

Draft Minutes of the Cambridge Bicycle Committee Meeting, February 9, 2011

Present: George Perkins, Cara Seiderman, Catharine Hornby, Ellen Aronson, Walter Willett, Richard Holton, Viola Augustin, Chris Porter, Dave McNally, Ken Field, Jim Wilcox, Adam Serafin, Peter Stokes, Randy Stern, Scott Walker, Megan Krey
Visitors: Bill Connolly, Carole Sousa, Matt Schruppf, Baylor Bennett, Tegin Teich, Molly Savard, Madeleine deBlois,

The minutes of the of the January meeting were approved.

Ken, Walter, Joan and Steve Miller, who are retiring from the committee, were thanked for their many years of service. Walter spoke of how much things had changed in the 20 years, in particular, of how much closer the city had come to having a network of bike paths and lanes. Ken too spoke of the achievements, and of the need to keep in touch with the city councillors.

Massachusetts Avenue corridor

The upcoming meeting to discuss possible renovations to Mass Ave between Harvard Sq and Porter Sq had been scheduled for a time that will clash with the next Bike Committee Meeting. Catherine has requested that the meeting time be changed. George reported that he had consulted plans that suggested that most of the carriageway was wide enough to accommodate two traffic lanes, on-street parking, and a bicycle lane in both directions. Cara reported that there were tentative plans to implement a federally funded study on this part of Mass Ave. (this still needs to be confirmed, we should know by sometime in March). The study would involve the drawing of temporary bike lanes; their effect on bike and vehicle behavior would then be recorded. The committee expressed its hope that if the lanes appeared to increase cyclists' safety, they would be made permanent. (The study may also be conducted in parts of Prospect St.)

Spring Bike Ride

George presented plans for the Spring Bike Ride, scheduled for May 21st. The theme will be Music in Cambridge. George circulated a list of places with musical connections that might be featured on the ride. There was discussion of whether it would be possible to organize live music during the ride: perhaps along the way, perhaps on bikes. The ride will be preceded by the Commuter Appreciation Day on May 20th. It was suggested that advertisements for the ride could be given out then.

Police Report

Kathy Murphy reported that there have been four reported crashes involving pedestrians in the last month, but none involving cyclists. She reported that a police presence at junctions reporting numerous accidents (for instance, that of Mass Ave and Vassar St) had typically, but not always, led to a large reduction in accidents.

Public Perceptions of Cyclists

There was a discussion of public perceptions of dangerous riding by cyclists, engendered by a paragraph in Cllr. Henrietta Davis's newsletter which complained about cyclists failing to respect pedestrians' rights on crosswalks. It was accepted that there were some problems here, especially in the perception of a risk, and that there was a need for greater awareness by both cyclists and pedestrians of the need to accommodate each other, especially with increasing numbers of cyclists. It was suggested that it would be good to talk through these issues with the city councillors, both individually and as a group. Dave offered to contact them. There was discussion of the effectiveness of ticketing offending cyclists, and of whether less confrontational methods (for instance, warnings) would be more effective. Cara talked of the 'Bicycle Ambassadors' that are employed by some cities to provide advice and to set good examples; she will investigate how these schemes work.

Wayfinding Survey

Cara reported that there have been 21 responses to the 'Wayfinding Survey' seeking to establish the best guidance route between Inman Sq, Central Sq and the BU bridge. There will be a final call for input; using the information gathered the city would be in a position to implement signage.

Snow

There was general wailing and gnashing of teeth over the recent snowfalls. The DPW was congratulated for working to remove much of the snow, and for filling pot-holes. There was discussion of whether more could be done to improve sightlines by removing large snow piles, and to discourage the parking of cars in places where snow was narrowing the lanes. It was noted that pot-holes and blocked cycle lanes could be reported to the DPW.

Updates

Cara gave a brief update on outstanding projects. The designs for the various bridges are still being finalized.