

Town of Belmont
Belmont Community Path Advisory Committee

2014 JUN -6 AM 9:05

Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED

Homer Municipal Building, 3rd Floor Art Gallery Room

23 April 2014

The meeting of the Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC) was called to order at 7:11 pm. CPAC members present included Jeff Roth (chair), John Dieckmann (vice-chair), Kevin Sullivan, Brian Burke, Sr., Tomi Olson, Vincent Stanton, Price Armstrong, and Cosmo Caterino. Jeffrey Wheeler from Community Development was present. Community members in attendance included Laurie Graham (Belmont Street, School Committee Member), Hank Thidemann (Warwick Road), and Paul Cobuzzi (Channing Road).

Minutes from Previous Meeting:

The minutes from the April 9th CPAC meeting were approved with minor amendments.

News and Announcements:

Jeff R. described the recently approved at-grade crossing in West Concord for the Bruce Freeman Rail-Trail. That may have implications for two locations in Belmont: Alexander Avenue, and near the Belmont Housing Authority. John D. reported on the April 12th meeting of the Golden Spike Meeting for the Mass-Central Rail-Trail. A speaker from the DCR addressed the group there regarding recent trail-development activities.

Discussion of the Final Report:

Jeff R. led the discussion noting that the draft of the Final Report is due to the Selectmen on April 30, 2014. The final recommendations were noted in last meeting including preferred routes and engineering feasibility studies.

The Committee reviewed Chapter 5 from an overview perspective. Vince reported that there are a large number of studies included in Chapter 5, and that the first page outlines the most important factors considered in deciding which studies to include (e.g., peer-reviewed studies or government-organized studies were preferred). Both quantitative and qualitative studies are included in this chapter. All studies cited can be found online and are in the open literature.

Price suggested that we could either move forward with a condensed four-page Chapter 5, or delay the Report until the Committee has an opportunity to more

comprehensively review and comment on the entire 40 pages of detailed summary of reports and studied. Since some of the reports had been discussed previously and were consistent with the CPAC's other research, and also to keep on schedule, the Committee decided to include this longer Chapter 5 in the draft that goes to the Selectmen. Vince suggested that we alert the Selectmen that Chapter 5 is still under review by the Committee. This motion was approved by a vote of 7 to 1.

The Committee next reviewed the consolidated recommendations from individual Committee members. This included addressing Cosmo's extensive comments, as well as those from John, Charlie, Tomi, and Jeff R. The Weston information would be addressed within the report, mentioning the context of those studies and also mentioning that Weston has now agreed to move forward with their section of the Mass-Central Rail-Trail.

The route evaluation criteria rubric used by the Committee to evaluate results will be more completely outlined within the document.

The MassDOT letter from Secretary Richard Davey, which presents the new policy supporting Rail-with-Trails, was reviewed. It was noted that MassDOT now has a policy to support Rail-With-Trail, assuming basic safety design standards are implemented, whereas previously Rail-With-Trail configurations were the exception to the rule. This is noted in the report.

Regarding the proposed underpass from Winn Brook to the High School, it was noted that that the entire Winn Brook neighborhood would benefit from this safety improvement.

It was suggested that if they so desired, volunteer groups could help the Town maintain a Community Path, to help offload work to the Town. The CPAC agreed by a wide consensus that the final responsibility of such maintenance would rest with the Town, though volunteer groups should be able to help perform this work as directed by the Town.

The hours of use for the Path would be consistent with DCR policy, which allows use after dark only for those passing through and using it as a means to travel somewhere, for example, to get home from work.

Laurie Graham, the School Committee liaison to CPAC, stated that she shared with the CPAC the minutes from School Committee meeting regarding the Library decision in 2013. She reiterated that the School Committee has final authority over use of the School lands. Issues that the School Department might have include access to the school, visual distraction, and the future expansion of the High School.

Vince suggested that we share with the School Committee all the routes currently under consideration. Brian suggested that we also furnish this information to the Permanent Building Committee.

Brian stated that he determined from his investigations that the Town-owned lands adjacent to the High School and recreational fields are also under the purview of the

Permanent Building Committee by Town bylaws, in addition to the School Committee. It was pointed out that irrespective of who has final authority, the CPAC would still desire support from the School Committee for any route that the Town decides to move forward with.

Laurie indicated that the School Committee is in general support of both a Community Path as well as the concept of a safety underpass between Winn Brook and the High School.

The Committee agreed to list all the appendices with title of each document and its URL link in the Final Report. This would shorten the report, and allow people to obtain the references from the CPAC webpage.

Vince suggested that Belmont Center is a crucial consideration for the Community Path, yet this topic is currently only briefly mentioned in this version of the Final Report. Therefore, some additional discussion will be added on the Belmont Center topic. The underpass discussion could also be moved to another part of the Final Report.

Tomi asked that the Arlington crime study be included in the Final Report. The Chair will forward Price the analysis Tomi shared with the Chair.

Price and Jeff R. will work on the Final Draft and circulate it to members of the Committee.

The current Final Report draft with the above updates, amendments, and changes will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen on or around April 30th.

CPAC Upcoming Schedule:

The next meeting of the Committee will be on May 14th. Following that, a Public Forum is tentatively scheduled for June 18th. A briefing to the Selectmen will occur sometime in June after Town Meeting.

Meeting Closing:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.