

Meeting Minutes
Bedford Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
Thursday 7 February 2019, 7:30 PM
Bedford Town Hall, Lower Level Conference Room

Attendees: Scot Shaw, Dawn LaFrance-Linden, Soraya Stevens, Cindy Barbehenn, Margot Fleischmann

Guests: Sandra Hackmann, Ralph Hammond

Meeting called to order: 7:35 pm

Traffic calming policy

Document in current form was presented to the Selectmen in late 2018, and edits were made by Peter based on feedback. Soraya will take a look at the latest edits, then pass them to Cindy to review. We would like to get these to Sarah Stanton before the April TAC meeting, which she is tentatively scheduled to attend. The goal will be to turn it over to the Town Manager's office by then so that it can be finalized and adopted, which TAC itself cannot do. There are some specific issues of implementation (e.g., the calling out of specific speed limits) that will need to be assessed with data collection and formalized by the TM's office in the final version.

Pedestrian and bicycle non-infrastructure recommendations

Ralph reported that BAC was working on an updated map that highlights "cycling hot spot/cut through areas" in need of infrastructure improvements. He indicated that he would have Mark (BAC Chair) pass along a copy to TAC.

There are a number of items called out in this plan that TAC needs to track, but none are immediately due. Soraya has culled the relevant items and put them in the Dropbox. The most important one that we do need to keep in mind is the regular update of the Complete Streets policy, which we are supposed to review annually. This review can include a review of DPW projects related to Complete Streets, and ideas for other projects we should be applying for. Ideally, the September annual report to the Selectmen can address what we've done for Complete Streets, and we can then fold that into our October review of CS. There is a meeting at 9 am on 24 October at DPW to discuss the plan.

Complete Streets aside:

In light of the Town budget's new annual line item for sidewalks, TAC feels strongly that this, in combination with a creative mix of additional funding, will enable the town to build some of the larger but desperately needed segments of

sidewalk (North Rd, Hayden, etc) that were previously more elusive because of the perceived “large” short term costs associated with these projects.

The group had an extended discussion on this topic and members believe that this more clearly defined, centralized list of priorities for infrastructure projects is needed.

Members pointed out that the success of this centralized process will only really work if there are hard numbers/good estimates on the cost for all potential projects in that queue. That way we, as a community, can annually decide if we, for instance, want to build out two/three small projects in one year or do one of the larger projects staged and budgeted over multiple out years.

TAC is interested in seeing all town committees and working-groups that are working towards transportation related ends - share and centralize information and priorities on these projects, so that we, as a town, can priorities, budget for and build some of the larger tickets items that to date in our short term budget scheduling never get done.

The group feels that all this is coming a great time for this effort, as town administration is adding headcount to its office to centrally manage all financial activities.

Old Billerica Road / Rt. 62 Intersection

Scot gave a summary of the report to the Selectmen. An idea that was mentioned that hadn't come up with the Selectmen was that if it isn't possible to move the 25 mph speed limit sign closer to the Burlington line, we could install a “reduced speed ahead” sign. There was also a comment that there need to be pushes from the citizens to get a lighted speed limit sign with radar installed permanently; one was there, but it is gone at this point. There was discussion of what can be done to get permanent placement those kinds of signs at key points all around town, especially coming into town.

There was a general discussion of how we can gather better information about traffic in town, start and end points, drive times, etc. Dawn suggested a crowd-sourced effort to get this kind of data throughout town. Soraya noted that she spent time in the past seeing what information we could get out of Waze, and the answer was nothing.

MBTA bus routes

Margot brought to our attention documents from the MBTA about evaluation of the bus routes. The routes into Bedford aren't slated for changes, but we noted that the documents showed that they are not up to the MBTA's standards of service, in particular frequency of service. In response, TAC unanimously passed the following motion:

We recommend that the selectmen send a letter to the MBTA with regards to their recent analysis, requesting that the busses serving Bedford achieve the minimum existing standards of service, notably the frequency and times of service. TAC can assist with the drafting of such a letter if requested.

Mailbag

We had a brief review of the mail that came into the TAC email address in the past month.

- Alcott & Gould Street

Resident letter to BPD was cc'd to TAC. Chief Bongiorno has been handling the communication, but we should keep on top of it. The traffic sign that was at OBR has moved over there.

- Hayden Lane

Possibly a complete streets of safe routes to school request. We need to get an estimate from DPW about what the cost there would be. There was a cost estimate in 2009 dollars; the best recollection is that it was \$500k for a ¼ mile sidewalk.

8:30 pm Liaison updates

- Selectmen

It's not clear what is happening with the tritown study. All three communities have new town managers, and Lexington planning staff has entirely turned over. The initial recommendations for a regions on-demand ride share was likely going to be too expensive, even with three towns coming together. In the mean time, MAPC has drafted an RFP for a micro-transit pilot program for a subset of MAGIC communities. Maybe this could be married with the tritown study.

Draft capital plan for warrant includes some bike/ped work: 900 ft of sidewalk on Pine Hill (North Road to Heritage), 600 ft of sidewalk on Page Road (Shawsheen to Hemlock), 2200 ft of sidewalk on South Road (Hartwell Road to Liberty), and bus stop shelters.

DASH pilot program is coming to an end. BLT is staying the same.

Questions were raised about the bike lane project on Great Road. That's not going anywhere at the moment, and Scot will see what's happening with the BAC/TAC/DPW meeting that Mark Bailey (BAC) was going to organize.

There will be a month worth of bike to school activities in May, and we can get things on that calendar to be publicized. There should be an agenda item for next

month to discuss TAC sponsored activities for that event (30 minutes). Cindy will take the item to reach out to Carla and let them know.

- Planning Board

Final proposal to MAPC for work on the Narrow Gauge trail to make it more attractive was submitted.

- Council on Aging

Ken Gordon is working on getting changes at the state level to the procedure for towns to change speed limits to allow a greater degree of control. Current regulations require a speed study that could result in an increase rather than a decrease.

Minutes

January minutes approved

Meeting adjourned: 9:35 pm