

Pedestrian Committee Meeting, December 17, 2009

Members in attendance: Robin Finnegan, Brian Culver, Sean Peirce, Kobena Bonney, Alan Greene, Amanda Trombley (chair), Eran Segev, Rona Gregory, Helen Rose

City staff in attendance: Rosalie Anders, Cara Seiderman

Bridge Meetings: City staff Seiderman had visuals of the North Bank bridge. Project came in significantly under budget.

Seiderman went to a meeting on the Anderson Memorial Bridge (North Harvard Street to JFK Street bridge), that was a listening session. The presenters did not have an official proposal, but talked about the structural integrity of the bridge and what needed to be done. The bridge is 100 years old, but the basic structure is in "acceptable" condition. The ornamental pieces are in worse shape and need replacement.

Harvard has done work on traffic analysis which they gave to the MassDOT to change the bridge traffic from four lanes to three lanes with bike lanes. This would change the intersections at both ends, including possibly requiring elimination of all left turns. There is some concern about where the trips would go. There is a meeting between Boston, Cambridge, Harvard, and MassDOT next week.

Discussion about physical changes to bridge to widen it, and this is possible (including leaving the bridge looking fundamentally the same). Some people concerned with historical issues expressed unofficial support for the idea. If the bridge is widened, potentially there could be cycle tracks or wider sidewalks. MassDOT people threw out a very large number (\$20M for 20 feet of widening, 10 feet on either side). One question remains: the cost if the bridge was not widened as much.

Clear desire for better pedestrian crossings on the Storrow Drive side of the North Harvard bridge. Some discussion of tightening the approaches. One idea is to cut a hole in the bridge abutment and make a mini tunnel for pedestrians and cycles.

Additional public meeting requested before 25% design hearing. MassDOT under pressure to move things forward as quickly as possible, yet it would behoove them to do it right.

Weeks Footbridge is staying with the DCR, the rest of the bridges are now under ownership of MassDOT.

Western Avenue project: due for major reconstruction, and Seiderman would like a pedestrian committee rep for the citizen's advisory board. Member Culver will be working on the project because of his work duties. Member Weintraub (not in attendance) is the pedestrian committee member who lives closest, but member Segev could possibly represent the committee.

Western Ave & River Street bridges also due for reconstruction. The city recently found out that they own the Western Ave & Memorial Drive intersection, after believing (for many years) that

the state controlled that intersection.

CCTV intern wants to record a Pedestrian Committee meeting. We discussed that his might be a better idea in the summertime on one of our walks and have the potential of being more interesting than recording one of our meetings. We will revisit this again next spring. Anders will get back to her.

Member Bonney talked about the difficulty using crosswalks as a blind person, specifically at Mass Ave & Inman St & Pleasant St. We will look at the audio-guide crossings at a future meeting.

Community Outreach Subcommittee has been working on ideas for billboards, and they would like suggestions. Anders had a list that she distributed. The signage department would do the "heavy lifting". We should have three or four top choices.

Segev is in touch with an iPhone App developer, where phone would go into "safe" mode if you're going faster than a certain speed.

City Climate Change Summit: members Segev and Finnegan attended.

Started Saturday 8:30 - 3:00. Agenda that went back & forth between everyone in the same room (city council chamber) and breakout sessions. Once you were in one discussion group you stayed in that group the whole day. The organizers assigned people to groups. Speaker focused on what city has already been doing. Discussions supposed to focus on perception of problem and how others in the community see things. Is there enough being done at city level. Brainstorming ideas. Went back to main chamber. 100 delegates plus volunteers. Each discussion group (12 groups) had 3 minutes to report to entire group. Note takers at each section. Vote on ideas on January 23, perhaps more media attention.

Segev wasn't sure about whether group should be discussing items offline or due to public meeting laws if all conversation should happen in a public forum.

Some discussion about increasing the parking permit fees in the city.

Segev wants feedback, and the general consensus is that ideas can be sent through email, but no ongoing discussion.

Next meeting: January 28, 2010, 6pm, City Hall Annex