

Pedestrian Committee Meeting Minutes- September 24, 2015

Attendees: Cara Seiderman, Debby Galef, Helen Rose, Rose Billeci, Jodie Cohen-Tanugi, Andrea Yoder, Joe Rose (note-taker)

- Didn't approve last meeting's minutes as there aren't enough attendees for quorum (quorum is 7).

Parking Day Recap:

- Table was located on Brattle Street near City Sports.
- Rose was in attendance and said it went well. Debby G. and Magda set up; Debby spent many hours there. There were a lot of commuters, but not many local residents. Overall, it was well attended.
- There weren't enough committee members who could volunteer and had some last minute, unexpected cancellations.
- Next time, we should have a table in conjunction with another group to show a larger presence.
- An added benefit of participating was having the added publicity for the committee through our presence as well as all of the event literature.

June Walk:

- Discussed where to have our June walk. Thought is should not be East Cambridge as several of our past walks had been there.
- The idea of the walk is to explore on foot places people don't know that much about, as well as to highlight things that are new in the city.
- North Cambridge is a tough option as the walk is all on Mass Ave which tends to be loud.
- The new developments in Alewife including the bridge project (currently in a feasibility phase) were suggested.

Construction Updates:

- Bill Dwyer was not in attendance at this evening's meeting, but we still discussed possible construction areas/issues.
- The DPW has an e-mail update/newsletter, so if anyone wants to be better informed, they may sign up for that.
- Joe asked about the sidewalk widening on Fulkerson Street next to Ahern field as it seems to have just come to a standstill.
- There was a question raised about simultaneous closing of Garden St and Concord Ave for construction.
- Jodie inquired as to whether Kirkland street was going to be dug up in the near future along with the fact that there seem to be some missing cross-walks along the street.
- Cara took the action to email Bill our questions and comments. [*Update: Fulkerson is waiting on some poles to be moved; Kirkland is delayed due to Beacon Street construction timing but is still on the list*]

NB: The following information about the presentation was forwarded by MIT for the Committee:

Here's the link to our presentation:

2015-09-21_PUD5_Bike and Ped.pdf

Password: 63wGF4YCK2jb

<https://kendallsq.egnyte.com/dl/OvTFfxjFRJ>

Also, here's our Kendall Square Initiative website: <http://kendallsquare.mit.edu/>.

It has all of our major presentations and submittals.

MIT Kendall Square Planning (MIT PUD):

- Committee reviewed the set of plans for this project making notes as to positives, negatives, comments and questions.
- Committee would like to see ground floor plans to address connection to Main Street and the main campus. There was a general lacking in the proposal for this aspect.
- The focus of MIT's presentation was inward with a focus on interior space and didn't address the street side.
- City of Cambridge arranged for the cross-walks to be added and placed in Kendall Square on Main Street between 3rd and the Longfellow Bridge (not MIT).
- MIT proposes to cantilever several new buildings over/near 3 historic buildings.
- Committee wanted to know what the experience was going to be like for pedestrians on Main Street.
- In reviewing the interior plaza, it was designed to be shared space, but doesn't seem conducive to that idea. There are lots of obstacles with several squeezed pinch points and unclear sight lines.
- Cara suggested that the committee talk about goals of design in our comments.
- Several comparisons were drawn to the plaza area in front of Harvard's Science Center.
- Committee suggested adding periphery paths for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- It was noted that MIT was planning to handle mitigation off-site for this project.
- Plaza seemed to be mainly hardscape with little grass. Committee wanted to know what type of surface materials were to be used.
- Committee suggested adding vibrant retail and felt the space needed to be livable by adding perhaps a grocery store. Made note that Roche Bros. in downtown Boston was doing well.
- MIT plan indicates 3' of soil for trees. Committee wasn't sure if this was adequate especially over parking structure.
- Committee noted the increased shade that all the tall buildings would add along Main Street.
- Committee was in favor of MIT rebuilding the MBTA head house as part of the scope.
- Committee noticed there was no real cohesion to the building designs. It was suggested that perhaps the architects each worked independently without any collaboration between buildings. Looks very disjointed and piecemeal. "Looming" was one adjective used for the buildings.
- Committee was unclear from the drawing as to what Main street, street level, would look like.
- MIT needs to make an effort to have an active ground floor presence.

- MIT needs to add more focus on the exterior Main street aspect of the project, not just the interior shared space.
- Committee suggests adding wayfinding signs in the area as part of this project.

Broad Canal Project

- Committee reviewed MIT plans for building on Broadway with retail along Broad canal area.
- Committee felt there needed to be outdoor seating not related to the restaurants and food.

Committee Planning for Next Year

- Committee wanted to continue its participation in public events- summer walks, parking day.
- Investigate condition of sidewalks across the city.
- Have someone come to a meeting to discuss signaling.
- Have someone update the committee on the status of the Inman Square Road Audit.
- Have someone update the committee on the status of Northpoint and McGrath Highway.
- Cara suggested we start thinking about what we want to do for December's meeting.