

Town of Natick - Transportation Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 9, 2020
School Committee Training Room, Town Hall, 13 East Central Street

Members present: Joshua Ostroff, Cody Jacobs, Matt Page, Steve Brayman
Also present: James Freas, Director of Community and Economic Development; Jeremy Marsette, Director of Public Works; Nicole Freedman (City of Newton)

The meeting was called to order 7:03; introductions ensued.

Agenda Item 4. Nicole Freedman was at the meeting to share Newton's experience with bike share. She started by asking about the town's interest, in the matter; Josh provided a history. Nicole then discussed the different kinds of systems (dockless, docked). Dock stations are very costly. Docked systems are typically solar powered, require no trenching, and are removable systems. Boston's experience with Hubway (Nicole worked for Boston at the time) was then the state of the art.

In the last 5 years, dockless systems have come on the market. All are phone-app based.

There is now a hybrid technology where locations are centralized, using dockless with standard racks which are much less costly than custom racks. Bikes are still geo-located so the bike share company knows where they are, and can ensure that bikes are parked where they should be. Other hybrids include Zagster with a built-in lock for a fixed object. Boston is experimenting with a hybrid system.

Technology has gotten confused with business models for bikeshare. For lower density e.g. Boston suburbs, dock-based system is overkill. We could not have enough stations at one end of the typical trip.

Cities may be paying the capital costs through sponsorships, and there has not been tax \$ support.

Most dockless systems with venture capital funding essentially gave the systems away for free. But they are losing money as they never had a sponsorship revenue stream, and generally they are gone. So the hybrid is the financially viable model. But they still need municipal support.

Questions about capital costs, \$300-500 per bike for hybrid. E-bikes are more. Zagster has a lease model, \$1800/bike/year. Veoride is now in Lowell with good equipment.

There was discussion of rebalancing, i.e. moving bikes around to match demand.

There was discussion of sponsorships and permitting.

There was discussion of an MAPC procurement. MAPC is meeting soon to discuss the end of Limebikes. There is an opportunity for grants to help fund municipal programs; however, MAPC is looking only at inner core cities (i.e. closer to Boston).

E bikes are used much more and should be a priority. They are pedal-assist. Costs are higher though. Scooters are ridden much more, but they are more urban and there are safety concerns. Typically, the vendor provides the insurance.

Cody will do research and report back.

Agenda item 5. Pedestrian safety was discussed. We will take this on and make this a priority. This will likely be part of a February discussion .

We returned to Agenda Item 1, Announcements.

- a. Steve discussed his background and Natick Center Associates, who has a seat on the TAC.
- b. Bala stepped down.
- c. We have two vacancies
- d. We will have a committee reorganization at our next meeting.

Agenda Item 6, street acceptance. Jeremy explained the concept of street acceptance and public/private roads, the benefits of acceptance and the limitations on maintaining private roads.

We discussed some roads that are good candidates for acceptance, e.g. Cemetery and the Windsor Ave neighborhood.

We need a more streamlined process to accept roads beyond the simplified street acceptance plan the Town recently adopted. Jeremy discussed a process that the Town of Mansfield used; we would accept special legislation, then come back with a list of streets.

There is legislation that would allow us to accept more roads. We would have a home rule petition, i.e. special legislation, then come back to Town Meeting with the list of streets. We would also pursue funding to do layouts of streets likely to be accepted.

Discussion was about the priority streets which tend to be collector roads, Dover Road, Kendall Lane, etc.

Agenda item 7, Parking. The Committee discussed the current parking issues and who is working on them. We briefly discussed the concept of parking benefit district. James expects to be focused on updating our parking bylaws in Natick Center.

Agenda item 8, updates:

- a. We will discuss Complete Streets at our next meeting
- b. We will discuss the 5 year roadway plan at our next meeting

c. Local projects: the Washington Avenue project came in under estimate; South Main Street recently had a bid opening, and thus will be on 1/21 BOS agenda. Cost is close to appropriation. Other paving projects are out to bid or will be soon. In future years, Hartford, Eliot, Speen, Hartford, Pond will be rebuilt. It is expected that the Town capital plan will fund more projects than it has in the past. We will be able to better align projects with the recent conditions report.

d. State projects: the Natick Center MBTA station is likely to be starting soon. For the CRT/MBTA Station connection the, town is submitting grant application for design; we hope to seek appropriation from TM for part of the design cost, as the grant is reimbursement based. The West Natick/CRT connection path received initial approval by MassDOT, and design will start soon with community outreach. The 9/27 interchange is awaiting a decision on the preferred design.

Item 9, meeting minutes: Steve Brayman voted to approved draft 12/5 minutes, Cody seconded, voted unanimously.

Item 10, other business: Josh will make an intro between Cody and Karen Adelman-Foster, who is on the BOS and is the Town's rep on the MetroWest RTA Advisory Board; Josh will share information about the 9/27 design to the committee. We will reschedule February and March meetings.

The meeting was adjourned by on a motion by Steve, seconded by Cody and unanimously voted at 8:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joshua Ostroff, Chair