

TOWN OF STOW
COMPLETE STREETS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the July 29, 2021 Complete Streets Committee Meeting

Members present: Karen Kelleher, Darren Thraen, Brian Hatch, Kathy Sferra, Jim Salvie

Karen Kelleher called to order at 2:30 pm

Kathy Sferra moved to accept the minutes of the May 12, 2021 meeting as written

Jim Salvie seconded

Roll call vote: Karen Kelleher **-YEA**; Darren Thraen **-YEA**; Brian Hatch **-YEA**; Kathy Sferra **-YEA**;
Jim Salvie **-YEA**

Harvard Road / Old Bolton Road update

Jesse Steadman said he had observed tire tracks over a new section of traffic island, but that any damage had been since repaired. Jesse Steadman said the project is mostly finished, the Highway Superintendent supervised the construction process and there were minimal disruptions. Jesse Steadman said the project will be concluded once the state DOT approves a contract amendment to allow left over funds to be used for milling and repaving of the intersection of Harvard Road and Great Road. Jesse Steadman commented that he has already observed residents using the new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at Harvard Road.

Town Center Concept Plan approach

Jesse Steadman said he is preparing a scope of work for the Town Center redesign concept plans which were funded at Annual Town Meeting in May. Jesse Steadman asked the Committee what role they wish to have in this process. Karen Kelleher said that many issues to be addressed by the redesign were part of the Complete Streets prioritization plan, and so it would make sense for the Complete Streets Committee to provide some input on the designs. Kathy Sferra said the Complete Streets Committee should provide input on design, including which types of pedestrian and bike infrastructure to include, but should not have any role in overseeing construction. Jesse Steadman asked the Committee if the town should use the services of Green International Affiliates, who provided the original cost estimate for the Town Meeting Warrant Article. Jesse Steadman said there is no requirement to publish a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit competitive bids for the project, as horizontal road engineering is exempt from the requirements of M.G.L. Ch 30(b). Karen Kelleher and Jim Salvie said the concept plans should still be subject to a competitive bid process. Jim Salvie said that the Town Administrator should be kept up to date as the scope of work and RFP are prepared.

Complete Streets Roles and Responsibilities

Jesse Steadman told the Committee that the new Traffic Safety Advisory Committee will be holding its inaugural meeting August 3, 8 am. Jesse Steadman said traffic safety issues have been frequently raised to the Complete Streets Committee in the past, but that the Committee's was not properly charged with

addressing these issues. Jesse Steadman said the TSAC had been created to specifically address the safety issues raised by residents and town departments, so that the Complete Streets Committee could focus more on implementing its prioritization plan. Karen Kelleher agreed that the Complete Streets Committee struggled to address traffic safety issues without a proper budget and charge to do so.

Jim Salvie said the TSAC should prioritize creating a new speed bump policy. Darren Thraen agreed that there must be a clear policy in place before any speed bumps are installed. Brian Hatch asked how the TSAC and Complete Streets are expected to interact. Jim Salvie said that safety issues which have some relationship to cyclists and pedestrians should be addressed by the Complete Streets Committee. Jesse said that part of the role of TSAC would be to bring proposals to other relevant committees for input. Karen Kelleher said it would be a good idea to share minutes between the committees. Jim Salvie said that shared membership between the committees would be helpful for sharing expertise and keeping up to date.

Meeting Format

Jesse Steadman asked the committee how they wanted to meet going forward. Committee members were amenable to a hybrid format. Jim Salvie said that offering remote participation was good for increasing resident participation and lowering barriers to attendance. Kathy Sferra said it was useful to have members attend in person to view plans. Karen Kelleher said committee members should try to attend in person but remote participation would remain available as an option.

Track Road Updates

Jesse Steadman said that the Federal Government should be allocating \$750k to the Town of Stow for completing design for paving Track Road very soon. Jesse Steadman said a bike planner at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) had also provided some comments regarding the design of the eventual Track Road path. Jim Salvie said that David Loutzenheiser with MAPC/Metro Boston Greenway Network and the Metro Nashoba Regional Greenways have been searching for appropriate, low volume routes to connect existing bike trails. Jim Salvie said that Nashoba Regional Greenways has been conducting regional rides to determine the best routes for these connections.

Jim Salvie said that David Loutzenheiser at MAPC suggested that Track Road not be widened and that no pavement markings be added, and that gates at either end be maintained if vehicle access is permitted. Members recalled that the current concept plans call for a wider alignment on the eastern section up to the entrance of Crow Island, with a narrower, more traditional bike path continuing to the western terminus at Sudbury Road. Jesse Steadman said that the Fire Department will likely request a 20 ft wide alignment for the full length regardless of vehicle use restrictions.

Brian Hatch asked standard width of bike lane, Committee members said 5ft is standard. Kathy Sferra said the standard width for most rail trails/bike paths is 12 ft. Kathy Sferra noted that heavily trafficked bike paths are often wider to allow a diversity of uses.

Brian Hatch asked about the consequences for the remainder of the former rail right-of-way if Track Road is connected to regional trail networks via a road, as pursued by Nashoba Regional Greenways. Jim Salvie said it seems unlikely that Track Road will ever connect with the rest of the Assabet River Rail Trail

(ARRT) in Hudson via the former rail alignment. Jim Salvie said that the ARRT could cut south through the Assabet Wildlife refuge to connect with the future Mass Central trail.

Jesse Steadman said that he and Kathy Sferra have an upcoming meeting with Rob Albright, who owns Crow Island Air Park and Track Road. Jesse Steadman said the meeting would clear the air about any of his concerns and would settle where exactly the project is at this stage. Karen Kelleher agreed that Rob Albright should continue to be a partner in this process.

Jim Salvie said that if David Loutzenheizer's suggestions were followed, construction could cost less than initial estimates suggested. Jim said that federal earmarks do not come with conditions that would require standards on things like curbing, so there is a chance construction prices can be kept low. Brian Hatch said that mode separation could be done cheaply. Jim Salvie said that there is likely not enough space to do mode separations. Karen Kelleher asked if there are width requirements from the grant, Jesse Steadman said he does not have answers yet on that. Jim Salvie said the only likely restriction is that the funds be used for design and not construction. Jim Salvie said that if the town funds the construction there would be minimal design requirements.

Jesse Steadman said that the design phase will need to proceed with a construction funding source in mind. Jesse Steadman said if the intent is to apply for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding for construction, design will need to follow very specific MassDOT standards. Karen Kelleher said that there would have to be further public outreach before design is settled. Kathy Sferra agreed and said that there needs to be a project management plan in place and the process should make it clear that the construction funding is not yet secured.

Jim Salvie said that the Town Administrator to be kept in the loop since there will be expectations from the public as soon as Lori Trahan's office announces the funds for design. Kathy Sferra noted that the Community Preservation Committee and Open Space Committee have also been involved in this process in the past, and that it could make sense to create a dedicated project team with representation from these groups. Jim Salvie agreed that there should be a Track Road working group, and that securing the broadest possible buy-in would be necessary to secure construction funding.

Jesse Steadman said that such a working group should immediately reach out to interested parties and remind them of the existing survey and concept plans, while making it clear that no design is currently set in stone. Kathy Sferra said that such a working group should collaborate with regional parties on the eventual designs. Jim Salvie said that the Towns of Maynard and Hudson should be notified, as well as the Assabet National Wildlife Refuge and other relevant regional advocacy groups.

Jesse Steadman said himself, Kathy Sferra, and Town Administrator would be meeting with the owner of Track Road soon to discuss any of his concerns. Jesse Steadman said he will update the committee on the outcome of that discussion at the next meeting.

Signage Procurement

The committee discussed a round of signage procurement and made some minor changes to Planning Staff's plan. There was disagreement over the most appropriate signage for bicycle safety. The Committee decided that "Bikes may use full lane" signage is most appropriate in some areas whereas "Share the Road" signage is better in others.

Next Meeting

The Committee scheduled the next meeting for Thursday, August 26 at 2pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Malcolm Ragan