

Acton Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Minutes

March 23, 2016

Room 121, Town Hall

Present:

Committee: Aneil Tripathy (secretary), Bengt Mutén (chair), Jim Yarin, Randall Bashta

Other: Franny Osman (Board of Selectmen Representative), Stephen Engley, Jim Snyder-Grant

Meeting begins at 7:38 pm with introductions.

Administrative:

Minutes Reviewed

September 16, 2015 February 10, 2016

Conversation occurred on how to condense minutes to make them more accessible to the public. Franny asked about bicycling discussions in previous minutes.

Minutes are approved.

TAC Responsibility for bicycle issues.

Franny wants to discuss bicycling. Citizen Jim Snyder-Grant discusses his conversations with Steve Ledoux about bike policy in Acton. Ledoux talked about the town trying to implement complete streets policy. According to Snyder-Grant, there is a lot of good work being done on sidewalks in Acton. Acton has had a Complete Streets Policy since 2014. Snyder-Grant also thinks that Green Acton could be applicable in helping with biking policies.

Ledoux is apparently planning to form a committee after town hall on Complete Streets. Bengt thought about how Acton should deal with the multiple transportation focused committees.

Forming Complete Streets Advisory Group or Committee

Jim Yarin thinks it would be good to have a separate Complete Streets committee, and that the transportation committee should think about defining its scope. Sidewalks, bicycles, a liaison from TAC could focus on traffic and mobility questions. Jim Yarin mentioned that someone from Recreation would be good on a Complete Streets committee as well.

Bengt stated that a town engineer could be good on the committee. Transportation, sidewalks, recreation, town engineer representatives could form the committee. A youth representative could be a good addition to the committee as well.

Snyder-Grant thinks someone from the committee on disabilities would be good too for a Complete Streets Committee. Jim Snyder-Grant is willing to join the committee.

Franny will write up a memo for a committee request to Steve Ledoux. Bengt says TAC is just advising how the committee should be formed. Randall said that town engineers are tough to get to show up at committee meetings.

When Snyder-Grant reviewed complete streets policy they tried to make a group for it not be a committee in order to speed up action on complete streets. Snyder-Grant thinks that keeping a group vs. complete streets committee can be helpful with more flexibility but harder with public accountability.

Randall says it is on the TAC charter to be on sidewalks, bicycles, and roads. Randall wonders where lines should be drawn with regards to jurisdiction.

Snyder-Grant thinks town staff work on actual details and sidewalks committee works on ideas. TAC can think about how should we have bicycles share space with cars on roads. Snyder-Grant thinks a lot about bike markings.

Franny wonders if there should be a bicycling committee. Bengt thinks that Steve Ledoux is creating an advisory group. Bengt contemplates the role that TAC should play with this advisory group. TAC could give complete streets advice to the Board of Selectman or another committee.

Jim Yarin thinks that in brainstorming a complete streets policy, past meetings focused on keeping open meeting law with a committee but also keeping the possibility open for people to meet in smaller groups. Snyder-grant agrees; we need to think about our policy in terms of implementation. Complete Streets is already an Acton policy now we need to think about how to implement. Snyder-Grant reads the implementation section from Acton Complete Streets Policy and reflects on how an advisory group should function with complete streets.

Jim Yarin thinks TAC could send a list to Steve Ledoux of people he could contact with stakes regarding the implementation of complete streets policy. Franny questions whether TAC should name specific people. Franny asks if any here would want to be on the advisory group. Jim Yarin is willing to be contacted by Steve Ledoux.

Snyder-Grant thinks there needs to be a non-town bicycling advocacy group, there are lots of good people involved in Bruce Freeman Trail work. Perhaps plans should start on connecting Assabet and Bruce Freeman Rail Trails.

Website Updating

When TAC updates the website, Franny thinks information on biking should be put on the website. TAC will be the conduit between bicyclists and the Board of Selectman.

Jim Yarin thinks work should be done to map all transportation systems in Acton, Bengt says that Acton has done quite a bit with mapping that we could draw on. Randall says we could ask Corey York if there is a central map of Acton that states information on streets.

Franny wonders if there should be paper mapping or if it should be interactive. Jim Yarin thinks about a map of bicycling routes in Acton. Snyder-Grant says that the Land Stewardship committee has GIS data on the town's trails. Open Street Maps and Google maps have some trail data from the Land Stewardship committee. Snyder-Grant says that GIS systems can work well if properly integrated.

Acton has a new GIS person, Kayla Patel. Jim Yarin thinks that TAC should try to be a consolidator of town information. Yarin wants lists to be created such as 15 5k routes that are nice to run, 10 best biking routes in Acton.

Yarin wants TAC to really focus on trying to connect Assabet and Bruce Freeman together. Route 27 should be made bicycle friendly according to Snyder-Grant. Committee discusses different bike trails in the area.

Conclusions: 1) TAC will make a list of recommendations to Ledoux for a complete streets group or committee.

2) the website will be updated to include biking concerns and committee meeting times.

3) TAC will start the process of trying to map transportation systems in Acton.

4) TAC will be a conduit for the board of selectman on bicycling issues.

Short update by Franny on recent transportation work:

Franny is doing publicity work for Acton transportation systems. Franny is not sure who should be doing publicity for CrossTown Connect services. Yarin thinks that CrossTown should be doing publicity work, they are being paid. Yarin thinks very little promotion has been done, Bengt says that in his condo newsletter there has been some CrossTown Connect publicity.

TAC thinks about passing a resolution that CrossTown Connect staff should increase publicity work. TransAction staffs CrossTown Connect. TransAction should pay for publicity. Randall thinks there might be legal issues with TransAction's contracts.

Franny thinks there might be different things TransAction is hired to do, both to run the vans as well as organize CrossTown Connect.

Jim Yarin wants to check if TransAction drivers know that they can stop at different places in town beyond the fixed route. Franny will put in a statement to TransAction. There is also a question as to how train shuttles are working at the moment with the different Fitchburg line schedule.

Randall asks if we are getting monthly figures from CAT (Cross Acton Transit). Randall says the last figures used to be \$23 per person.

Franny says that CAT has just applied for two grants, one for dispatch services, and another for the vans to be used for morning and after commuter times.

There is a discussion that will happen about sharing vehicles between Lowell Regional Transit Authority and Montachusett Regional Transit Authority. There is also a North-South Rail link meeting that will happen at Acton Town hall. TAC will be a sponsor for this event, there is unanimous approval.

MassDOT Regional Coordinating Council

For the next two RCC meetings, August 11th and May 24th, there will be a focus on linking Council on Aging and other vans. There have been problems coordinating Lincoln-Acton transit systems. The next one will have a focus on medical transportation.

Meet before Town Meeting – April 4th?

The committee deliberated if there were any issues we wanted to bring up at the meeting. Randall contacted Corey York, and found that they are using the same pay-by-phone system as the MBTA uses. There will be a public forum on rates. The committee thought about getting rid of the current town parking setup.

TAC might call a meeting to discuss parking organization. For next time a license plate study and meters and pricing will be debated.

Jim Yarin thinks that we should think about effects from parking rate increases. People who may have chosen to come to Acton for cheaper parking will stop doing it. People might be drawn to shuttles or carpools. Bengt thinks there should be more parking fees and lower taxes. The problem at South Acton station is that it fills up before later trains.

Meeting Adjourns at 9:18pm