

Draft minutes for Nov. 19, 2009 Cambridge Pedestrian Committee meeting

Members in attendance: Amanda Trombley, Debby Galef, Larry Parnell, Joseph Rose, Alan Greene, Eran Segev, Alex Linthicum, David Loutzenheiser, Stephen Keen, Sean Peirce, Rona Gregory, Robin Finnegan

City staff in attendance: Cara Seiderman, Rosalie Anders, Bill Dwyer, Sue Clippinger

Guests: Conrad Crawford (DCR), Amy Getchell and Stephanie Boundy (Mass. DOT)

Agenda: Discussion with DCR representative Conrad Crawford

Update on DCR responsibilities and activities; specific issues and questions for Cambridge

Updates, Projects, Announcements

A. Reports from the 'hood: Committee members share things of interest to walking, etc. that are going on in their neighborhoods

B. Construction updates

C. State Conflict of Interest Law

Subcommittees Meet

Subcommittees Report briefly back to larger comm.

Upcoming Meetings

Conrad Crawford of Mass. DCR introduced himself and explained what he does. He works in the partnership office, which matches privately raised funds for small scale DCR projects.

Amy Getchell works for the accelerated bridge program (hereinafter ABP), as a liaison between the state DOT, DCR and the cities of Boston and Cambridge. Her office has done bike and pedestrian counts along the Charles River Basin.

Stephanie Boundy deals with public meetings and notices and traffic advisories.

The Pedestrian Committee had sent out questions which were answered by our guests.

1. Concerning DCR's continuing responsibilities in Cambridge: the river roads/parkways and paths. Vehicle bridges have been transferred to the DOT, Weeks footbridge still DCR. O'Brien Hwy. now DOT. Study to begin soon on whether all parkways should be transferred to DOT. Decision, in which Cambridge may be involved, to be made Nov. 2010.

2. Concerning the status of a bicycle-pedestrian plan: Halverson is the contractor. Contract to be co-managed by DCR and DOT. Two alternatives will be produced for each bridge project in the Basin. There will be a public process eventually. Currently detailing existing conditions.

3. Charles River Basin Master Plan: newly reconstructed paths in various places along river, Weeks Bridge has been studied, focus on docks at Community Boating as part of Esplanade Centennial. Magazine Beach pedestrian bridge over Memorial Drive has been designed and is out to bid as part of ABP. To be completed around mid-2011. There will be temporary pedestrian signal during construction. \$35 million has been set aside for pedestrian bridges in the new Charles River Basin: North Bank Bridge bid came in under estimate. South Bank and Inlet Bridges info will be sent to committee. Charles River Conservancy has raised money for a skate park and area clean up.

4. DCR is no longer designing bridges. ABP is entirely under the DOT. Once completed, pedestrian bridges will be returned to the DCR.

5. Discussion regarding a Land Blvd. crossing near the Longfellow Bridge. Alan Greene feels it's unsafe and DCR is aware of problem. Unclear if it will be dealt with as part of bridge project.

6. Signal timing on DCR parkways: suggestion that it could be more favorable to pedestrians. DCR would like more info and a smaller group to look at issue in detail.

7. Hawthorne St./Memorial Drive crosswalk: DCR thought the city had requested the crosswalk but city does not at all approve of design as it's too dangerous. Some kind of traffic control device is needed for pedestrian safety. No crosswalk would be better than current one, according to Sue Clippinger.

D. Loutzenheiser said pedestrian committee wanted LPI on Memorial Drive crossings at JFK, Western, and River. There's a need to improve signals. This is all part of Halverson contract. River and Western bridges are part of the ABP. All to be coordinated with city's Western Ave. project. Cambridge recently learned it owns Memorial/Western intersection.

R. Gregory pointed out that in Cambridge, DCR parkways separate citizens from green space: 4 lanes and hard to cross. Harvard and MIT are partners but don't necessarily have same point of view as citizens.

A. Trombley asked whether DCR would continue with snow clearance. This coming winter will be the same as the last. DOT's snow and ice working group will make recommendations for future.

R. Anders asked about improvements to sidewalk (where there's no pedestrian access) on upstream side of Longfellow bridge during construction. Answer is that a new sidewalk is part of the final design. A temporary sidewalk may be added, possibly at the expense of the bike lane.

A. Greene wanted to know whom to contact: Conrad Crawford at DCR: Conrad.crawford@state.ma.us and Stephanie Boundy at DOT: Stephanie.boundy@state.ma.us.

Neighborhood updates:

D. Galef brought up Oxford/Wendell intersection in the Agassiz neighborhood. New signs are up on Oxford St., both directions, not on Wendell. Currently no plans for zebra stripes. Not all drivers recognize crosswalk.

C. Seiderman said city is studying impacts of zebra lines. Interns are gathering data. Can't just add zebra lines to existing raised crosswalk. Yield rates and speeds are important.

S. Keen said Inman Sq. has become much more pedestrian friendly. New signal timing has helped.

J. Rose: Fulkerson and Binney signal now functioning (as opposed to blinking). May need re-timing.

E. Segev said Volpe crosswalk's flashing lights are often out of order.

Construction updates: B. Dwyer

Prentiss and Frost Streets: a total reconstruction of these two streets, plus part of nearby Oxford St., to include sidewalks, will begin after Thanksgiving.

New sidewalk ramps at Concord and Walden.

Walden and Sherman intersection will be made accessible.

Brattle St.: city doing utility work. Project is behind schedule due to poor weather this year during construction season.

Prospect St.: finishing up sidewalk work.

Cedar St. is near completion.

R. Gregory asked about rubber sidewalk on Rindge Ave. City has not received much feedback. Assumption is that it's OK. And much easier to repair.

State conflict of interest law discussion:

Committee members are subject to it even though unpaid. All need to sign paper acknowledging receipt of rules. Main relevance to committee is that members cannot later be paid for working on project on which they also worked as committee member. Advice may be obtained from city attorney and/or state office.

New open meeting law will clarify that committee cannot have deliberative/substantive discussions over e-mail. Logistics are OK.

Sub-committee reports:

Outreach: will be doing internal survey on billboard slogans.

PVIS: Hawthorne/Brattle intersection (of last month) could use sharrows, making bicyclists more obvious to drivers.

Mass. Ave. at Wendell/Shepard needs a no right turn on red sign for Wendell.

Sub-committee will try to set up meeting with Jeff Parenti to discuss various issues.

Next month: holiday potluck, city council to be invited.