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Town of Belmont
COMMUNITY PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
7:00 pm - Wednesday, June 11th, 2014
Homer Municipal Building, 3rd Floor Art Gallery Room

2014 JUL 22 AM 8:56

MEETING NOTES

The Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting was called to order at approximately 7:15 pm by Chairman Jeffrey Roth.

Attendance

CPAC Members present at the meeting included Jeffrey Roth, John Dieckmann, Brian Burke, Amy DeDeo, Tomi Olson, Price Armstrong, Kevin Sullivan, Vincent Stanton, and Charlie Conroy. Absent were Cosmo Caterino and Joseph Noone. Also present was Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Coordinator and Mark Paolillo, Town Selectman.

Community members included: Hank Thidemann, Paul Healy, Cindy Taylor, Maura Mallowney, Phil Lawrence, Rick Macchi, and Annette Goodro.

Kevin Sullivan served as revolving secretary for this meeting.

CPAC Appreciation

Jeff Roth and Mark Paolillo handed out plaques of appreciation to committee members as well as to Jeffrey Wheeler and Leanne Fierro.

Selectman Paolillo offered his thanks to Jeff Roth for his leadership and to the Committee for all of their hard work.

Charlie Conroy acknowledged the community members for taking part in meetings and their active participation in the CPAC process.

CPAC Final Report

Jeffrey Wheeler handed out the final report to the committee. He noted that the links included in the report are not currently working, because the Town website has been updated. But that problem should be resolved soon.

The committee asked Jeffrey Wheeler to ask that the old documents that are not currently available become available. We also asked that the links from the final report be updated.

Outcomes from Board of Selectmen Briefing

The meeting went well and the Selectmen were receptive to the CPAC Final Report. They seemed anxious to move forward quickly, though they did not set a timeline for setting up a new Implementation Committee.

Price mentioned that most surrounding communities have a permanent bicycle advisory committee and would recommend that the next committee be a permanent, standing committee to address general bicycle-related topics as well.

Hank Thidemann of the community mentioned that during the June 9 Selectmen's meeting, it was noted that several adjacent communities have paths in place or in the works. He also noted that the Selectmen seemed to want to move forward soon. Selectman Paolillo said during that meeting that it would make sense to run parallel processes (applying for grants and planning) so that opportunities are not missed and the project can move forward quickly.

Vince provided the Selectmen with information on funding resources for other nearby paths. Price said that there is federal money available and that the State can draw on highway money. Price mentioned a rail-trial project on Martha's Vineyard, in which they planned to build a one-mile segment to connect two sections, but concerns were raised from the historic commission, and therefore they lost funds that the State planned to funnel to the project. Therefore, he urges the Selectmen to shore up local support as soon as possible, because there are plenty of projects waiting for that money.

Brian noted that in order to apply for funds for construction, the state requires that a 25% design be done by the Town. Price said that the feasibility study should iron out the path route and all major decisions. Price noted that he is not speaking on behalf of MassDOT.

Maura Mallowney of Clark Lane asked why the Committee chose a path route that didn't have full consensus. Ms. Mallowney commented that the MAPC report did not reflect the issues recently brought forward to the CPAC regarding use of Clark Lane. Jeff Roth said that the Committee did its best to come up with a consensus given the short time to address these concerns raised. Price also said each path would have different feasibility challenges. Charlie said that the Clark Lane issues could be a show-stopper and that the concerns of these residents were heard.

Jeff Roth noted that the Selectmen seemed very supportive of putting in an underpass at Alexander Avenue. Paul Healy of Channing Road asked what would be done to address abutters if an underpass were to be put in. The committee already agreed to recommend installing privacy and security measures throughout this area. Vince mentioned that Kevin noted that the Community Preservation Committee has administrative money available for feasibility studies and the like that may be applicable in this case.

Summary of Assessments of Concord Avenue Route Options

Jeff Roth prepared a presentation on some of the Concord Avenue options that were investigated by the committee and the reasons why the Committee decided not to pursue them.

Options:

Concord Ave to Mobil Station -- The downsides are the crossing at Leonard and Brighton Streets and potential loss of parking. Tomi mentioned that there could be an

underpass to get across both Brighton Street and the train tracks, though the Committee already looked at a diagonal underpass and determined that there was not sufficient land to do so.

Concord Ave. to Ice Rink -- The drawbacks are the crossings at Leonard and Brighton Streets and issues with the School Department, who have said it would be difficult to have a path that uses any School property.

Kevin noted that the Selectmen suggested that there could be a master plan drawn up for the School property, which could incorporate a path that runs through it. Amy noted that there are concerns about "strangers" on School property, so some sort of fence might be needed.

Concord Ave. to Clay Pit Pond -- The drawbacks are crossings at streets, the High School driveway issue, and concerns from School committee.

Concord Ave. to Fire Lane Behind High School -- The drawbacks are the Leonard Street and Brighton Street crossings, and also School Department issues. The Fire Department and other trucks use the fire lane and a path would conflict with that lane.

Concord Ave. to Hittinger St. -- The drawbacks are the crossings at the streets, the High School driveway issue, and the safety issues at Hittinger Street.

Concord Ave. to Underwood St. -- The drawbacks are street crossings, safety issues at Underwood and Hittingers Streets, and the one-way at Underwood.

Vince suggested that the slides also contain the relative positive aspects of the routes. That is, which routes address negative aspects of the other routes.

Tomi made a motion to accept the presentation with suggested amendments to submit to the Selectmen for review. Amy seconded the motion. All voted in favor of approving this document for public release.

Based on this analysis and the summary provided in this document, CPAC did not end up recommending any use of Concord Avenue, Clay Pit Pond, the sports fields, the High School lands, or the surroundings streets for the primary Path route, since those routes would have required navigating busy Concord Avenue to some degree, as well as requiring Path users to cross the busy intersections at Leonard Street (in Belmont Center) and Brighton Street (near Cambridge). Those roadway segments in general seemed too busy to use as a Path route for children, families, and others to bike and walk on. Instead, CPAC opted to recommend only off-road routes to keep the Path as safe as possible.

Letters

Jeff compiled a document with all the letters (51) that the committee has received since CPAC first started meeting. They are available online on the CPAC webpage.

Green Routes Network

The MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) is putting together a coalition in support of a Green Routes Network. They are looking for support in their concept to

establish more greenways, such as rail-to-trail projects and off-road paths. The MAPC is asking groups to send letters of support. Vince moved that the Committee authorize Jeff Roth as chair to send a letter of behalf of CPAC expressing support for the Green Routes Network initiative. John seconded the motion, and all voted in favor of it.

Review of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the previous May 28th, 2014 meeting and this current June 11th, 2014 meeting were reviewed. The June 11th minutes were edited in real-time on an overhead screen to record changes and updates.

A motion was made by Amy to accept both sets of minutes as amended with minor amendments, and the motion was seconded by Price. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

While the Committee was not formally dissolved by the Board of Selectmen, this meeting is the last scheduled meeting given that the CPAC has now fulfilled all the requirements and deliverables in the Committee's Charge by the Board of Selectmen. The CPAC has now completed all of its work as of this meeting.

A motion was then made by Brian to adjourn this meeting, and it was seconded by Kevin. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.