

Cambridge Pedestrian Committee – Oct 22, 2020 Draft Minutes (Zoom)

Attendance

Committee Members: Wade Smith, Robin Bonner, Sean Peirce, Jenny Turner-Trauring, Olivia Turner, Magda McCormick, Pam McLemore, Theresa Tobin, Debby Galef, Helen Rose, Angie Meltsner, Erik Tillman, Sandy Goldberg, Elka Kuhlman

Staff: Cara Seiderman (CDD), Greg Hanafin (CDD), Brian McLane (DPW)

Guests: Ana Hurka-Robles

1. Agenda Review, Zoom Meeting Protocols

- a. Magda moves to approve last month's minutes, seconded by Angie, no objections

2. Snow Operations (DPW) - Brian McLane

- a. We average 44-48" of snow a year/season. Snow predictions come late Oct/early Nov. This year's salters will have liquid tanks, sprayed with DPW's brine. Brine helps with 30-40 lbs/ lane mile (lower than full salt dusting) and helps reduce salt scatter/product waste. This year DPW will be using treated salt but salt barn is currently full so maybe a few storms until we see - works better and quicker to melt the snow. Salt Brine barn has 15K gallon capacity (currently completely full).
 - i. Sandy: with truck advancements, how can we move beyond the shovel for the sidewalk (machines/new tech)? Contributes to assumption that cars come first before pedestrians.
 1. Brian: Biggest issue is that the machines still require man power to run, that we don't have (full time and contractor staff). We have Bobcats that go through on main thoroughways and try to clear our pedestrian ramps and around schools. We would love if cars weren't on the street but we are doing it for life safety - for Ambulances and Fire trucks. Some of the other cities can ship their snow away but we are more short on space. We try to focus on pedestrian ramps.
- b. Brine vs salt - Cara asked for more info on chloride loading. A typical brine application is 30 lb/lane mile and typical salt is 140-400 lb/lane mile depending on the storm. Salt needs to be reapplied prior to a storm as well. Brine will lower amount of salt that can get into waterways at beginning of storm and when we put in the tanks, we add the activated "juice" to the salt prior to the salt hitting the ground, which will also decrease amount of salt needed (reduces time for melt).
- c. Ops: City is broken into 5 sections, in each section are 2-3 managers and many other contractors, etc. This year we will be concentrating on restaurant seating that is currently on sidewalk/road - will probably be done during daytime vs night.
- d. Prediction for this year: below to slightly below avg snowfall. Temps slightly above avg.

- e. Milan: Is heavy equipment necessary at parks, do all paths need to be cleared/salted? Brian: We are trying to reduce salt. We do think about this - but we do want to open all park paths. The equipment may be the only one that can handle that volume of snow. We put out wooden stakes at parks, but they quickly disappear. Workers don't always know they are hitting grass.
- f. Magda: Are there regulations on what private contractors can use on streets (like dead ends)? Brian: We don't have a lot of control because they are doing private work. The best we can do is educate. We distribute pamphlets to areas under new construction to talk about salt usage. We want them to use less salt, but private contractors don't want to come back to the location and someone who slips and fall can come back to private contractor for improper snow removal.
- g. Magda: How many people are usually in the trucks - compost program was suspended for now because of COVID, will that impact snow? Brian: No - one guy, one truck for entire snow storm. Will have cleaning procedures post-storm for truck turnover.
- h. Elka: How far away should a pedestrian be from a brine truck? Brian: brine trucks are just in drive lanes of major roads - don't stand directly behind it but you won't get hit with the brine if the truck goes past you. They spray straight down on the roadway - there can be some mist that can be problematic for a windshield.
- i. Milan: mentioned when a private driveway is done and snow from driveway is moved back to road. Brian: it is a battle, if we can find contractor we make them reclean road. Otherwise we will do it again. Bigger issue is when people clean off cars and put their snow in the bike lane. We try to hit bike lanes frequently after storm to help with bike traffic.
- j. Cara: Talk more about why we don't clear our sidewalks the same as other cities. Cambridge sidewalks in particular are very difficult/narrow/even/full of trees and street furniture - can't just get in a bobcat and go down the sidewalk. The amount of equipment and time is very difficult to have ready to go to clear sidewalks and have enough equipment. We do prioritize bus stops and ramps for pedestrians.
 - i. Debby: Have looked at this in previous subcommittees - many sidewalks just can't handle machinery. SeeClickFix is now used to report unshoveled sidewalks.
 - ii. Elka: What is response to SeeClickFix when it is a private house that is unshoveled? Brian: We have enforcement officers - 1st time they get a warning, 2nd time and after: \$50 fine. Have some success but some do not pay attention and there is not much recourse for those except fines.
 - 1. Jenny: what is turnaround time on tickets? Some aren't looked at. Private curb cuts also don't get cleared. Brian: Timing varies. We can't clear private, will look into it but we can't really do it.
- k. For winter/pedestrian repair issues, please put them in SeeClickFix so they can keep track of list and add to list that DPW missed themselves.
 - i. Elka: Should we report potholes in the streets? Brian: Yes, report potholes.

- I. Public Comment - no public comment

3. Project Updates

- a. Brian: finished up a bunch of streets, working on Huron Ave from Raymond to Concord (raised intersections at Holly and at Raymond) - almost completed, end of Nov - to reduce traffic streets and give a better pedestrian experience. Redeisel, Brewster, Highland, Sixth St - completed by end of this week. Gore St kicking off in next 1-2 months. Franklin St - kick off in Winter to finish up utility work and sidewalks done next summer. Glocken Field - little league should be able to play in Spring. New accessible park at Danehy park - groundbreaking this winter.
- b. Cara: Ames St project is complete. Quincy DeWolf corridor - Harvard is implementing - will include separated contra flow bike lane. Binney St - will be done in phases, piece between 6th and Broadway was supposed to start this year but they are doing a quick build for bike and take out median in prep for the full reconstruction. Full reconstruction delayed because of sub infrastructure work to be done for transfer station. Harvard Sq - quick build complete. Inman Sq - still has a lot of utility work.
- c. Other City projects
 - i. Upcoming info on River Street starting next week - virtual open house with an explanatory story map and videos (per Olivia, should be released next week 10/27, a few days in advance of the public meeting - join ½ hour early for walkthrough before Q&A period).
 - ii. Port project: all streets in The Port. Will have citizen advisory committee getting underway soon.
 - iii. Milan: is the pedestrian committee involved in shared streets project? Cara: we have discussed in previous meetings. At the moment there won't be additional shared streets. Can submit as an idea for a meeting topic if we want to discuss as committee.
 - iv. Wade: Are they going to continue shared streets once snow starts to come? Cara: still being discussed.

4. Development Projects

- a. 325 Binney was approved by Planning Board (see PB website for details).
- b. MIT Volpe Redevelopment - MIT will be presenting pre-application package at upcoming Planning Board meeting 10/27. There was a community meeting recently, Cara has asked them to come to a future ped/bike/joint meeting but hasn't been scheduled yet.
 - i. We looked at the info available on Volpe website. Looked at Site Circulation slide to see major streets impacted. Thinking about how to have additional connections (full streets or bike/ped) to break up huge site. New Volpe building being constructed in NW corner of diagram (on Binney between 5th and 6th streets).
- c. Public Comment - none

5. Pedestrian Subcommittee work

- a. Sean - started email exchange on problem intersections and signal timing.

Subcommittee members may “adopt” an intersection and go out and do some observation on what is wrong and what might be able to be done. Will bring suggestions to committee.

- b. Other topics to think about: Lighting
- 6. Other updates and next meetings**
- a. Next meeting is 11/19
 - b. April meeting is during April vacation, may need to move