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Town of Belmont

COMMUNITY PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7:00 pm - Wednesday, August 21, 2013 -- Town Hall

MINUTES NOTES

The Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting was called to order at approximately 7:04 pm by Chair Jeffrey Roth.

Attendance

CPAC Members present at the meeting included Jeffrey Roth, John Dieckmann, Cosmo Caterino, Joseph Noone, Price Armstrong, Kevin Sullivan, Vincent Stanton, Brian Burke, Sr. and Tomi Olson. Also present were Jeffrey Wheeler (Office of Community Development), Cindy Taylor, Alex Corbett, Caroline Noone, Shelia Flewelling (residents); Franklin Tucker – Belmont Patch; and Peggy Enders (Lexington Bicycle Advisory Committee). Joseph Noone served as revolving secretary.

Approval of Minutes from July 23, 2013 Meeting

Prior meeting minutes were not available to review and approve at this time.

News and Announcement

For the benefit of those members of the committee that were not able to attend as well as the citizens in attendance, Mr. Roth provided a recount of the last meeting in which Police Chief Richard McLaughlin and Fire Chief Frizzel attended. A discussion occurred about the needs for access by public safety vehicles to any path.

For the August 21 meeting, Chief McLaughlin provided to Mr. Roth statistics of all types of motor vehicle accidents in Belmont. A discussion occurred about information the statistics yielded in terms of motor vehicle and bicycle accidents. Price Armstrong reported that the number of crash and fatalities involving bicyclist has declined nationwide despite the increase in the number of individuals using bikes. The discussion turned to the greater safety that off road paths provide to bicyclist versus on-road paths.

Price also reported that the week of September 20 will be Car-Free week.

Mr. Roth reported that the official opening of the Cambridge Alewife community path is coming up soon.

Upcoming Calendar

The next CPAC meetings will be September 11 and September 25. Meetings will resume 2 times per month. The Committee's work is taking longer than originally expected. However, the hope is to complete the charge to the Board of Selectmen by the end of the year.

A discussion took place about staffing the Meet Belmont forum on August 27 at the Middle School.

#### CPAC Application for CPA Funds

Mr. Roth discussed a draft application for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding to study a pedestrian/bicycle connection between Belmont High School and the Winn Brook neighborhood. Since an underpass would be relevant to a Community Path no matter which of the proposed routes were actually recommended, the purpose of doing an engineering study would be to determine whether it would be feasible to construct such an underpass and what the cost would be for construction. Members assessed the wording of the application and the amount of money sought. Mr. Roth reported he discussed the application with Paul Solomon, the Chair of Belmont's CPA. Mr. Roth suggested that the amount of money sought from the CPA should be increased. A decision was made to increase the amount of money sought from \$25,000 to \$50,000 because of the need for testing the ground composition to determine if the ground would be stable enough to support an underpass beneath the railroad tracks. Unused money would be returned to the CPA.

Mr. Roth provided information concerning pedestrian underpasses for community paths in other towns with some photographs. The cost of these tunnels was discussed.

A motion was made by Mr. Burke to approve the application with the recommended changes. The vote in favor of the application was 8 to 1. Joseph Noone opposed on the basis that the application of CPA funds for a tunnel design study to the high school and Winn Brook was beyond the scope of the CPAC charge.

#### Discussion of Issues and Concerns Raised by Abutters

Mr. Roth asked Mr. Caterino to discuss some of the concerns raised by Channing Road neighbors. Mr. Caterino reported that he put together a list of concerns that he has as a potential abutter. Mr. Caterino pointed out that the list was not intended to be exhaustive and did not necessarily reflect the views of all of his neighbors as his list is based upon his own perceptions. The first issue raised was safety/privacy and a discussion occurred about the potential safety issues surrounding a path along the railroad tracks on Channing Road. Mr. Roth invited Peggy Enders from the Lexington Path Committee to share her thoughts about the Lexington path on some of the issues. Ms. Enders stated that path abutters in Lexington generally have expressed very little safety concerns and that crime is not a significant issue caused by the Minuteman Bikeway in Lexington.

Mr. Caterino reported that Channing Road abutters' safety and privacy concerns are significant. The Channing Road abutters have expressed significant concern about privacy because the rail bed is 10 - 15 feet above street level, which could permit users of the path to potentially view into homes and yards.

A discussion occurred about potential ways to resolve abutters' safety and privacy concerns. A meeting with Channing Road residents was recommended by Mr. Noone. The discussion then turned to preparing a survey for Channing Road abutters and other abutters to assess whether there are potential screening approaches that would satisfy the safety and privacy concerns of neighbors. Mr. Price

volunteered to draft a survey. Mr. Noone and Mr. Burke volunteered to be part of the subcommittee working on the survey.

#### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 following a motion by Price and a second by Charlie.