

## Cambridge Pedestrian Committee minutes - September 22, 2011

Committee members attending: Debby Galef, Robin Finnegan, Pete Kane, Sean Peirce, Helen Rose, Joe Rose

Guest: Jed Jeng

City staff: Rosalie Anders, Cara Seiderman

The meeting began with introductions. Guest Jed Jeng; he's more interested in cycling than pedestrian issues but wanted to get a sense of what the committees are doing.

Helen briefed the committee on the Kendall Sq. Project meetings she's been attending. All agree more retail is needed, particularly a small grocery store and a drug store, the previous one having closed some years ago when the area housed fewer people. The intersection of 3rd St. and Broadway has been much discussed. Some want a reopening of the connection between 3rd and Main Streets. This would allow the urban ring transit system to pass through, but that's not likely any time soon. Another suggestion was to close Wadsworth St. The area could use better wayfinding. Sean mentioned a conference he'd been to where cars as a percentage of mode share was discussed. Cambridge's is very low and this is hard for some to imagine. Rosalie said there's talk of making Kendall Sq. "green". Sean volunteered to write a letter for the committee.

Huron Ave. meetings are to begin in Jan. or Feb. There will be a full reconstruction of Fresh Pond Parkway from Concord Ave. to Huron Ave. The latter is so wide because trolleys used to travel down it.

There's also a Central Sq. Project, which is an attempt to figure out how to enliven and revitalize the square, where there are quality of life issues for pedestrians.

State Legislation: Rosalie briefed the committee on various bills before the state legislature. The speed limit bill, which would reduce the 30 mph speed limit on urban roads to 25 mph is currently in the committee on the 3rd reading. One question is how to define "urban road." Denise Provost from Somerville is pushing hard for this bill.

The senior safety zones bill would allow local governments to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph near senior housing.

The vulnerable road users bill would allow for higher penalties when pedestrians and cyclists are hit, particularly if alcohol is involved. This bill might be tacked onto another one.

The photo enforcement bill has been re-filed. Rosalie was not hopeful of its passage.

Discussion is needed on sidewalk shoveling liability. As it stands now, if one shovels or salts the sidewalk and someone else falls, the homeowner can be sued. If there's no attempt to shovel, no suit is allowed, despite any local requirements for property owners to clear their sidewalks..

There was a discussion regarding cyclists and the road rage they sometimes incur. There are more and more cyclists these days and many articles, including those in the Boston Herald, are critical. The Cambridge Police have been out in force recently, ticketing many cyclists. Pete mentioned a project that was promoted by a GSD student last year which had cyclists wearing signs saying "Hi Cars". The point was to engage with other road users and show humanity. Pete did not know the results. There are bike classes being conducted in Boston in conjunction with Hubway, the bicycle share program, and there will also be ones in Cambridge next spring, when Cambridge's Hubway stations are planned to come on line. Joe suggested using a Cambridge alert message to communicate with the public about these issues.

Reports from the 'hood: Rosalie mentioned Cambridgeport History day, for which residents write down information about their houses and post the signs, which remain up for a week. Many people wander around, it's all interesting, and a great community building experience. This will take place Oct. 1, when there will also be several historic impersonators in the neighborhood. Debby mentioned an Agassiz neighborhood walk this coming Sun., Sept. 25, led by Charlie Sullivan of the Cambridge Historical Commission.

Cara reported that construction updates are on the DPW website. The Craigie dam and bridge won't be finished until next construction season because of additional utility work that needs to be completed. The pedestrian bridge from North Point to Charlestown is under construction. And the pedestrian bridge by the tracks - from North Station to North Point - is under discussion.

Cara mentioned [www.streetsblog.org](http://www.streetsblog.org) and [www.streetfilms.org](http://www.streetfilms.org). She'd seen some of the latter at the GSD recently and thought they were great. A Loeb fellow at Harvard, Aaron Naparstek, is the initiator of Streetsblogs. Eran suggested that some of the films might be shown to those involved in reconstruction projects - or that perhaps the committee could sponsor a showing of some of them. Helen said maybe this could be our holiday meeting, possibly held at the Stata Center at MIT. November's meeting was also suggested.

Next meeting: Oct. 27. Juan Avendano will give a traffic calming overview.