



South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee

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www.facebook.com/southhadleybikewalk

email: bikewalksouthhadley@gmail.com

South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee (BWC) Minutes September 21, 2016

Present: Mariann Millard, Melissa O'Brien, Nancy Bozek, Larry Dubois, Lucia Foley, Marilyn Gass

Guests: Doris Dubois, Jim Reidy

The August 17, 2016 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as written (task completed post-Guest Speaker presentation)

Guest Speaker: Jim Reidy

Jim Reidy gave a one-hour overview and update on the current 5-year plan for street and sidewalk repair and paving. He is holding neighborhood meetings in those neighborhoods where sidewalks will be repaired on one side, removed on the other, and trees removed if necessary. The focus is on those sidewalks that could result in liability to the town. There is not enough money to replace sidewalks on both sides of low traffic streets. Sidewalks are being replaced with asphalt and concrete ADA-required ramps are being installed leading to the street level. Larry brought to our attention that the bumps on these ramps can make wheelchair use uncomfortable.

Currently work is progressing on the repaving of Alvord Street. The street will become 26 feet wide, which will include two 3-foot-wide shoulders. The topography and right-of-way prevent the ability to have five-foot designated, striped bike lanes. It is not in the five year plan to extend the Ferry Street sidewalk; at Mariann's request, Jim provided information on how to request consideration of extending it to the Ferry Street/Stony Brook bridge, which is to make an initial request to the Capital Planning Committee.

It was noted that School Lane has been cleared out for tree and vegetation overgrowth by the DPW, which was initially raised as a safety issue by Diane LaRoche, resident, to Mike Sullivan. The issue of the neighboring, oft-overflowing apartment dumpster remains a problem, which has been previously brought to the attention of the town Board of Health by the SHFNA.

Congratulations were given to Jim for his significant involvement for the town receiving a Complete Streets designation. Richard Harris is currently working on a Prioritization Plan. Fifteen projects are needed and funding can be applied for by the town for the subsequent phases. Larry stressed the need of removing telephone poles from the middle of sidewalks. Lamb Street sidewalk improvement funding will come from the Mass Works grant and it is need of wheelchair ramps. They are not in the five year DPW plan.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) Task Force Update | Melissa O'Brien, Task Force Member

At the Sept. 14 PVPC meeting, Melissa noted that not all of our suggestions were incorporated into the general comments and that there was no mention of the Falls to Center corridors for connectivity in the narrative. Mike Sullivan is considering extending the contract with PVPC for more time and money. Before this happens, BWC would like something definitive as to what the additional work would include. Marilyn noted that an executive summary is still needed on the report.

In the report, PVPC suggested we should look at the Franklin County Greenway as a model using multi-level paths without the availability of an old railway bed.

Melissa announced that the River to Range Grant was awarded to South Hadley for Phase One. Phases Two and Three will be applied for through FLAP (Federal Lands Access Program). The Connecticut River is considered Federal land via the Conte Designation so we can apply for these funds. PVPC is also including the Gateway Project for the New England Scenic Trails in this grant application and they asked us to provide them with other small projects along the river that might be folded into this grant application, which is due in early October. After a brief discussion, we thought improvements to Canal Park to Cove Island, and the Newton-Carver-Jones/Bagg Pierce conservation areas might be eligible and good suggestions as these areas are situated near the river and lack proper parking, signage, map information, etc. at trailheads.

Communications Update | Mariann Millard, Communications Liaison

Mike Sullivan informed Mariann of the following news items:

- DCR award ceremony for the R2R Trail grant, 9/22, 2 pm at Summit House; Mariann will attend on behalf of BWC as we have agreed to be the designated trail steward. Other BWC members are welcome to attend as well.
- Canal Park slated for some significant town funding consideration (Fall Town Meeting) for improvement projects.
- Mass Works Grant: Mike Sullivan believes the Selectboard may support BWC opinions on Roundabouts in the Falls and throughout the town.

Falls Redevelopment Authority (RA)

Mariann is still working with Frank DeToma, Chair of the Redevelopment Authority to schedule a joint BWC-RA meeting to informally discuss the proposed biking/walking pathways in the plan.

Conservation Commission

Janice Stone has submitted a draft narrative of a new Black Stevens write-up; this was forwarded by Mariann to BWC just prior to this meeting. Marilyn suggested that a MHC student gather and author the info for the website in lieu of Janice to assist her (Janice would retain review/approval authority). Mariann will follow-up with Janice about her planned 9/9 meeting with Tim Farnham to discuss a MHC intern. BWC to finish deciding what info is needed on the website. Further discussion was tabled until our next meeting.

Other Town Committees and Groups

No other information to report.

Open Streets Event (11am to 3:00pm on May 7, 2017)

The next steering committee meeting is scheduled for 6:30pm on September 22, 2016 at the South Hadley Public Library. Lucia reminded us that the application deadline for a Cultural Council grant is 10/15; Mariann will communicate this to the steering committee. Larry will represent MASH; he was thanked for his willingness to do so. The agenda for the 9/22 meeting is for the steering committee to regroup since its last meeting was on Aug. 4th. More participants from Holyoke and volunteers overall to assist the various sub-committees are needed.

Monthly Treks

- Treks should be kept to the publicized timeframe
- Mike Lamontagne gave a very informative with interpretive talk for BWC's Black Stevens trek on 9/18.
- One possibility to vary our monthly trek would be to meet at a conservation area that doesn't have established trails per se due to overgrowth, smallness of the area, etc. This type of trek would offer to the public an information session on flora and fauna; it could be a benefit to those not interested in physically hiking the trails.
- The October at MHC was changed from Oct. 16 to Oct. 23 so as not to interfere with the MASH Jazz Festival planned for Oct. 16th.

Administrative tasks

It was discussed that our monthly email blasts should focus on our biking, walking, or trek information; this is to prevent unnecessary emails to BWC's distribution list. Blasts can include biking/hiking news of related interest, and include a news announcement of something BWC is working on or anything associated with BWC in some manner and sent as a News Flash as FYI. Due to time constraints, further discussion was tabled until the Oct. meeting.

BikeWalk Committee Meeting Dates

The October meeting date has been rescheduled to 10/12, 7 pm; Mariann will follow-up to secure a public meeting room.

Announcements

Marilyn suggested that Craig Della Penna (Northampton) be considered as a possible future speaker on the topic of the rail-trail corridor.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Bozek