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COMMUNITY PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC)

Homer Municipal Building, 3rd Floor Art Gallery

Town of Belmont

6 November 2013

MEETING NOTES

The Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. by chairperson Jeff Roth.

Attendance

Committee members in attendance were Jeff Roth (chairperson), John Dieckmann (vice-chairperson), Brian Burke Sr., Kevin Sullivan, Cosmo Caterino, Vince Stanton, Joseph Noone, Charlie Conroy, Price Armstrong, constituting a quorum with 9 members present. Cosmo Caterino said he would serve as revolving secretary. However, he was not able to write up the minutes in a timely manner, so Mr. Roth wrote the minutes.

Town officials present were Jeffrey Wheeler (Community Development Office), Ralph Jones (Board of Selectmen), and Laurie Graham (Chair School Committee).

Community members in attendance at the meeting were:

Meg Boggess (Channing Road), Sara Smith (Bartlett Avenue), George Kokoros (Agassiz Avenue), Jarrod Goentzel (Agassiz Avenue), Philip Lawrence (Agassiz Avenue), Jessica Kirkus (Arlington), Mike Cicalese (Channing Road), Roger Colton (Warsick Road), Kathleen Gardiner (Channing Road), Scott Rossi (Channing Road), Cindy Taylor (Channing Road), Judith Ananian Sarno (Waverley Terrace), Ann Tierney (Channing Road), Merrie Watters (Channing Road), Rick Macchi (Beckett Road), Jennifer DeMetropoulos (Channing Road).

Minutes Approval

The CPAC minutes from the previous meeting on 23 October were reviewed. Some minor and typographical changes were suggested to the minutes. The minutes were subsequently approved unanimously as amended.

Discussion about Publicizing Questionnaire Open-Ended Results

The documents by Yvette Tenney that summarized the 2013 Questionnaire open-ended responses were discussed. One document showed how the comments were binned across all the topics and categories mentioned in the open-ended responses, to give an idea of how frequently certain topics emerged. This summary was not intended to list comment verbatim. Rather, the analysis Yvette did was to sort the comments into all the categories reflected in the responses. The categories are

generally paraphrases of the items contained in the responses. All comments were analyzed to generate these categories. The tallies then show the number of times that a particular type of response was received. The Committee agreed to revise this summary of the Questionnaire open-ended comments by including a short context at the top to describe the analysis process, and to describe how many comments the tallies included. This explanatory text would be added by Mr. Roth.

The second document discussed contains sample excerpts of the verbatim responses. It is intended to provide a snapshot of the responses under three specific categories. This document is not designed to capture every comment, just a sampling.

These two documents could be helpful for writing the final report and for sharing with the public. They would be discussed again at the next meeting after the above revisions.

Evaluations of Potential Community Path Routes

The Committee discussed Route Area 3, which includes the path sections from the Clark Street Footbridge to slightly beyond Belmont Center. Routes 3-A, 3-B, and 3-C were all retained since there was a lot of overlap and commonality among these routes. The scores on all of these routes were also all very similar. They all scored highly, with 3-D scoring the highest overall. 3-A was closely behind. However, route 3-D was considered a duplicate of 3-A, and the short section over the historical granite bridge would be folded into route 4-C (later renamed route 4-CD).

We also discussed the path connections 3-E and 3-F, both of which were retained as possible access points and connections to a Belmont Community Path. Route 3-F and 3-E both scored highly, with route 3-F scoring the highest among these connections. Route 3-F involves resurrecting the former stairway (c. 1900) that previously connected the Belmont Station pedestrian underpass to the platform between the Fitchburg Line and the Mass-Central Line. Connection 3-E would provide an access point to the Mass-Central Railroad (MCRR) right-of-way from Channing Road. One unknown about 3-E is the ability to make such a connection ADA compliant and also whether the owner of the Coldwell-Banker facility would need to provide an easement to construct this access point.

The routes in area 4 (East Belmont) were also discussed. It was decided to reduce those routes to three primary routes for the CPAC to focus on. The first potential route utilizes Channing road itself. The second potential route is an off-road path that utilizes the former MCRR right-of-way between Belmont Center and Brighton Street. The third potential route utilizes sections of Concord Ave., the High School athletic fields, the High School Fire Lane, Hittinger St., and Brighton St. The potential route on Channing Road was proposed as a two-way cycle track and sidewalk on one side of the street. It involves converting Channing Road into a one-way street with parking on only the one-way (motor-vehicle) side. The purpose of this was to make such a route as protected as possible from motor vehicles given

the large number of intersecting driveways. Mr. Conroy volunteered to draft up this approach and bring it to the next meeting for further discussion.

The potential abutter survey was voted on and approved at a previous meeting. We briefly discussed distribution of this survey at this meeting. It was decided that once we had determined which specific routes the CPAC would focus its efforts on, then we would distribute the survey to those specific residents. Since we had not yet reduced down the number of routes in area 4, we would wait to distribute the survey until after that point.

Forum for Potential Abutters

The Committee discussed a future forum for potential abutters that has been requested by neighbors. The Committee would like to accommodate this request, and discussed the format briefly. The Board of Selectmen also indicated their interest in helping to coordinate this event. Mr. Roth mentioned that the Forum could include a brief overview at the beginning to cover the following points: (a) review what the CPAC has done and its mission, (b) summarize the current routes that the CPAC is focusing on and the associated design considerations, and (c) summarize pluses and minuses of each route. This overview could then transition to a period for the audience to make comments and ask questions, both verbally and in writing. Mr. Jones from the Board of Selectmen agreed with this general approach, and mentioned that the Forum should include enough time for people to make comments. This Forum is intended to be an opportunity for the public to provide comments and feedback to both the Selectmen and the CPAC.

CPAC Schedule and Upcoming Events

A working calendar was presented and discussed. The calendar aimed to complete the CPAC's primary work in the March time-frame. Major remaining tasks and milestones include a third Public Forum general to the entire community, a final written report on the CPAC recommendations, and a briefing of those recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.

CPA Application on Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection Between Belmont High School and Winn Brook

For the News and Announcements agenda item, it was pointed out that the CPA final application for this project was submitted on Friday Nov. 1. As part of this application, letters of support for this project from both the school committee chair Laurie Graham and from the High School principal were included. An email from the MBTA's Director of Development supporting the project was also included. A formal written letter was not included since the MBTA did not provide one by the deadline. The application was submitted jointly with the Office of Community Development, in the event that the CPAC temporary committee stopped convening prior to the conclusion of the project.

Upcoming Events

The next two CPAC meetings are scheduled for Nov. 20th and Dec. 4th.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m., with a motion by Mr. Armstrong and a second by Mr. Sullivan.