

Minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting February 27, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM.

Attending Committee Members were: Bob Dorer, Soraya Stevens, Margot Fleischman, AnnaLisa Madison, Dan Silverman, Shawn Hannegan

Guests included: Josh Chessman of Concord Road, Margaret Lee, Gordon Yates, George Damon, Sean P. Hemingway, Tina Miller of Hemlock Lane, Rich Madison of Fox Run Road, and Roy Sorensen Director, Bedford Department of Public Works (DPW).

- Several residents attended the meeting to listen to updates on various sidewalk projects. Bob notified them that Roy would be joining at late at approximately 8:30.
- Review of meeting minutes was deferred until there was a quorum of TAC members who attended the last meeting.
- Bob gave an update from Healthy Bedford. Carla Olsen informed Bob that they will be requesting funding to develop a Pedestrian Master Plan and it will be on the warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting. It will be a study to look at pedestrian access in the town. Efforts will be made to coordinate with the Bicycle Master Plan. Margot said they might look at using the same firm who developed Bicycle Master Plan to develop the Pedestrian Master Plan to maximize overlap between the plans.
- A request was made for TAC to speak at town meeting to endorse the Pedestrian Master Plan effort. A motion was made and passed unanimously for the TAC to endorse the plan at the Town Meeting.
- AnnaLisa inquired about using a grant for a taxi service similar to Lexington's per the information she had distributed to the TAC a few months ago. Bob recommended finding an advocate for this type of effort. A request was made to put the taxi service proposal on the agenda for next TAC meeting.
- Margot gave the selectman liaison update on transportation related issues. She attended the Middlesex 3 Coalition Executive Committee meeting. Middlesex 3 is a cooperative effort looking at transportation needs in the Bedford, Burlington, Chelmsford, Lowell, and Billerica regional area. MassDOT attended this meeting as well. Middlesex 3 is looking at transportation needs for attracting businesses and working together on transportation issues to support businesses bringing workers into these areas to work in the regional manufacturing, technology and restaurant

industries. Regionalizing the problem of transportation is getting attention at the state level. Middlesex 3 received a grant from the state to look at our transportation resources including looking at gaps in transportation offerings or looking at where the individual town mass transit systems might work together to reduce redundancy and expand functionality. Middlesex 3 is looking to make a transportation management association for all of these communities within the context of their existing transportation management associations. Bedford could look at ways to work to Lexington outside of Middlesex 3 to address issues in the eastern side of town near Lexington. Middlesex 3 will be meeting with Beverly Scott, Executive Director of the MBTA, soon.

- Josh Chessman of Concord Road spoke about concerns regarding sidewalks in the vicinity of 79 Concord Road. He is interested in having sidewalks installed on the opposite side of the road from the current sidewalk on this area of Concord Road. He explained the difficulty trying to get to the crosswalk at the corner of Davis and Concord Road near St. Michael's. In the winter it requires having his son walk along on Concord Road to reach the crosswalk. He also pointed out that getting the kids onto the bus can be dangerous as people don't always stop and let the kids cross the street to reach the bus. Josh requested that the town look into getting new sidewalks put in on his side of the street.
- Bob: this is an opportunity to revisit the challenges of installing sidewalks in Bedford. In a perfect world we'd have sidewalks on both sides. It is difficult to prioritize when to recommend sidewalks on both sides when there are so many streets in Bedford with no sidewalks.
- Margot: Michelle Ciccolo told her in Hudson they are trying to pilot a Complete Streets inventory package. "Complete Streets" is a term referring to street designed with bike lanes, and sidewalks to accommodate car, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. This inventory would serve as a roadmap for improvement projects and account for and track all the streets in a town with the intent of developing them to become Complete Streets.
- Roy Sorenson joined at 8:15 to discuss sidewalk issues and how the TAC and DPW work together.
- Roy: Sidewalk issues that the DPW handles are the maintenance and repairs of existing sidewalks and the construction of new sidewalks.
- Roy: What are the roles of TAC and DPW and how should they work together?
 - Bob: TAC's role is to determine opportunities for additional sidewalks and do the due diligence before recommending projects to the

selectman. TAC discusses feasibility of projects with the DPW informally and then makes the recommendations to the Selectmen. If the Selectmen approve the recommendation, they will get the DPW formally involved. The general language used by the TAC is “We recommend consideration of a sidewalk in this area” but try to avoid specific engineering or design details, which would be left to DPW to work through when the recommendation is approved by the Selectmen.

- Roy acknowledged that there was more history behind some of these sidewalk projects than he expected when he first saw the projects.
- Roy gave updates on North Road, Concord Road, and Hemlock Lane sidewalk projects.
 - DPW got the last easement for the North Road project. They will do a layout for the homeowner in the spring to let them know what it looks like and they will be able to get that work going again.
 - Concord and Hemlock, they will also look at those projects in the Spring.
- Roy: For Hemlock Lane the big concern is which side makes the most sense to build the sidewalk. There was a big price difference in which side. DPW recommends the west side. It is nearly three times the cost to put the sidewalk on the east side of the street. The east side of the road requires a retaining wall and has significant drainage issues to address. The Selectmen approved the sidewalk project for a west side construction due to the significant cost difference.
- Margot: Recalling from the selectman’s meeting, there was some discussion about switching sides at Hilltop or having sidewalks on both sides. The Selectmen had that discussion; the costly portion at the east side is the part between Page and Hilltop. The sight lines might pose safety concerns if they added a crosswalk and switched the sidewalk to the other side of the road. Although it could serve as traffic calming, the crosswalk could pose safety issues. The conclusion of the Selectmen meeting was to move forward with the less expensive proposal. It would have taken all of the funds currently available for sidewalk construction to do this one project if it were done on the east side and the Selectmen wanted to be in a position to do both projects currently proposed (Hemlock and Concord) this year.
- Hemlock resident: What is the status of adding a sidewalk on Hilltop? Margot responded that it hasn’t been discussed.
- Hemlock resident: What about connecting the Hemlock Lane to Shawsheen? Roy responded that it is a natural next step.

- Hemlock resident: Do you have parameters you look at for each of the sidewalk projects?
 - Margot and Bob responded. The guiding principles are:
 - Arterial roads and connectivity
 - Connecting to the existing network of sidewalks
 - Connecting schools and town owned assets
 - Population density
- Bob added that TAC role as it pertains to DPW is to be provocative and ask tough questions of DPW and make suggestions for traffic calming measures, etc. For example, looking at ways to discourage people from using Hemlock as a cut-through.
- Margot: What does the process look like for getting the sidewalk projects done?
 - Roy: First they will likely look at the Concord Road project near NE Nurseries. Hemlock would come after Concord Road.
 - Hemlock resident: How long will it take to get built?
 - Roy: the ballpark estimate is early next year.
- Bob: The TAC should formalize our guidelines for sidewalks. It has been formalized in prior committees, but not since it became TAC.
- Is the Springs Road sidewalk going forward? No – the Community Preservation committee rejected it.
- Hemlock resident: What specific next steps happen for the Hemlock sidewalk project?
 - Roy: We want to look at each area up close this spring. The DPW has the preliminary designs and directives and they need to review them after the winter. They need to start by looking at feasibility this year (for example, determining whether any trees need to come down).
 - Margot: Reminder to the Hemlock residents that there are two things in favor of these projects: 1) Funds are appropriated and 2) selectmen have already heard the preliminary designs and approved them for DPW to work on the projects.
- Margot: Intersection at Renzo's – has there ever been any type of design done there at any time.
 - The Homestead Circle development required the blinking light.
 - Roy: No formal designs have ever been made for that intersection. Complaints related visibility due to pole and large oak tree. Things to consider: Do we remove the tree that's there? Would removal of that tree improve visibility?

- Dan talked to Adrian – Dan looked at the GIS map, and it would remove the tree and move the pole with a small right of way off the corner to square off the intersection.
- Roy: A discussion should be had on the topic.
- Margot: Her understanding was that the DPW had been given the task to look into options and would come back to the Selectmen with some suggestions for solutions at the intersection.
- Bob: Will the School Way project happen this year?
 - Roy: It will be a bonded (bundled?) contractor working on that project. There will be a specific contract working on two projects: The School Way project and the intersection at South, Springs, and Great Road.
- Margot: Is there any solution to getting back the mid-block crosswalk between Old Town Hall and the Town Common?
 - Roy: A better time to look at that might be when they look at the Great Road Master Plan.
 - Roy: Why did it go away?
 - Margot: The Selectmen at that time were concerned about mid-block crosswalks and they decided not to repaint that one. That particular crosswalk falls just outside the focus area of the Great Road Master Plan.
- Margot: The selectmen were asked to make a change to the parking to flip the student and teacher parking areas. The selectmen said yes, Margot's concern is the corner of the library to the tot-lot might be a good place for a stop sign and a crosswalk. There needs to be some pedestrian flow control there.
 - Soraya: Middle School students are always crossing between the Library and playground to get to The Corner.
 - Roy: That could fall under a safe routes to school project. It might be something they could do when they could get Mudge Way light project under way.
 - Margot: Do we have to really wait for that project since there is really no reason to delay putting up a stop sign, it is something the Selectmen can just authorize since it is all town owned.\
 - Bob: the whole pedestrian flow in the area of Mudge Way and the Police Station / Library / playground intersection needs to be looked at – currently the only identified crosswalk is not even near this pedestrian busy area.
- Josh Chessman: Why didn't they put sidewalks on Liljegrin when they did that work on the Bedford High School parking lot?

- Margot and Shawn: The planning board had strongly recommended sidewalks, but it fell through the cracks when the HS parking lot problem was finished.
- AnnaLisa: Springs Road sidewalks are not wheelchair accessible, is that something DPW can repair.
 - Roy: the Springs Road sidewalk in the Fox Run area is not wheelchair accessible but the Springs Road project was not funded so there is nothing they can do at this time. Older sidewalks are not ADA complaint.
- Josh Chessman: The intersection near Springs Road and Great Road on Springs Road and Hancock has visibility issues. There are lots of trees in the way.
- Discussions with Roy ended.
- The Minutes from 1-23-2014 were accepted.
- Shawn Hannegan gave planning board updates.
 - The comprehensive plan was accepted by the Planning Board.
 - There is a proposal to put 70 units of housing at the VA. They have an agreement that there will be no sex offenders housed there. Dan: Where is the area for use? Shawn thinks it is near the old chicken coops by the golf course.
 - There will be a Planning Board article on Town Meeting that will update the flood maps. It affects a few houses near the Concord River.
- Bob reminded the TAC members about the Parking New Ideas workshop being held April 8th in Boston.
- Bob: Noted that the town has posted the Warrant and Annual Town Reports online.
- Bob: Noted that we need to come up with plans for reorganization of the committee. Bob is not planning to be part of the committee after June and in any case we should be electing a new chair as the recommended standard in town is to rotate positions on a yearly basis.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Soraya Stevens