



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, June 15, 2023

TIME: 6:30 PM

PLACE: Town Offices **ADDRESS:** 50 Billerica Road **ROOM:** 200

Meeting Minutes

Members Attending: R. Klinkhammer, T. Gazda, R. Schneider, D. Antonelli, M. Carignan, J. Warhurst, J. Haouchine

Members Absent: J. Kelsey, S. Pustell

Public Present: None

6:30 Vote to Approve BPAC Public Input Policy (R. Klinkhammer)

- The committee viewed and discussed the Public Input Policy document developed by the Town Counsel per the direction of the Town Manager. The explanation is as follows:
 - *A recent Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) decision (Barron v. Kolenda) clarifies the limits that a local board/committee/commission may place upon public comment. The SJC found that a requirement that residents be respectful and courteous was a violation of Article 19 of the State Constitution and likely a violation of the 1st amendment to the United States Constitution. The court noted that while criticism of public officials may not be barred, such criticism may be required to be done in a peaceful and orderly manner, and that such speech may be restricted as to the time, place and manner. The Court noted that peaceful and orderly is not the same as respectful and courteous. Such restrictions can include "designating when and where a public comment session may occur, how long it may last, the time limits for each person speaking during the public comment section, and rules preventing speakers from disrupting others and removing those who do."*
- The intent is to introduce more order into the committee's meetings by organizing member comments in turn during negotiations of agenda items and not allow public input to keep the meeting orderly. The committee also agreed to retain a specific Public Comment agenda item and to limit further public comment to items identified as being open to public comment.
- A motion to approve the BPAC Public Input Policy was made by J. Warhurst and seconded by M. Carignan. Unanimous Vote. The policy is attached and will be posted on the BPAC webpage.

6:45 Public Input

- None

7:00 Announcements

- R. Schneider reported that Colin Spence was appointed as the new Chief of Police. The new Deputy Chief is Gary Hannagan.
- M. Carignan noted that a section of sidewalk on Wilson Street has been excavated but not repaved for some time, creating a pedestrian hazard.

7:20 Update on Uniform Trail Rules Signage (T. Gazda)

- T. Gazda informed the committee that per communication from C. Hempel of the Friends, the new rules signs have yet to be ordered. It sounds like the art work has not yet been finalized so that it can be sent to the manufacturer.

7:40 Update on Bench Donations

- The bench donation by the Charles River Wheelmen (CRW) in memory of Gardner “Sandy” Fell was installed by the DPW near the 6.8 mile marker DPW the week of June 5th. The contact at CRW has been informed of the installation.
- No communication from J. Alexander who was sent information on the bench donation process several months ago.
- An inquiry as to the cost of a donated bench was received from J. Santangelo via the Friends. Cost information on the most recent bench purchase was forwarded. No further communication received as of this date.

7:55 Discussion on adding Railroad Memorabilia to Brickhouse Trail Entrance and other possible places on the BFRT (R. Schneider)

- R. Schneider obtained a contact at CSX from the Town Manager’s office. The person is M. Twidle in the CSX Transportation Real Estate Department. The discussion was about the possibility of obtaining an intact section of track and ties near the Freight House on School Street that could be displayed along the BFRT, possibly at Cushing Place. Mr. Twidle indicated he would investigate this as well as any other memorabilia that could be donated for display on the BFRT in Chelmsford.

8:00 Update on Brick Donation Program for Carol Cleven Park (S. Pustell)

- S. Pustell was unable to attend the meeting. No update.

8:10 Discussion on how BPAC can work with LRTA for better access and ridership (J. Warhurst, Public Hearing)

- J. Warhurst made a presentation regarding his initial investigation of Pedestrian access to shopping, medical, worship and family and increasing safety by reducing vehicle speeds in town. The intent is to ultimately improve ways to move between Vinal Square and Chelmsford Center in a safe and time efficient manner. Getting across town, particularly getting from Vinal Square to Chelmsford Center need improvement as walking between the two locations can take 1.5 hours while biking can take about 25 minutes but there are some route and safety concerns with both methods. Bus service is not direct and involved takes a similar time compared to walking and involved a bus change at Drum Hill and a double fare (\$1.85 x 2). Taxi and Rideshare is also an option but can cost \$10 - \$15 each way.
- Further presented was the lack of safe sidewalks linking the two locations as well as weather related issues such as sidewalk clearing in winter and lack of in-route shelters/ rest points. The predictability of bus schedules and frequency is also an issue.
- The committee encouraged J. Warhurst to reach out to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) to gain more information on their plans for new and/or revised routes and to see how BPAC can offer helpful input. He agreed to try to attend LRTA Advisory Board meetings via Zoom to learn more about their plans and report back to the BPAC in the future.

8:20 Approval of Meeting Minutes from Regular Session on May 18, 2023

- A motion to approve the minutes of May 18, 2023 as amended was made by M. Carignan and seconded by J. Warhurst. Motion carries. Abstention by D. Antonelli.

8:30 Updates:

- **Trail Maintenance Program (B. Schneider)**
 - Trail is in good shape but needs brush cutting (DPW usually starts this in June).
 - R. Schneider reported on a Facebook posting about cyclists having issues using the tire pump at Cushing Place particularly with tires having the Presta valve vs the Schrader valve. He will email J. Kelsey to check out the pump head to see if it is working properly. It was also noted that cyclists can purchase an inexpensive adapter that allows the use of the Schrader valve on the pump head.
- **BPAC Account Status (T. Gazda)**
 - Current BPAC Account Balance is \$4,127.50 . The invoicing issue at USS has yet to be resolved but is in process. At some point multiple invoices will be received for payment.
- **BPAC email report (R. Klinkhammer)**
 - No Emails were received.

8:40 Future Meeting Dates and New Agenda Items

- Next Regular Session: July 20, 2023 (6:30 PM)
- New items for future meetings - Need to restore the Discussion Item for *Alternatives to Bench Donations* to the Agenda
- Dates and agenda for future meetings/work sessions

8:45 Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was made by D. Antonelli and seconded by M. Carignan. Unanimous vote.

Next Regular Session: July 20, 2023 (6:30 PM)



Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee recognizes the importance of active public participation at all public meetings, at the discretion of the Chair, on items on the official agenda such as public hearings or other published topics where public input is explicitly identified for a given agenda item. All comments from the public should be directed to or through the Chair once the speaker is recognized. Once recognized by the Chair, all persons addressing the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee shall state their name and address prior to speaking. It is the role of the Chair to set time limitations and maintain order during public meetings, as it is important that the Board/Commission allow themselves enough time to conduct their official town business.

If included on the meeting agenda by the Chair, public comment is a time when town residents can bring matters before the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee that are not on the official agenda. Comments should be short and to the point, with the Chair ultimately responsible to control the time available to individual speakers. To avoid Open Meeting Law violations, any matter presented under public comment will not be debated or acted upon by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee at the time it is presented. Such matter may be acted upon by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee later in said public meeting if properly included on the meeting agenda, or at a subsequent public meeting if included on that meeting agenda.

In order to allow a peaceable and orderly meeting, no person may offer comment without permission of the Chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the Chair, be silent. The Chair may require a person to be silent if they are addressing topics that are not germane to a particular agenda item, that exceed the time allotted for comments, or if such person is disrupting the proceedings of a meeting by interfering with the right of others to provide comment.

June 15, 2023