

Bikeway Committee Minutes
February 17 2021

The Bikeway Committee Meeting, a remote Zoom conference, was called to order at 7 PM; Lois Callahan (chair) called the roll. Members present were Lois Callahan (Chair), Jim Anderson and Mat Coes, Bob Espindola. Since 4/5 members were present a quorum was declared. Also in attendance was Paul Foley, Dir of Planning and Economic Development. Lois read the authorization and guidelines for remote meetings and the business of the committee commenced.

The first Agenda item was approval of the minutes from the previous meeting on January 19, 2021, and also the minutes from the meeting on December 2, 2020, whose approval was deferred from January 19 meeting. The minutes were approved.

Updates and Discussion.

Complete Streets. Paul announced that the Phase one Policy statement was approved by the Selectman's meeting on Monday February 8 and then by the MASSDOT, with a high score of 100, on Thursday February 11. This approval clears the way for the submission of Phase two, the Implementation Plan, which is a prioritization of projects; the deadline for submission of this list to MASS DOT will be April 1. Green Engineering submitted a list of projects for the committee's consideration and discussion.

The spreadsheet listed 64 projects in no particular order. The members had only received the list the prior day so it was agreed that we would need to do careful study in order to agree on which projects (and some not on the list) should be prioritized, and take up the discussion at the next meeting. Given the urgency of deadlines we decided to push back the next meeting to March 10. Also, the list was difficult to read in its current form and we decided to request Green Engineering to provide just the project descriptions in readable type face. [Ed. Note: readable version supplied on February 18].

A discussion began on several individual projects, including a reprise of the problem with traffic in the Main/Middle street corridor. The project doesn't appear on the list but there was support for getting it included; several variations were discussed, including a link to Green St from Main by extending and improving an existing path to the the east side of Green. Green itself in this area should have continuous sidewalks. The project and ideas should be presented to other groups for inputs. Bob questioned how priorities would be established for the list, and suggested that costs should be included in the criteria. Mat suggested ranking by high/middling/low costs, and this implies a matrix of criteria to help decision making. Bob suggested that Google Earth maps could be helpful in orienting persons to the projects, and this would be taken up next meeting.

Alden road again came up to discussion, and apparently there are improvements in the Transportation Board bill, with monies already identified, but Bob suggested that input from the Complete Streets should be provided before construction plans are hardened. Paul suggested another alternative for linking Rt 6 to Alden, via a path behind Walmart where there currently are overhead wires and therefore, empty space. At one point SRPDD was invoked as a player in these games, but unsure how.

The Bollard striping project was discussed. Lois reported that Mr. Furtado of DPW will make a case at the Planning Board meeting March 4 for funds for the project. Can we use our own funds for this if that is fruitless? There also was a note about the Safe Schools project, and would this be a source of funds for the crossing at David Drown Blvd. Mr. Furtado also indicated that he's open to attending one of our meetings to discuss matters further. Paul volunteered to invite him.

The next meeting will be March 10.

Mat announced that he will be stepping down from the committee, and will do an exit report; March 10 will be his last meeting.

The meeting adjourned.

Submitted,
Jim Anderson