

Dedham Sustainability Advisory Committee
Lower Conference Room, Town Hall
April 2, 2012

Present: Joanna Hamblin (JH), Jon Briggs (JB), Deb Harrison (DH), Steve MacAusland (SM), Carol Hills (CH), Virginia LeClair (VL)

Guests: David Loutzenheiser (DL), Sarah Kurpiel (SK), Linda Wilkins (LW), Rich McCarthy (RM), Eliot Foulds (EF), Diane Foulds (DF), Brian Foulds (BF), Beppy Martin (BM)

JB opened the meeting for Monday, April 2, 2012. JB announced the Green Fair will join with Dedham Day in September. More details to follow.

Discussion with MAPC about Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

David Loutzenheiser (DL) and Sarah Kurpiel (SK), transportation planners with MAPC will be presenting tonight possible pedestrian and bicycle transportation improvements. The Town of Dedham applied to MAPC for technical assistance to create a pedestrian and bicycle improvement plan. S. Kurpiel provided background on the Sustainable Communities grant that MAPC received and as a result was able to provide technical support to 13 projects. The Town of Westwood applied with a similar project to Dedham's and will be working therefore to create connections between the two communities. The final product, as a result of this assistance, will be a series of maps showing proposed improvements and routes that the Town could use for future planning purposes. There is no funding that will be given to Dedham to implement this plan. DL said that there is chapter 90 money given to communities from the state and he hopes that they will be able to use this money towards bike infrastructure improvements. CH asked about sidewalks and DL said Chapter 90 money can be used for that and it's the decision of the Town how they will spend the money.

DL said that they have been investigating road widths and sidewalk connections in Town and will share their findings, but that tonight they want to hear from the community about additional ideas and opportunities. JH asked what were the criteria for evaluating sidewalks or bike lanes? DL responded that they were looking at what exists currently within roads for striping and opportunities with roads that are up for being repaved for cyclists or pedestrians. He stressed that the Committee will need to be on top of the proposed road work and have discussions with the DPW to ensure that every opportunity is being taken to make such improvements on the roadways. DL has shared this map with Joe Flanagan, DPW Director. There are several types of striping and a methodology for how and when roads would be re-striped.

JB said they would also like guidance on working with other volunteer boards for bringing this forward in terms of expectations. DL served on Cambridge Pedestrian Committee for 10 years and noted that every major project in Cambridge goes through their Committee; it is part of an institutionalized process.

VL reminded the group that the DPW does publish its list of road work, known as the Pavement Management Plan on the Town's website. He reminded the group that this Committee is advisory to the Board of Selectmen and is appointed by the BOS, so that when they make a vote on the Pavement Management plan we should provide our input as well through a letter to the BOS. DL suggested the Committee keep an eye on the Washington Street improvement project since Town staff has approached MAPC about funding for improvements once the Town has control.

DL reviewed the bike lane plans that he brought to the meeting. He stated that a bike lane can be as narrow as 4 feet, the average car is 7 feet wide and a MBTA bus is 9ft wide. RM said there are limitations to where bike lanes can be placed based on existing road widths. SK reviewed sharrows and stated that they are used when there is not enough room for bike lanes, but when we still want to bring attention to the cyclists and to notify drivers to share the road. DL said that they are looking for opportunities within Dedham and to connect Dedham with Boston's Bike Network Plan. He stated that there are two major corridors, the first one crosses Dedham from Readville to Dedham Center, the second one is a path system of trails that connect with Needham. DL was interested in creating a path from downtown Dedham to East Street and through Gobbi's property to Central Street and eventually connecting with Legacy Place and the MBTA Corporate stop.

DL analysis revealed Bridge, East and Sprague Streets as possible locations for bike lanes. They had not yet walked the rail trail, but would make recommendations about expanding that since it connects Dedham Square with Boston. He recommended small steps when it comes to the rail trail; a gravel or dirt path is a good way to start and build support for the trail.

The Foulds Family attended the meeting with concerns about access to the Middle School, where their son will be attending next year. It is difficult to get across Rt 1 safely. It is also difficult to get under the bridge on East Street. Discussion ensued about possible measures for getting around bridge using MBTA crossover at track. EF thought that the strategy to get people behind this plan is to sell it as a means for helping to get people into Dedham Square and soliciting the local merchants.

CH reviewed the inconsistencies with the sidewalks on High Street into Westwood. MAPC is working with Westwood on their sidewalks. She also discussed Rt 1 as being a fundamental barrier of the Town. The timing of the lights and pedestrian traffic crossing at Rt 1 to Legacy Place was also discussed since there are so many employees of Legacy Place crossing that intersection. DL said that road speed and on and off ramps to 128 will be a consideration at this intersection. Discussion ensued about crosswalk standards. The piano key method of creating crosswalks is least expensive and has the same effectiveness as the other designs.

BP noted that education and outreach will need to be a cornerstone of this program if we are to educate drivers about sharing the roads. BF thought bike lanes would make it safer for students to ride their bikes to school. It can be helpful in drawing attention to cyclists. The next steps for this project are to come up with a plan for the Town based on paving schedules and opportunities with existing road width.

Next Step Living

VL updated the Committee on her discussions with NSL regarding bringing them into Town to implement a home energy assessment program. This has long been a goal of the Committee, but we do not have enough staff, time or expertise to implement on our own. She will be presenting a MOA to the Town Administrator to review, which would enter us into a non-binding contract with NSL.

Earth Week

VL announced that the Town will be celebrating Earth Week, which will kick off with Woodard and Curran clean up on Friday, April 20th and commence with cleanups on Saturday, April 28th. SM offered to bring the earth ball in for everyone to sign.

Earth Hour

Earth Hour was Saturday, March 31st from 8:30-9:30pm. She heard from residents that they celebrated with good friends, food and spirits, cooked on the gas grill outside, had dinner by candlelight or roasted marshmallows by the fire.

Next year we will try to promote on our Facebook page for people to send in photos of what they did further in advance so we can also gauge how many people participated. We will also try to connect with Dedham Turn off TV week, which is during School vacation week.

Community/Member Update

DH announced that she promoted Earth Hour and Earth Day at Nobles.

JB said he will confirm the date of the Green Fair in September, there will be a cost for a booth unless a non-profit is participating. CH is going to try and get the MIT Solar Car to participate. This year we will be focusing on quality of the vendors, not the quantity. JB said we want vendors that can bring value and can be interactive.

JB announced that the garden program that he applied for mitigation money to create with Green City Growers will be built out in the next couple weeks at the Dolan Center. He has been working with Park and Rec on this program to implement it as part of their regular offerings.

Adjourn

Meetings have been changed to the second Monday of every month. The next meeting would be May 14th. J. Hamblin made a motion to adjourn and S. MacAusland second. All in favor.