

Bikeway Committee Minutes
January 19, 2021

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The Bikeway Committee Meeting, a remote Zoom conference, was called to order at 7 PM. Lois Callahan (chair) called the roll. Members present were Lois Callahan (Chair), Paul Foley, and James Anderson. Since 3/5 members were present a quorum was declared. Also in attendance were Bob Espindola, Selectman, and Bill Scully, consultant, representing the Complete Streets Initiative. Lois read the authorization and guidelines for remote meetings and the business of the committee commenced.

The first Agenda item was approval of the minutes from the previous meeting, but since these were not available, the approval was deferred to the next meeting.

Bill Scully provided an overview of the draft Tier One policy initiative of the Complete Streets project. He solicited comment from the Bikeway committee and reminded us of the deadline schedule. The policy draft must be approved by the Selectboard by April 1 in order to develop an implementation plan (Tier Two) by the May 1 deadline. If this is not met the deadline will move to August 1. The emphasis must be on projects that are ready to start, since there is a five year window to use Mass DOT funding; Bill Scully suggests that we have a minimum of 15 projects in the plan, but to use the plan as a means to do more long range planning; that is, aim for 35-60 projects even though most of them will have to be deferred for other funding. By having more projects, switches can be made during implementation, but only if the projects have already gone through DOT approval.

In this regard, Bill reminded the committee that citizens should be making suggestions about problem areas on the Complete Streets website through the mapping wiki application. Efforts to publicize this activity have been made through a Neighborhood News article, links on the Complete Streets website, and through various social media (Bob Espindola). Jim Anderson presented the project to the Sustainability Committee. Some follow up notices would be beneficial given the deadlines. Bob Espindola stated that the Selectboard would meet February 8, at which time Paul Foley would present the Complete Streets policy project for approval; the next meeting would be February 23.

Bill Scully discussed some projects that other towns have proposed as examples, and was asked how he viewed the Fairhaven issue of traffic congestion in the Main st/Middle street corridor. He stated that there were benefits but also problems with particular proposals; they would review their recommendations further, and it would be good to include the project even if the needed research would only come later.

The discussion shifted to the problematic bike/pedestrian crossing at Sconticut Neck rd and David Drown Blvd. Participants described the safety hazards of the crossing, including the bad position of the flashers in relation to oncoming traffic; near misses were observed. Poor lighting at the intersection was deemed a hazard for crossing under poor light conditions. Bob Espindola reported that Vinnie Furtado is aware of the problems, including the road narrowing

southward. Bill Scully remarked that someone in his shop is looking at this as well. Proximity detectors were briefly discussed as a passive way to activate the flashers since it is awkward to reach the buttons from a bike.

Mat Coes (member) joined.

There was general discussion of other problem areas. The barrier posed by Rt 6 crossings has no easy solutions for non vehicular access by Northside; there are few safe options. Paul Foley suggested that the Knowles property due to be developed might provide a site for crossing Rt 6 for access to Mill Rd. Alden Rd was cited as ripe for sidewalk and bicycle improvements since it connects town center with commercial areas; however, zoning would be a problem not covered by Complete Streets. Signage for the Little Bay bypass will be improved with Bikeway funds; a detailed list of needs will await another survey, weather permitting. Jim Anderson brought up ways to make bike trail intersections (and bollards) safer with chevron paint stripes. Lois Callahan will convey to Vinnie Furtado the plan, along with examples of striping, since he is in budget planning mode.

Bob Espindola suggested that Fairhaven needs a rating system for popular cycling routes that would emphasize safety. Bill Scully replied that his study does have a "stress" metric that also includes traffic pressure. Bob suggested that these ratings could be a basis for a cycling list. Lois stated that the recommendations should be written down, to be taken up later. Bill said he would be in contact with Mat about this.

Given the involvement of the BPW in street planning, it was suggested that Vinnie Furtado be invited to a future meeting of the Bikeways Committee to discuss matters of mutual interest.

The next meeting will be held February 17 at 7 PM. Paul will send out the Tier One policy document for comment.

The meeting adjourned.

Submitted,
Jim Anderson