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06/19/2013 Minutes

Minutes for the ABAC meeting of June 19, 2013

Board members attending were Christopher Tonkin, Stephan Miller, Ron Sender, Doug Greenfield, Phil Goff and Scott Smith. Jack Johnson was absent. Also present were Joey Glushko, Jeff Boudreau, Stephen Quinn, Todd Spivak, Maggie Stanley and Tsunau Yeung (last name?).

The meeting was called to order at 7:30.

*Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes of the May meeting were approved after amendments were made.

Bikeway: Hours of use. Scott summarized the objections to the current hours of use rules for the Bikeway. Jeff brought this to our attention. Those that disagree with the current hours feel that the hours stated in the bylaw make no sense—cyclists and pedestrians need to use the Bikeway after 9 in the evening to get to and from Alewife among other destinations. He explained that we and others wrote a warrant article to extend hours but that article was opposed by the police on the grounds that they wish to be able to restrict gathering on the Bikeway after hours. Scott added that, if we wish to pursue extending or eliminating the hours of use, we have to get the main stake holders (Police and Selectman) on board with the changes or be able to make a very good case to overcome their objections.

Jeff told us that a town does not have the authority to close a throughway unless it has the consent of the adjacent communities. Joey answered that Bedford and Lexington did consent to the hours when the Bikeway was built. Scott added that extending the hours would benefit pedestrians more than bicyclists which should help the argument for extension. Jeff also felt that the current signage is not sufficient so no one knows what the hours of operation are. Ron explained that a lot of legwork will be necessary to change this bylaw and added that it would be helpful to contact all the abutters and get their buy in as was done in the case for plowing the Bikeway in winter.

BIKE-Arlington Tour. 28 people attended this year's Tour. Christopher hypothesized that the turnout was low because of the remote starting point. Those who attended obviously enjoyed the event itself and also the activities that took place at the dam after the Tour was finished.

Spring Outreach. Stephen and Stephan told us that there had been rain in the morning so traffic on the path was light. In spite of the light traffic, we talked to number of people, adjusted a lot of brakes and distributed the new Bikeway Map.

Recreational Trail Grant Program. Joey handed out copies of the new Bikeway Map. She asked what venues in Arlington we thought could distribute copies of the brochure and map. Suggestions included the hotel on Rt. 16, Jam 'n Java, Barismo, Urban Adventures, the Dallin Museum and others. She reminded us that comments on the draft recommendations submitted by the consultant on the RGTP are due next week.

Bike accommodation as roads are repaved. Scott told us that neither TAC or the DPW have worked on this project in the last month. The DPW appears to think that now that the guidelines are set up, no more input from ABAC or TAC will be required. We disagreed with this point of view and would like to participate in the process on an ongoing basis.

Transportation Advisory Committee report. Scott told us that the Feds have not yet signed off on the Mass. Ave. Corridor Project plans but there is some room for optimism. A delegation from East Arlington Livable Streets met with a delegation from Federal Highway Administration to advocate for the project in person. EALS asked what the time line for approval is. The Feds made it clear that they have not taken sides on the dispute over the design. Their interest is to make sure that the project is in compliance with existing regulations. Phil that perhaps they are taking their time and accumulating information in case there is a lawsuit later in the process. He also told us that both congressmen Markey and Senator Warren's offices are engaged in the process and that he believes, at this point, the deadline for this project is just a month away.

Clean Air and Mobility Program. In the 25% design plan, we tried to fit bicycle accommodations into the existing dimensions of the road while, at the same time, keeping all the parking. A number of speakers at the public hearing pointed out that the parking should be eliminated and a cycle track built. At the same time, the Town is trying to avoid the possible backlash from eliminating parking. We have also heard that MassDOT did not rate the plan very highly. Scott feels that more work needs to be done on this design.

Bikeway Usage Guidelines. Joey, Stephan, Ron and Scott will work on this topic and present it at the August meeting.

ABAC Website. Doug has been diligent in keeping the website up to date. We decided that he should maintain an archive of past events.

Bikeway Counts. Joey showed us a summary of the counts taken over the last few years. She pointed out that in the last two years the weekday counts have doubled. We discussed how we should use and disseminate this data. She also asked for volunteers to do future counts.

League of American Bicyclists update. Joey informed us that we need to do an update to maintain our Bike Friendly Community designation. LAB has asked us to choose our biggest bicycle related achievement in the past year. Joey suggested our increased on line presence with the new ABAC Website and Facebook page.

Mass. Commute Bike Challenge. Joey informed us that, once again, Arlington won the Annual Mass. Commuter Bike Challenge!

Other Items.

Christopher told us that our application for a Town Day booth has been submitted. He requested our usual site in front of the Library. He suggested the idea that we buy some bicycle safety equipment such as ankle bands, have them imprinted and give them out at Town day. The response was largely positive. Christopher will look into it.

Todd suggested that for large events like the Bicycle Film Festival the sponsors should consider providing a bicycle corral for parking.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 pm.

*Notes that a vote of the board was taken.

Minutes submitted by Stephan Miller.