

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2022

12:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

Present: Franny Osman (Chair), Rama Balakrishna, Paula Walsh

Absent: Julia Day

Select Board Representative: Not present

Invited guests: Qinrui (Qin) Pang (Town of Acton Civil Engineer), Yutoa Wang (Town of Acton Civil Engineer), Corey York (Director, Town of Acton Department of Public Works), Nirupana Velankar (COA Liaison), David Honn (Town of Acton Historic District Chair)

1. Opening

Chair Franny Osman opened the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

2. Regular Business

- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes – A motion to approve the TAC February 23, 2022 meeting minutes with edits was made by Rama Balakrishna and seconded by Franny Osman and unanimously approved. Approval of the January 26, 2022 minutes was tabled.
- B. Select Board Update: None
- C. Council of Aging Update by Nirupana Velankar:
 - a. There is no longer a mask mandate in effect, masks now being optional.
 - b. Most programs are in full swing in person, although a few are still being held virtually.
 - c. Walk Massachusetts Challenge: The Massachusetts Council on Aging is again offering the Walk Massachusetts Challenge which will run from May 1 to October 31, 2022. As participants complete the challenge, they can win prizes in addition to the COA of their choice getting entries in a raffle to win funds up to \$1000. In 2021, the Acton COA was awarded \$500. You can register at: [Walk Massachusetts - MCOA Online](#)
- D. Department of Public Works Update:
 - a. River Street: There have been traffic concerns over the years and the DPW has been looking at different options including making River Street a One Way. A consultant looking at the one way option has given his recommendations to the Select Board. The information is being distributed to obtain public input then the Select Board will make a final decision. Franny was able to share the contents of an email from a Chadwick Street resident, Alisa Ruggiero who was concerned about the potential increase in traffic with the morning and evening rush hours. Corey was able to share the findings of a study showing current peak traffic of

vehicles in the 70's during the morning commute and around 134 during the evening commute. The study included a number of recommendations as calming elements to the speed issue such as a stop sign, other signage, and the addition of sidewalks. There was some concern by TAC members as well as the community that making River Street a one way could potentially increase the traffic along Chadwich Street to/from School Street. Although, this seemed slim compared to the benefits along River Street with the change. David Honn shared that the Historic District Commission was in favor of the change, particularly if a sidewalk would be installed along the South Side of River Street making it easier for pedestrians in this area. He also shared that the Historic Commission would not approve destruction of the wall. The change to a one way would provide an additional 10 feet of room along the roadway for a sidewalk. A vote by TAC supporting making River Street was proposed by Paula Walsh, seconded by Franny Osman and unanimously approved. Franny will send a letter to the Select Board that TAC is in favor of making River Street a one way.

- b. MBTA Communities Zoning Discussion: This was tabled.
- c. Annual Meeting discussion: Corey explained that additional funding has been requested and will be voted on at the Town's Annual Meeting, Franny would like for TAC to give input to the Select Board in support of the additional funding. Paula motioned for TAC to support the Town warrant funding for sidewalks, it was seconded by Franny and was unanimously approved. Franny will send a letter to the Select Board.

E. Sidewalks:

- a. System for Evaluating the Need for Sidewalks: According to Corey, the DPW is working through the current ranking of sidewalk needs. All current sidewalks projects listed are being worked on in one form or another. If they run into issues (either with design or legal issues), then the department will move forward to another sidewalk on the list. Corey did discuss some of the methodology used. Unfortunately, the funding proposal will not cover all the sidewalk projects currently on the list but \$750,000 will be a boost and get some shovel ready by next year. The Town Manager is looking for \$10-15 million funding for sidewalks. TAC will review the process of evaluating sidewalks at the next meeting.
- b. High Street: The last 2 homeowners have signed agreements. DPW is in the process of building a retaining wall then this Summer/Fall they will rebuild walls and finish the High Street project.
- c. Great Road between Main Street and Meyers Hills: the Department of Transportation has raised concerns about trees and landscaping. Hopeful they'll get the permit soon after these issues are worked through. The town is using a landscape artist that the DOT has used in the past. Pavement markings using durable plastic to give the impression of a center isle are being considered.
- d. Faulkner Hill Road: Portable speed signs have been purchased, similar signs have been well received around town.
- e. Taylor Road: On the DPW list to be finished this year.

- f. Stow Street: Being evaluated by the engineers including the intersection with Maple Street. There has been a suggestion that a bridge evaluation is needed.
- g. Willow Street: Legal issues have been resolved. Permits are being applied for.
- h. Parker Street: The MBTA cannot use train whistles. Bike lane evaluation is being conducted.
- i. Massachusetts Ave: Bike accommodations have been made. This area is in compliance.
- j. Main Street, Great Road to Harris Street: Reaching out to homeowners.
- k. Martin Street to Train station: There have been past proposals to the MBTA about a path or sidewalk to make for easier access however, the MBTA has been opposed to what they call trespassing but Corey believes there may be some edits that potentially could help sway them to change their minds.
- l. Plastic islands: Franny asked if the town could obtain some plastic islands on some of the streets of concern and Corey will investigate this option.
- m. Spreadsheet: The engineering department maintains a spreadsheet of the sidewalk projects that can be shared in the future with TAC.
- F. Austin Cyganiewicz was unable to attend this meeting but sent some updates to Franny who shared them with the Committee.
 - a. The Taxi Service: Funding has been extended to the end of May
 - b. Bike Share Program: There is a local fellowship that is looking into bringing back the Bike Share Program for 8 weeks.
- G. Adaptive bikes: No updates

3. New/Special Business

- A. No new business

A motion to close the meeting was made by Paula Walsh and seconded by Franny Osman and approved unanimously, The meeting ended at 1:22 p.m.

Acronyms:

ADA= Americans with Disability Act

ARPA= American [COVID-19] Recovery Program Act

Boston MPO= Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization, the part of MassDOT that disburses federal transportation funds

BAG= Bicycle Advisory Group (formed January 2021)

CMAQ= Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality

COD= Commission on Disabilities

COVID= Novel Coronavirus 2019 causing a worldwide pandemic in 2020

CTPS= Central Transportation Planning Staff, within the Boston MPO, within MassDOT

**Landline= a signage and wayfinding project to connect communities by bike and pedestrian, by MAPC and MassTrails of MassDOT.*

*MAGIC= Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination, which is our 13-town subregion of the
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
MAPC= Metropolitan Area Planning Council
MassDOT=Massachusetts Department of Transportation
NRG=Nashoba Regional Greenways Coalition
SATSAC= South Acton Train Station Advisory Committee
TAC= Transportation Advisory Committee*