

TOWN OF STOW
COMPLETE STREETS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the October 27, 2022 Complete Streets Committee Meeting

Members present: Karen Kelleher, JP Benoit, Kathy Sferra, Daren Thraen, Brian Hatch

Members absent: Ingeborg Hegemann Clark

Karen Kelleher called the meeting to order at 2:00PM

Previous Meeting Minutes

Kathy Sferra motioned to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2022 meeting

JP Benoit seconded

Roll call vote: Karen Kelleher -**Yea**; JP Benoit -**Yea**; Kathy Sferra -**Yea**; Daren Thraen -**Yea**;

Track Road Updates

Resident Jim Salvie asked that the Committee begin considering how to route a safe street connection between the Assabet River Rail Trail and the future Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT). The Committee viewed a map with several potential route connections between the terminus of Track Road and the MCRT. The Committee noted that Barton Road is a private way for most of its length and it would be difficult for the town to improve the route or install wayfinding signage. Jim Salvie said that a route running west along Sudbury Road toward Route 62 would be quite direct but would require some streetscape improvement to increase safety for cyclists through Gleasondale Village. Jim Salvie said that a connection to the MCRT through the Assabet River Wildlife Refuge, bypassing Track Road, may also be possible. Jim Salvie cautioned that this would require coordination with the federal government and the route would be subject to wildlife refuge rules.

Brian Hatch asked if there are currently plans to continue the Assabet River Rail Trail along the section of former rail right-of-way now owned by Honeypot Hill Orchards. Kathy Sferra said that besides the parcel now being privately owned, that section would require reconstruction of two bridges over the Assabet River. Several Committee members said that the owners of the orchard have made it very clear that they are not interested in hosting an extension of the Assabet River Rail Trail.

Kathy Sferra said that her preferred route would be Sudbury Road eastbound, due to the adequate width of the road layout and potential destinations to the east for cyclists. The Committee recalled that a shared-use path along this section of Sudbury Road is included in the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.

The Committee discussed the best route for cyclists to reach the MCRT from the Stow/Hudson town line. JP Benoit noted that Eversource had previously expressed interest in connecting the MCRT with the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge. Kathy Sferra said the director of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge did not rule out the idea of routing cyclist traffic through the refuge, but did express concerns that it would require new restrictions on hunting.

The Complete Streets Committee discussed selecting a route to recommend signage along at a future meeting. The Committee agreed that they will need to verify construction schedules from Eversource on the MCRT.

Other Track Road Updates

Kathy Sferra reported that the conceptual cross section design for paving track road has been revised and that the property owners are in general support. Kathy Sferra said the revised cross section for the entire length includes a 10-paved path with 4-ft stone dust shoulders on either side. Kathy Sferra reported that a meeting to present this concept to representatives of MassDOT did not go well, and that they expressed concern that the Federal Highway Administration would not authorize funds to better privately held property, unless the Town would be willing to accept the full length of Track Road as a public way and allow vehicles to transit the entire length. Kathy Sferra said that MassDOT suggested abandoning the \$750k earmark from Congresswoman Lori Trahan, and instead to apply for a \$500k MassTrails grant to apply a stone dust surface.

Kathy Sferra said the Town is not seeking to improve the private owner's property but rather their own recreational easement. Jim Salvie said that it is not clear what, if any, role MassDOT should even be having in the project given that funds were allocated to the Town of Stow by Congress. The Committee discussed the possibility of funding the improvements without federal dollars.

Crescent Street Sidewalk Improvements

Assistant Planner Malcolm Ragan said that several engineering firms have been selected to provide design services for the next several years through a bid process administered by the Highway Department. Malcolm Ragan said that the Planning Department has reached out to one of the selected firms to develop a draft scope of services and fee estimate for design of sidewalks along the northern side of Crescent Street from Bradley Lane to Library Hill Road.

Town Center Transportation Improvements

Valerie Oorthuys said that the Planning Department was allocated \$60k by Town Meeting to advance conceptual designs for Town Center streetscape improvements, and said that staff are beginning to put together the scope of services. JP Benoit said that library renovations may influence what work can be done, and that the Planning Department should coordinate with the Library Renovation Committee.

Other Updates

Kathy Sferra said the Open Space & Recreation Plan survey identified a desire for additional pedestrian connectivity, and said there may be an opportunity for collaboration with the Complete Streets Committee.

Brian Hatch said that the Highway Department should be prepared to install solar-powered speed feedback signs at two locations on Route 62.

Kathy Sferra motioned to adjourn
JP Benoit seconded

Respectfully submitted,
Malcolm Ragan