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Town of Belmont
COMMUNITY PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7:00 pm - Wednesday, November 7, 2012 -- Town Hall
MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

The meeting was attended by Brian Burke, Jeff Roth, Price Armstrong, Amy DeDeo, Cosmo Caterino, John Dieckmann, Joe Noone, Vincent Stanton, and Jeffrey Wheeler.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

John asked about who exactly proposed the bylaw amendment stating that a majority of committee members must approve a measure, since the minutes said that John proposed it. Jeff R. and others were not sure who proposed it, but it was recorded in the draft minutes that way. Price then raised a question about whether names should be associated with every statement in the minutes. The consensus was to use sound judgment when writing the minutes.

Joe motioned to approve the minutes as amended, and Amy seconded the motion. The minutes were then unanimously approved as amended.

Administrative Tasks

We discussed the key milestones and deliverables document. Price wondered about what the visuals were going to be for the public forum. It was explained that the visuals would be more detailed maps and photos.

Discussion of the updated outline and structure for final report was deferred until the next meeting since Kevin was unable to attend the meeting.

The Rules of Governance document was approved at the last meeting. It was emailed around and we should all also have hard copies.

Committee Appointments — Brian Burke, Sr. is now officially on the committee. Dara Colleary is going to be stepping down from the committee due to family commitments. This means that we now have eight members and it may be best to have an odd number. John agreed that we should have nine people. Price suggested that we fill the position soon since we're so far along.

Board of Selectmen Update — Jeff R. said the update at the Board of Selectmen meeting went well. They went over the work plan, meetings, bike ride, other updates. Cosmo added that they said they wanted to include the business community.

Summary of the CPAC Bike Ride

The ride had to be postponed by one week due to Hurricane Sandy. John, Vince, Karen Gut, Gail Walker, Jeff Roth, and Jeffrey Wheeler were in attendance. Jeff R. presented the pictures he took. The group also met with a property owner adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway in Arlington, and he shared some positive experiences of owning a home next to that trail.

Vince reported that the individual the group met lived right next to the trail. When you stand on the trail and look horizontally towards his house, you're looking at the second floor of his house. There is a lot of screening vegetation as well as barriers due to grade difference.

Price asked how he liked being next to a trail. He said that he didn't mind living next to the trail, and enjoyed having it there. Jeffrey W. mentioned that he bought there after the path was developed, seeing the path as a positive asset. Vince mentioned that his children also use it to get to elementary school.

Jeff R. mentioned that this homeowner didn't feel a lack of privacy or security by having the path nearby, since most people are just looking straight ahead and not to the sides, and also don't venture off the trail.

The group also toured part of the boardwalks on the Alewife Brook Greenway. There was a discussion about whether these types of boardwalks would be recommended for all uses, such as roller blading and other small-wheeled users. The consensus was no. Jeffrey W. mentioned that stone dust is also problematic for multiple uses, such as ADA accessibility.

Jeff R. asked for those who couldn't attend the ride to do so on their own time.

Evaluation Criteria

Cosmo mentioned that the "Engineering" category could include feasibility or major obstacles. Price said that many of the criteria could fit under cost. Jeff R. said that some engineering concerns like available width may not be embodied in cost.

Brian asked if it is a given that all former railroad right-of-ways are contaminated. Cosmo mentioned that it is generally assumed by MassDEP that all right-of-ways could be contaminated due to the variety of different chemicals used over the years. It is unclear whether contamination issues exist in Belmont, because in general the MBTA will not allow testing until a right-of-way has been transferred and also because part of this former rail line has already been developed into a trail.

Cosmo asked for there to be a tax map to confirm ownership along the rail right-of-way.

Jeff R. suggested we add an environmental subcategory. John suggested we change it to "Factors of..." or "Feasibility of Construction" as a subcategory.

Price asked about "permanence". It was explained that this criterion refers to whether the land is leased or purchased. A discussion of leasing versus purchasing ensued.

Price asked about parking — Jeffrey W. explained that it referred to parking for the users of a trail.

Price asked about how specific we need to be right now, since the primary purpose is to inform the questionnaire. Jeff R. responded that we should ultimately come up with a way of scoring the proposed routes.

Cosmo suggested that we put down zoning and legal issues, such as risks of lawsuits. He also suggested that we remove the categories of “perceived” and “actual” categories under safety. He also suggested having a subject of usability, including when a trail would be open for use.

It was agreed that liability issues should be included under “Feasibility.”

“Property values enhanced” should be changed to “Impact on Property Values.”

It was discussed that it might be unrealistic to evaluate economic impact of a particular route.

Jeffrey W. thought that the second question about opposition was too upfront. He thought that opposition was to specific routes, not the path in general. The question should be “What is your primary concern regarding a community path?”

Cosmo wanted a section for people to write in their issues or concerns.

It was agreed to move the demographic section to the end.

People were instructed to send Price any further thoughts on the questionnaire.

Status of Inviting Planner/Official from Mass Central Rail-Trail

John sent out an email but has yet to hear back from anyone.

Report Summaries

Cosmo edited the background reports that were originally done by Kevin. They were distributed at the meeting.

Site Visits

Jeff R. would like to do site visits to certain areas along some of the proposed routes. Jeff R. will send out a doodle poll to coordinate the site visit. Cosmo suggested scheduling it for a time when a train would come by.

Action Item Review

1. Price will work more on the questionnaire with Amy. Others will send in any further comments to him.
2. The Evaluation Criteria will be revised by Amy and Jeff R.

3. Jeffrey W. noted that the questionnaire should be sent out well in advance of the Nov. 28 meeting.
4. Amy motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9p, and Brian seconded the motion.