

COMMUNITY PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC)

Homer Municipal Building, 3rd Floor Art Gallery

Town of Belmont

25 September 2013

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MEETING NOTES

The Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting was called to order at approximately 7:10 p.m. by chairperson Jeff Roth.

Attendance

Committee members in attendance were Jeff Roth chairperson, John Dieckmann vice-chairperson, Brian Burke Sr., Cosmo Caterino, Vince Stanton, Charlie Conroy, Amy DeDeo, constituting a quorum with 7 members present. Jeff Roth served as revolving secretary.

Town officials present were Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Coordinator

Community members present at the meeting were Bruce MacKinnon (Channing Road), Merrie Watters (Channing Road), Pamela Tsang (Channing Road), Michael Cicalese (Channing Road), Cindy Taylor (Channing Road), Alex Corbett, Matt Sullivan, Judith Ananian Sarno, Sheila Flewelling, Phil Lawrence (Agassiz Avenue), Hank Thidemann (Warwick Road), and Rick Macchi (Beckett Road).

Minutes approval

The CPAC minutes from the previous meeting on 11 September were reviewed. Some minor and typographical changes were suggested to the minutes. They were subsequently approved unanimously as amended.

Survey/Questionnaire to Potential Adjacent Property Owners

The discussion on performing a survey to all potential neighbors of a trail, as requested by Channing Road residents, was further discussed at this meeting. Mr. Roth provided a summary of the approaches taken on screening, and distributed a report by CPAC summarizing common screening approaches used on trails. The report also included examples of places in Belmont where homes are screened from short pathways (e.g., pathway to Burbank school). The questionnaire utilized some examples from this report.

Mr. Roth provided reasoning behind why a solid sound-barrier wall was not included in the current version of the questionnaire. He explained it was primarily because it would limit current and future access, and because other trails we looked at did not exhibit a need to include such barriers for sound abatement of trail noise. Mr. Caterino countered that there were other cases where walls existed along trails, and distributed photos he found on the Internet. Discussion of those example walls indicated that they appeared to be either retaining walls or walls intended to protect trail users from adjacent highways, as opposed to walls installed between houses and a trail. It was generally agreed by the Committee that a wall would limit access to a trail, and therefore it was not included in the questionnaire. The Committee offered a reasonable compromise to have an open-ended fill-in-the-

blank where people can write in whatever they desire. Mrs. DeDeo suggested people include photos. The Committee was in general agreement about this approach, with the exception of Mr. Caterino.

Other changes were suggested to the questionnaire, such as striking the question regarding rail-with-trail approaches, and rewording some of the questions. The questionnaire was voted on, and the Committee voted in favor of adopting it as amended. The vote was unanimous with the exception of Mr. Caterino.

Discussion occurred about distribution of the survey, and the Committee agreed upon an approach of hand-delivering the questionnaire to households. All Committee members were expected to participate in this process. A list of homes was needed. The questionnaire would go out to all homes in Belmont that adjoined a potential Community Path route as currently identified by CPAC.

Evaluations of Potential Community Path Routes

Mr. Roth reviewed the status of the listing for potential Community Path routes. Some additions were made to this list since the last go-around, and a report and spreadsheet by CPAC summarizing this current listing of routes was distributed. Each route was categorized into a classification category per the CPAC document "Route Evaluation Definitions" dated 2013-07-23. This was to facilitate the Committee having a consistent vision and understanding for each potential route, thereby making the evaluation process consistent. Each route was also categorized by primary user type and by land ownership.

The potential routes near Waverly Square were discussed. These routes, labeled 1-A through 1-E, were to be evaluated as the first phase of the evaluation process. All Committee members were tasked to perform the evaluation according to the evaluation criteria spreadsheet adopted by CPAC. Each Committee member was asked to submit to the chairperson their evaluations of routes 1-A through 1-E by Sunday, Oct. 6. The initial scoring would then be reviewed at the Oct. 9th meeting. As part of this evaluation, it was recommended that Committee members view these potential routes first-hand if they have not done so already.

Mr. Burke provided a brief update on the Clay Pit Pond planning meeting that occurred recently. Mr. Burke reported strong interest in the CPAC's work by the Clay Pit Pond planning group.

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

The CPA preliminary application for this project, which would study the feasibility of such an underpass, received approval by the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Mr. Roth reported that the CPC requested a 5-minute briefing of this proposal at their Oct. 10 meeting. Mrs. DeDeo volunteered to draft information for this briefing. The final application is due on Nov. 1. Many items are required for this final application step, and these duties were distributed among the Committee members. Mr. Wheeler offered to circulate the Clay Pit Pond application as a possible template that could be used for this application. Mr. Wheeler also volunteered to draft a letter to the MBTA asking for their support of this project. It was pointed out by Mr. Dieckmann that since the MBTA was already concerned about pedestrian crossing of the tracks near Belmont High School, they were likely to support a measure that would dissuade such activity. Mr. Macchi suggested contacting the MBTA about the Old Colony Line to

see if pedestrian underpasses were installed after that rail-line went active again after being dormant for many years.

Mr. Dieckmann pointed out that the MBTA is now undergoing a Fitchburg Line Improvement Program. Part of this effort will install a cross-over track between the two rail-lines near Belmont High School and Alexander Avenue. That construction will suspend weekend service through Belmont for a number of months during the summers of 2014 and 2015. That window would provide a unique opportunity to coordinate with the MBTA about construction of a pedestrian/bicycle connection in that vicinity. Mr. Stanton pointed out that it might also be possible to improve the Concord Ave. underpass during this construction period.

News and Announcements and Upcoming Calendar

A new email list was set up for CPAC's purpose of distributing information about meeting notices and other events. The list was to allow for easier means of distribution for such notices, since it was becoming cumbersome to manually email so many people. People can subscribe to the email list by sending email to belmont-community-path@googlegroups.com.

Upcoming CPAC meetings are on October 9th and October 23rd.

The Committee will sponsor another CPAC Bicycle Ride again this year, and plans to hold it on Sunday 13 October at 2:00p. (Rain date is exactly one week following.) A flyer was distributed for this event. The casual ride will explore local trails and greenways, and be approximately 7 miles long. The route was described by Mr. Roth.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m., with a motion by Mr. Conroy and a second by Mr. Burke.