

CAMBRIDGE BICYCLE COMMITTEE DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 14, 2010

344 Broadway, 4th floor conference room, Cambridge, MA 02139
5:30 – 7:30 pm

Attending:

Fred Hewett (Watertown Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee), Ken Field (note taker), Megan Krey, Rob Van Dyk (Watertown Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee), Chris Porter, George Perkins, Cara Seiderman, (CDD), Catherine Hornby (Chair), Leonardi Aray (guest), David McNally, Ellen Aronson, Tom Meek, Kathy Murphy (CPD)

I. Introductions, Agenda Review, Approval of Minutes and Announcements

II. Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee & Watertown Branch

Fred Hewett, outgoing Chair of the Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, and Rob Van Dyk, a member of that Committee, joined us to discuss this project and open a dialog for collaboration. The following summarizes Fred's comments.

The Watertown Branch rail/trail conversion project dates back to the 1980's, and would provide a link between the Minuteman Path and the Charles River. Other new destinations along the route, such as the Arsenal Arts Center, have arisen in the intervening years. The corridor is about 4.5 miles. Underpasses along the way present unique design challenges.

Rail use along the corridor is virtually non-existent at this point. The section NE of Grove St is owned by the railroad. The remainder is owned by the Commonwealth. Preliminary design work has been done by VHB, a traffic and transportation consulting company.

The history of the project includes a filing for abandonment by the railroad in 2005, with opposition to the abandonment voiced by Watertown at that time. The railroad subsequently withdrew their abandonment filing.

One possibility is for a dual use "rail with trail" design, but this could be difficult due to width constraints along the right of way and in underpasses.

The trail terminates at the intersection of Arsenal & School Streets. One question is how to get to the Charles River from there.

The path construction would take place in 2 phases. Phase 1 is currently 25% complete. Phase 2 involves Cambridge. Issues include:

1. DCR needs to know that both Watertown & Cambridge are supportive
2. There needs to be a plan for acquisition of the path by the Commonwealth
3. Public awareness of the path to Alewife & the Charles River needs to be raised
4. We need to establish a communication link between our 2 committees.

The project in all likelihood can't move forward until the railroad right of way is formally abandoned. The first half of the right of way was purchased in 2000 for \$1.7M. The purchase price for the second

half might be similar (this is conjecture). One possible funding source is the Community Preservation Act, though this was voted down in Watertown.

Action items:

1. Joint letter of support from our Committees to the Commonwealth
2. Zoning restrictions in Watertown to protect the right of way from other development pressures

III. Projects

A. Accelerated Bridge Program: general bike/ped accommodation (MassDOT meeting July 13); Anderson Memorial Bridge (MassDOT meeting July 22)

Continued articulation of desire for bike facilities on bridges is important. The state replied in May to our April letter, stating that they will study the underpass concept we mentioned. It would be helpful if we could be sure that someone could represent the Committee at each meeting. George Perkins will attend the 7/22 MassDOT Anderson Bridge meeting.

There is a possibility that with the reconfiguration of the Anderson Bridge and the appropriate associated signal and operational changes to the Mem. Drive/JFK intersection that bicycle lanes may be added to JFK Street between Eliot St & Memorial Drive. The reconstruction of JFK between Elliot and Brattle that will take place this year includes bicycle lanes.

B. Street project updates

There is a MassDOT 25% Design Hearing 7/22 meeting at 7pm at the Volpe Center regarding the Broadway/Third St/Ames St. roadway reconstruction project. The committee approved sending a letter of support for the project, which was reviewed in detail previously by the committee. Catharine Hornby will attend this meeting.

Megan Krey reported on the Western Avenue project Advisory Committee. Option 3 (segregated bicycle lane) is favored by the Bicycle Committee; among the advantages of this design is the clear reduction in dooring risks and the support it provides for those not comfortable riding under current conditions. There was a discussion of the issue of maintenance and of the specific wording of a statement by the Bicycle Committee in favor of Option 3.

C. Dr. Paul Dudley White Bike Path Striping – volunteer opportunity

Ken Field reported that the Charles River Conservancy plans to initiate a project, using volunteer labor, to install center striping and directional arrows on the Paul Dudley White multiuse pathways along the Charles River. There will be an opportunity for Bicycle Committee members to help with this effort. The DCR has promised to provide the paint.

IV. Updates, Meetings

A. Construction and Public Works Update

See attached DPW report.

B. Police Report

Sgt. Murphy presented a report of traffic incidents involving bicyclists.

V. Subcommittee Work, etc.

A. Fall Bike Committee ride – Sunday October 3

Henry Lewis will work on this with help from other Committee members. Possible themes include African American History, Alternative Energy, Music, and the traditional "bow tie" ride.

VI. Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, August 10: City Council Transportation Subcommittee meeting chaired by Councilor Kelley.

Wednesday, August 11: Regular Bicycle Committee Meeting, potluck social, at the home of Richard Holton, 22 Lee Street, 5:30pm. (including possible ride to hear Ken Field's band at <http://www.titussparrowpark.org/> from 6:30-9:30pm in Boston's South End)