

MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 4, 2013

Attendees:

Committee Members: Maria Saiz, Janet Jameson, Ethan Davis

Guests: Gideon Schreiber (Community Development and Programming)

There were not enough committee members for a quorum, so the meeting was held for discussion purposes, but nothing was presented for a vote.

1. MAPC Bike Parking: Racks are being installed at Saltonstall Park. Several were not installed properly, which demonstrates the need to coordinate with DPW to get the racks installed properly. Issue: Gerry Mee has put up some resistance to suggestions from the Committee concerning rack installation.

There was a discussion of bike rack placement throughout Watertown. The bike rack in front of the Lowell School is a great example of a good location and good use of the racks. Other schools have also ordered racks, but the racks they ordered are not good racks. The Committee discussed whether we should reach out to the schools to discuss placement of bike racks. Maria is responsible for coordinating the bike parking program. Gideon has already mapped where the bike racks should go.

Goal: Ensure racks are installed where they should go with a particular focus on replacing broken/dilapidated racks. This will require doing an inventory and gathering other data—Maria will take charge of this project.

2. GREENWAY

Clean up: Tufts is willing to do a volunteer day to clean up the Greenway and will also maintain the area that is to be developed.

Progress: Reps. Hecht and Brownsberger are working on moving forward with Athena and Tufts. The priority is getting access to the Charles River and is a Watertown/Athena/Arsenal Mall collaboration. Likewise, continuing the path to Cambridge is a high priority project for the state.

3. Community Path

Not discussed

4. Greenough Blvd

Gideon bumped into Herb Nolan and he provided an update. Plans have been approved, but they are looking for funding. For the time being, there is nothing for the Committee to do. As the project moves forward, we may want to anticipate resistance if someone argues that closing a lane of Greenough Boulevard will cause additional traffic.

5. Underpass Resolution

There is a meeting at 7:15 on Nov. 12 to discuss the underpass resolution. This is really an aspirational resolution. It is unlikely that the bridges over the Charles River will actually be altered to allow for bike traffic to travel beneath bridges. Still, it would be great if there was an uninterrupted bike path along the Charles River.

6. Sidewalk Ordinance

Steve Magoon has chosen to hold the ordinance back so it has not been presented to the Council. Gideon explained that there are a number of changes going on, so Steve Magoon decided to hold it back so it does not get lost in the shuffle.

7. Parking Zoning Ordinance

The current ordinance requires that for new construction, there must be a certain number of parking spots added based on the number of residences being constructed. No bike racks are required to be put in until the builder must put in 15 parking spaces. At that point the ordinance requires that the builder put in 4 new bike racks. For every 15 parking spaces thereafter the builder must add 2 bike racks. The Committee should review the ordinance and be prepared to discuss next month.

8. Mt. Auburn Street Status

No news

9. Comprehensive Plan Update

From the meetings that people have attended it is apparent that the town is interested and wants the same things that the Bike/Ped Committee advocates. People are very interested in the connection to the Charles River. Also, the envision Watertown website has been very popular.

10. MAPC Wellness Grant/Safe Routes to School

Gideon talked with Jeanette Belcher-Schepis (the founder of safe routes to school). It would be best if there was a paid "safe routes to school" coordinator. There was a discussion of how can we get the schools to pick this up and continue the program. One thought is that we might want to get gym teachers involved.

11. Live Well Task Force Update

No update

New Business:

There was a discussion of some of the dangerous crosswalks in town. Maria pointed out that Pleasant & Bridge Street has a light that is not bike activated. If we see a light that is not bike activated we should bring it to DPW and then take it to Traffic Commission.

Maria described an incident that happened to her recently when she was biking home in the dark on Waverly Street. A Watertown Police SUV passed her. The officer in the passenger seat shouted "Bike Lane" at Maria as the SUV passed. It was startling to be

yelled at and the incident raises concerns about what the police are being trained about cycling if they are yelling at Maria to get in a bike lane when she is in the right lane. Maria complained about the incident to the Town Manager and Chief Deveau and is waiting to hear back.