



Transportation Advisory Committee Minutes February 28, 2023

Members in Attendance: Laura Davis (Chair); Nick Pappas, Mark Gailus; Phil Posner, Staff person: Erin Stevens, Selectboard Liaison: Terri Ackerman

- The meeting was called to order with a roll-call vote at 7:00 PM

The minutes of the meeting of January 10, 2023 were discussed and a change to the draft meeting minutes was proposed by Mr. Gailus. A motion was made by Mr. Pappas, seconded by Mr. Gailus and the members voted unanimously to accept the minutes, as amended.

Ms. Davis then presented her chair report. Ms. Davis advised the committee that the letters of support for the trolley funding by the state were sent out but no response had been received. Ms. Davis mentioned that Richard Fahlander was in attendance at the meeting and that Mr. Fahlander informed her that June was the likely target date for a 'formal' bridge opening ceremony for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management is working with the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee to organize a celebration. Ms. Davis related her conversation with the chair of the West Concord Advisory Committee about placing temporary 'wayfinding signs' directing people to various places along the trail (e.g. NARA Park, Acton; West Concord Train Station). The Trail Opening would also be a good opportunity for the TAC to meet and speak with members of the public about transportation issues in town. Ms. Davis mentioned that Dan Schragger, Mark Gailus and she had submitted comments as private citizens regarding the proposed large project at Hanscom Airfield but that the matter was not on the agenda for the current meeting. Chairperson Davis also mentioned that Senator Barrett is very engaged on the Hanscom Field issue. Finally, Ms. Davis mentioned that she is working on a 'bike parking assessment' idea to note where bike parking is located in town. Ms. Davis then showed a slide show of photos taken of various bike racks and geotagged locations. The idea is to locate the facilities and catalog the entity responsible for the racks. Mr. Posner volunteered to take photos – identify locations of the bike parking West Concord. Ms. Davis will investigate "bicycle parking guidance" in other communities.

Ms. Stevens then presented an update on the Comprehensive Transportation Study. The RFP is in the final stages of preparation. The staff hopes to have proposals received in April and a decision made by May. The present budget for the RFP is at or under \$100,000.00.

Ann Sussman of the West Concord Advisory Committee made a presentation regarding that committee's work related to transportation and bike and pedestrian safety in West Concord. Ms. Sussman related a number of car crashes that have occurred in West Concord. She recommended that the town adopt an approach to safety called "Evidence Based Design" and "Evidence Based Transit Planning." She also recommended that the town seek data from MassDOT on an annual basis, as opposed to an every 5 year basis. Ms. Sussman then presented a

slide show depicting various pavement treatment measures such as visible crosswalks; cobblestones in the center area of a street; speed humps, used in various places to promote safety. Ms. Sussman related that parents she has spoken with are 'afraid to let their children walk and bike to school'. She asked that a member of the TAC attend the next meeting of the WCAC to discuss how the committees could work together to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety which they are calling "beyond complete streets.". Mr. Posner volunteered to attend the March meeting of the WCAC. He then asked Ms. Sussman if WCAC had any direct communication with the DPW about the specific work WCAC would like to see occur. Ms. Sussman stated that she discussed the matter with Aaron Miklosko, Highway and Grounds Superintendent for Concord Public Works. Mr. Gailus recommended that we have a clear plan to define and collect the data appropriate to make good decisions. Mr. Pappas concurred. Ms. Stevens then related that she spoke to Officer Ron Holsinger who related that most of the data available to the Concord Police Department comes through the state system but noted that the data is accurate but may not be completely inclusive because the Police may not have been called or because the accidents are called in to the State Police. Mr. Gailus reemphasized that keeping track of the 'quality' and the 'qualifications on' the raw data. Mr. Pappas then asked "who is to be responsible for collecting and assessing the data" and then what do we do with it? Mr. Posner asked about how the police department's data is organized and how it compares with the state data. Ms. Stevens stated that the system was "clunky" and difficult to use to answer various questions. Mr. Posner volunteered to check into how other municipalities address the issue and whether the UMass transportation center had any information or guidance as to how to obtain and use crash data for addressing safety concerns.

The next agenda item is a discussion of winter maintenance of the town's transportation facilities. Ms. Davis presented a slide show depicting various sidewalks, the bridge over the Nashoba Brook, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, the Train Station and other locations in West Concord after the late February snow event. Ms. Stevens and members related their impressions of the snow clearing efforts in town. A discussion of plowing and other issues related to the stone dust sidewalk on Monument Street was begun by Mr. Pappas. Mr. Gailus suggested that we investigate the locations of and issues related to sidewalk surfaces and condition in town as a committee.

Ms. Davis related that she had reached out to Nat Welch and Richard Fahlander regarding plowing/winter maintenance of the Rail Trail. According to Mr. Welch, plowing was not part of the planning for the budget for the BFRT. Mr. Gailus suggested that we get some feedback from the users who ski. Mr. Pappas suggested that certain sections might be appropriate to plow (as opposed to the entire length of the trail). Mr. Gailus suggested that we should hear the people who are actually responsible for maintaining the sidewalks and trails. Mr. Posner suggested that we may want to reach out to the various cities and towns (like Arlington, Lexington, Bedford, Ipswich, Amherst, Northampton) that have rail trails to see how those facilities address winter maintenance. Mr. Fahlander, 399 Old Bedford Road, suggested that if there is going to be plowing, then sanding and salting would be appropriate for safety. He also suggested that that the BFRT Committee and the TAC get together to discuss the issue, and then make a recommendation.

Mr. Posner then related his impressions of the site walk related to the Walden/Main Street crosswalk project. He mentioned the members of the committee and community that attended and that it was 'well attended' and a successful event with good input from the participants. Ms. Stevens then related that Historic Districts Commission (HDC) approved the Town's application to begin work on the project and that the project was received positively. She related that members of the HDC and attendees at the meeting asked when similar treatments would occur throughout the town. She also related that such work could not move forward without sufficient funding. Mr. Posner suggested that the installation of the treatment was an opportunity for the Town and the DPW to at little or no cost to 'track' the performance of the materials installed to see if the performance is as good or better than bricks and then, if the material holds up, to use that information to promote the use of

the technique in more places. Mr. Gailus concurred that this was a good idea. Ms. Stevens related that the company that may install the treatment has a similar project in New Jersey that has held up for 15 years.

Ms. Stevens then provided an update on the Route 2 crossing study to be conducted in conjunction with the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). She related that she had a site walk at Old Road to Nine Acre Corner (ORNAC) with the MPO staff. The next step will be counts of pedestrians and cyclists at both ORNAC and Route 62 and then to undertake outreach to the stakeholder groups. She emphasized that the information gathered will include not only the “actual safety” but also the “perception of safety.” She gave the example of the pedestrian island in the middle of Route 2 at ORNAC which may technically be safe, but likely does not feel safe. In addition to TAC, Ms. Stevens will reach out to the Council on Aging and the Commission of Disabilities as stakeholder groups. She would also like to schedule a public forum. Mr. Pappas mentioned that during the long range planning process, the ability of middle and high school students to cross Route 2 safely was brought up. He suggested that reaching out to the parent’s groups to get feedback is important.

Ms. Stevens mentioned that the idea for the study was to find ‘low cost solutions’ and ‘short term improvements’ that would help improve safety. Outreach to Emerson Hospital and its staff is also going to be undertaken as the hospital has facilities on both sides of the highway. Mr. Gailus likes the focus on specific locations. He related that he attended a Council of Aging meeting and that the member and participants were very interested in hearing about safety improvements in various places in town. Mr. Posner then suggested that the speed limits on Route 62 might be examined and that the Traffic Management Group and Concord Police Department could be stakeholders. A discussion regarding speed limits, setting speed limits, enforcement, the designation of Route 62 as a state highway then ensued.

The next agenda item concerned correspondence received from library officials and staff concerning the crosswalk on Thoreau Street between the library and the Emerson Umbrella property. Ms. Stevens mentioned that the issue has been on the town’s radar and that several grants had been submitted to address the issues. However, none of the grants have been funded. Mr. Pappas mentioned that the Historic District Commission would be involved and that outreach to them was appropriate. Ms. Stevens mentioned that she had spoken with Emily Smith, the Library Director, about the possible approaches and noted that it was a good idea to have a vetted plan of action ready so that a grant proposal could be submitted in a timely manner when necessary. Ms. Davis then suggested that this matter was a very good opportunity to get all the stakeholders to come to a table to discuss and find out what the issues are with the site. She proposed that we have a site visit in the spring. Mr. Gailus suggested that there may be more sources of funding for improvements than in other situations, because of the cultural institutions involved. Mr. Posner moved that we have a site walk at the library at a date to be determined. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gailus and approved by all the members. Ms. Stevens then stated that she would contact the Library to schedule and organize the site walk. Ms. Davis suggested that the TAC discuss using an assessment tool, such as the AARP materials to help make the event productive.

Ms. Ackerman, the Select Board liaison mentioned that the Select Board was particularly interested in the Comprehensive Transportation Study.

Karlen Reed of 83 Whit’s End Road then made comment that funding for the improvement was important enough not to wait for a grant but should be included in the warrant as a budgeted item.

The committee then voted to adjourn at 9:02 PM.