

Fairhaven Bikeway Committee

Town Hall · 40 Center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719

Fairhaven Bikeway Committee Minutes – February 2, 2022 – **Final**

The Bikeway Committee Meeting met via a remote platform (Zoom) and was called to order at 7 PM;

1) Quorum & Attendance

- a) Paul Foley read the Open Meeting Law announcement which allows remote participation.
- b) Bob Espindola (acting chair) called the roll. Members present were James Anderson, Tim Garcia and Mike Rotondo. A quorum was declared. Also in attendance was Town Planner Paul Foley.

2) Approval of Minutes: No draft minutes from the last meeting in May 2021 had been prepared.

3) Updates/Discussion

- a) Bike Committee Membership: Tim Garcia, a new member, introduced himself. He has served on the Sustainability Committee and is interested in sustainability and Complete Streets issues. Mike Rotondo is also new and is one of the proponents of a BMX Pump Track.
- b) Complete Streets Update:
 - i) In April 2020 the Town was awarded \$38,500 through the Community Compact Best Practices program to develop a Tier 1 Complete Streets Policy and a Tier 2 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
 - ii) In March 2021 the Town, with the assistance of the Planning & Economic Department and Complete Streets Advisory Committee, developed and passed a Tier 1 Complete Streets Policy.
 - iii) In April 2021 the Town developed and passes a Tier 2 Prioritization Plan.
 - iv) In July 2021 the Town was awarded \$332,636 from MassDOT in Complete Streets Tier 3 funds for four projects on the Complete Streets Tier 2 Prioritization Plan.
 - v) These projects include:
 - (1) Developing Bike Lanes along Alden Road from Howland Road to Whaler's Way;
 - (2) Improved ramps and crossings along Main Street in North Fairhaven including a bus shelter at the Fairhaven Village Apartments and a bus stop near the Fairhaven Housing Authority;
 - (3) Improved ramps and crossings at Orchard Street and Sconticut Neck Road;
 - (4) Speed feedback signs along Sconticut Neck Road.

These projects will be implemented in 2022.

- vi) In July 2021 the Town was awarded \$183,689 from the Shared Streets and Spaces Program for two projects on the Complete Streets Tier 2 Prioritization Plan.

vii) These projects include:

- (1) Improved ramps and crossings at Alden Road and Howland Road as well as Alden Road and Glenhaven Avenue and;
- (2) Improved ramps and crossings at Main Street and the Phoenix Bike Trail. These projects will be implemented in early 2022.

These projects will be implemented in 2022.

Tim Garcia noted that a sustainable project that would fit with Complete Streets would be to install some solar powered beacons along the bike path at appropriate locations.

c) Bike Path Signage:

The Fairhaven Bike Way Committee was awarded \$3,000 in 2016 for signage along the bike path intended to make the bike path safer and more user friendly and increase its use for recreation and commuting. The committee requested the placement of signage indicating the location of the town center, Fort Phoenix, Council on Aging, Little Bay, West Island and Fairhaven Recreation. One sign for each location to enhance safety. Signage proposed also included:

“All Path Users Keep to the right except to pass” – 12 signs

“Pass on left - give audible signal” - 12 signs

“No motorized vehicles” – 6 signs

“Ride with the traffic” - 6 Signs on Sconticut Neck Road

Signage to replace the existing entrance signs at the entrance from Mattapoisett and the entrance at Main Street.

The Committee discussed that this is still an interest but that the subcommittee needs to go out for a ride along the bike path, when the weather is better, to locate the sites for the signs and possibly tweak the language. We want better informational signage but do not want to have too much clutter with too many signs. Bob Espindola noted that he has heard about whether to allow bike-assist or E-bikes on the bike paths. E-bikes should be put on the next agenda.

d) Mass DOT Safe Routes to School Project:

- **2016** - DPW engaged a traffic engineering company to design a plan to narrow down SNR at David Drown Boulevard to eliminate the ability for northbound traffic to pass on the right of any vehicle that was taking a left from SNR onto David Drown. As part of this effort DPW asked SRPEDD to conduct a traffic study in the area. The Town obtained a set of plans for this and a traffic beacon was installed.
- **2018** - Matt Coes, on behalf of the Bikeway Committee/DPW submitted an application to the State's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program using the aforementioned plan and SRPEDD report to obtain funding to narrow SNR at the Phoenix Bike Trail.
- **April 2019** - the State informed Town that we received the SRTS grant in the amount of \$800,000.
- **2019** - DPW and the State met numerous times re: logistics.
- **2020** - The project came somewhat to a standstill because of Covid.
- **2021** - DPW and the State met numerous times to review/improve the project. Via these meetings and site walks, this project now stands at a \$2M dollar grant.

The original application narrowed SNR from David Drown to Timothy St. The current (expanded) project includes sidewalk upgrades on SNR from Route 6 (both plaza sides) all the way to the south entrance of the Wood School. As part of this effort, existing sidewalks will be made ADA compliant (poles have to be pushed back), the road will be narrowed and bike lanes will be created.

The DPW just received the State's 25 % plans.

Bob Espindola noted that Matt Coes had organized a local group that was biking their kids to school and that was part of what made the Town eligible for the funding. It goes to show how the committees and in this case, the Bikeway Committee, helped the Town get grants.

e) SRPEDD Spotlight on Fairhaven - Bike/Pedestrian path Economic benefit:

SRPEDD has an upcoming webinar series for the Regional Transportation Plan focusing on the ways in which transportation improvements support economic development. They have invited Fairhaven to discuss how the Phoenix Rail Trail has supported local business. It would be a mostly anecdotal 10 minute presentation discussing how the bike path has increased or enhanced tourism, opened up access to coastal, natural, and cultural amenities, and how the bike path has spurred business growth, including access (walkability and bike access) to the town center and also to the plazas on Route 6. Bob and/or Paul will make short presentation to SRPEDD in May. Bob added that studies have been done showing an increase in home value with proximity to bike paths and that Realtors often advertise that as part of a property description.

Mike Rotondo mentioned that he has a friend in Middleborough that brings his family down to bike the Fairhaven Phoenix Rail Trail and they usually go to shops and restaurants and make a day of it. Jim Anderson noted that Shaw Road conservation area is another attraction along the bike path.

f) Pump Track update:

Paul Foley gave an overview that the CPC had an Application for a proposal to relocate and expand the current dirt bike track away from the wetlands and pave it and create a "pump track "at Macomber/Pimental Park on Bernese Street. The requested amount was \$150,000 but the CPC Voted not to fund the project at this time. Among the questions the CPC had were how many bikers use the existing dirt track and what permissions, such as Conservation Commission review, are required for proposals in a public park? Next Steps or possibilities include a possible Recreational Facilities Usage Review or possible an Alternative Site Review.

g) Mattapoissett Rail Trail extension project status:

The slide show showed a few slides of the proposed Mattapoissett Rail Trail extension that has been in the works for a number of years including a long raised bridge section that connects from the YMCA/Reservation Road area over Goodspeed Island to downtown Mattapoissett. Bob explained that it was almost done when they discovered there was a problem with the decking that had to be removed and replaced. Paul Foley wondered how much this whole section of the project cost and whether they looked at alternative ways to connect this section.

h) South Coast Bikeway Alliance Initiatives:

Bob Espindola gave an overview South Coast Bikeway Alliance (SCBA) and noted that the SCBA is conducting a feasibility study with SRPEDD to close the gap between Fall River and New Bedford. They are looking for comments and suggestions from the public.

4) **OTHER BUSINESS:** Any other business that may properly come before the Board, not reasonably anticipated when posting 48 hours prior to this meeting.

5) Next meeting: March 2, 2022 at 6:30 pm

