensive Plan
Tim asked anyone who had ideas on long-term needs and corridors for bicycle accommodations to let him know. The need for more cross town routes was mentioned. We will ask for suggestions on all the SBC lists.
3. Complete Streets policy
Alex is looking at how national models might be adapted to Somerville's needs. More at the next meeting.
4. City bike abandonment and removal policy.
No update. On the City's 311 site there is a link to report abandoned bikes, under Abandoned Property.

Education and Outreach:

1. Spring bike-ped counts review/ Sign up for October count volunteers
Sarah will send out a link to the presentation that Nikhail gave, which was sparsely attended due to the weather. Members and guests volunteered for the fall counts, which begin the week of October 24. It was suggested that she also look for volunteers among Tufts students.
2. Map subcommittee deliverables
Copies of the previously developed maps were distributed. Suggested improvements – the color map should show one way streets, the Existing Conditions parts should be updated, and perhaps the topography pieces from the black and white one can be added. The recommendations for future improvements might also be updated, although no specific recommendations were made. Send suggestions to Alex and Sarah.
3. Map poster printing

A large copy of the color map will be printed for display at SomerStreets.

4. Online bicycle registration update
There is a link and form available online, thru the 311 site. Links are still needed to several other city departments. Will be on new SPD website.

New Business

1. Innovative practices will be discussed at the next meeting. Contact Lauren Clayton if you would like to do some research and participate in a discussion before then.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Gallagher, Secretary