



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Minutes

Date: Oct 21st, 2020

Time: 7:15PM

Location: Via Zoom conference

Attendees: *Executive committee:* Christopher Tonkin (chair), Doug Greenfield, Jack Johnson, Muris Kobaslija, Adam MacNeill, Doug Mayo-Wells, Scott Smith

Town of Arlington: Daniel Amstutz, Officer Neil Simard

Members of the public: David Creedon, Linda Epstein, Phil Goff, Roderick Holland, Stephan Miller, Galen Mook, Alison Piasecki, Judith Proctor, Thomas Proctor

1. Introductions, Ground rules

Meeting opens with review of emergency remote public meeting guidance consistent with Governor Baker's executive order of March 12th, 2020: The Governor's order suspends the requirement of Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a public and accessible location. Public meetings may meet entirely remotely as long as the public can access the meeting.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-suspending-certain-provision-of-open-meeting-law/download>

Committee secretary Doug Mayo-Wells is taking minutes; the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of verifying the minutes; and the recording will be deleted after the minutes are approved.

Executive committee roll call:

Christopher Tonkin, chair, present

Jack Johnson, present

Muris Kobaslija, present

Adam MacNeill, present

Doug Mayo-Wells, present

Scott Smith, present
Doug Greenfield, present

From the Town of Arlington:
Daniel Amstutz, Sr Transportation Planner, present

Participants are invited to introduce themselves and affiliation, if any:

David Creedon, Arlington resident
Linda Epstein, Arlington resident
Phil Goff; East Arlington Livable Streets co-chair
Roderick Holland, ABAC member at large, Precinct 7 Town Meeting member
Stephan Miller, Arlington resident
Alison Piasecki, Charlie Proctor's partner
Judith Proctor, Charlie Proctor's mother
Officer Neil Simard, COBWEB (Cops on Bikes with Education for Bicyclists)
(The following joined subsequent to introduction)
Galen Mook, executive director, MassBike
Thomas Proctor, Charlie Proctor's brother

2. COBWEB OFFICER

Officer Simard: Not much to report, off of bikes since the start of the pandemic. Appleton St closure seems to have mitigated the safety issue temporarily, but has been suspended.

3. TAC report

(Transportation Advisory Committee)

Smith: TAC main topic was Chestnut St, where a pedestrian was fatally injured last December at the crosswalk at Chestnut Terrace. Pushing for action to improve safety of crosswalk, a TAC working group has proposed good design ideas:

- clarifying that there is only one lane in each direction
- potential refuge island in crosswalk
- maybe room for bike lane (currently a wide curb area)
- immediate remediation: flags at crosswalk

Citizens seem pleased with progress.

Nothing to report on Mass Ave/Appleton Design Review Committee.

4. Lake Street lane markings, room for a bike lane?

Smith: After some discussion with DPW, with helpful contributions from Phil Goff, worked out a reasonable approach. Test markings have been down for about 2 weeks, 10.5' travel lane,

leaves room for 4'-5' bike lane west of Margaret St. Some discontinuity right at the Rt. 2 overpass (under Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) jurisdiction).

Roderick Holland: Rode with the test markings inbound at rush hour; worked well.

Smith: Only issue observed was tree overhanging lane at approx. 109 Lake St westbound; may be good candidate for Town Request/Answer center.

Tonkin: Trees can be a sensitive issue in town, but safety issues need to be addressed, and trimming is easier than outright removal.

Smith: Also looking at Lowell St, may have room for a bike lane inbound by the reservoir where there is no parking. (Eastern section is not really wide enough for parking, but parking has been allowed.)

Daniel Amstutz: There is a short section of Lake St west of Rt 2 that is not MassDOT and not in Belmont; it seems like there was some effort to get a bike lane there heading east to Acorn Park Dr. (could connect to the bikeway on ramp). Temporary marking seemed close to curb on the westbound side, but connection is desirable, so it may be worthwhile even if width is less than ideal.

Smith: Drove it recently, it does seem challenging, but Rt 2 underpass itself is a bigger issue; motor vehicles don't need 2 lanes westbound.

Goff: When the bike lane is striped in Arlington it will highlight the deficiency of the southbound Lake St/Acorn Park drive connection. 2 westbound travel lanes in addition to a left-turn lane seems excessive, would provide room for a buffered separated bike lane or 2-stage left turn. Good candidate to raise to MassDOT. David Loutzenheiser at Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) had advocated for a bike lane about a year ago, but there was nothing for it to connect to; now there is, so this should be re-visited.

Smith: Take pictures after stripes are down, contact MassDOT this winter (before the next painting season).

Goff: Don't even need to scrape existing striping, the lane line between the 2 westbound lanes could become the separation between the bikeline and the westbound through travel lane.

5. Approval of outstanding minutes from previous meetings

Christopher Tonkin moves to accept December minutes as amended

Scott Smith seconds, Tonkin takes a roll call vote

Smith: Yes

Mayo-Wells: abstains (absent for December)

Doug Greenfield: Yes

Jack Johnson: Yes

Muris Kobaslija: Yes

Adam MacNeill: Yes

Tonkin: Yes

SO VOTED (6-0)

Christopher Tonkin moves to accept January minutes as amended

Kobaslija seconds, Tonkin takes a roll call vote

Mayo-Wells: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Kobaslija: Yes

Smith: Yes

MacNeill: Yes

Greenfield: Yes

Tonkin: Yes

SO VOTED (7-0)

Christopher Tonkin moves to accept February minutes as amended

Smith seconds, Tonkin takes a roll call vote

Smith: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Kobaslija: Yes

MacNeill: Yes

Greenfield: Yes

Tonkin: Yes

Mayo-Wells: Yes

SO VOTED (7-0)

Amstutz: On page 8, re: DPW managing the project, need to clarify that the Planning Department makes updates for their department, not the whole website. More accurate to say that the planning department has helped with communication updates about these projects.

Christopher Tonkin moves to accept September minutes as amended

Kobaslija seconds, Tonkin takes a roll call vote

Mayo-Wells: Yes

Greenfield: Yes
Kobaslija: Yes
Smith: Yes
Johnson: Yes
MacNeill: Yes
Tonkin: Yes

SO VOTED (7-0)

6. Lake Street/Bikeway signal project construction status and discussion.

Kobaslija provided in-progress photographs to facilitate discussion.

Kobaslija: Routing traffic via Brooks for bikeway closure worked well, it felt like a shared street.

Holland: Agrees, it was straightforward.

Amstutz: Michael Rademacher (Director of Public Works) provided an update to me and notes:

- site work should complete by end-of-month.
- the last remaining item is interconnection of signals at bikeway and Brooks Ave.; that should complete by the first week of November if not sooner.
- Missed the fall planting season so new trees will be planted in spring.
- Waiting on painting contract to schedule lane striping (for Lake St)

Tonkin has a draft of the memo on the need for education about the new signal ready to send to Arlington Police Department (APD) and Select Board.

Johnson: Also include DPW, planning department. May need to recommend active police presence during peak times to educate and direct traffic.

Smith: Still experiencing light traffic on Lake St vs. normal conditions.

Tonkin: Have noticed backups at odd times, not normal peak hours.

MacNeill: Currently all 4 traffic lights are facing bikeway, not the road

Tonkin: Maybe pointed away from traffic until activation, to avoid motorist confusion?

7. Update on the Design Review Committee for Mass Ave/Appleton.

Tonkin: Town Manager will be calling the initial committee meeting in the next week or two.

Epstein: Haven't heard the schedule yet.

Tonkin: Does the scope of review extend as far west as the proposed hotel?

Smith: Unclear.

8. Ghost Bike memorial update.

Tonkin: Looking for a new location, Leader Bank next to the parking lot seems suitable.

Thomas Proctor: Believe that the bank has been contacted, waiting to hear back

Mayo-Wells: What happened with the original proposed location?

Tonkin: Was going to be by the Captain Joseph Grant memorial; Veterans' Services felt there was inadequate space.

Judith Proctor: How to work to move forward?

Tonkin: Suggests contacting the bank directly, the proposed site is likely their property (and they should know if it is or not). The bank is based in Arlington, and has been responsive.

Johnson: Width of sidewalk in front of the bank could be a concern. A little further eastbound (1191-1195 Mass Ave) the sidewalk widens, and there is an open area that is likely town property.

Epstein: That area has benches now, not heavily used. Concerned about the potential of impact on the memorial at the bank site location from construction of the proposed hotel at 1207-1211 Mass Ave.

Mook: Appreciates ABAC's contributions to the discussion.

9. Bluebikes latest.

Amstutz:

- First stations installed and operational Sep 10 2020: Railroad lot at Bikeway, Linwood at Bikeway
- Next stations installed Sep 15 2020: Grafton St at Mass Ave, and Grafton St at Broadway
- Thorndike Field/Magnolia Park/Bikeway station installed Oct 15 2020
- Mass Ave/Broadway station won't be installed this season due to delays & too close to winter.
- Just over 1,000 trips were recorded between Sep 10 and Oct 21.
 - Formula: (Trips that start at Arlington stations + Trips that end at Arlington stations) / 2
- Railroad lot & Linwood by Bikeway seeing most activity
- Magnolia Park/Thorndike will remain through winter
- On-street stations have to be taken up to facilitate snow removal, will be taken up starting Nov 23 and will be in storage until late March
- May be possible to move the Railroad Lot station to Town Hall plaza over the winter; working to coordinate with James Feeney (Interim Director of Facilities); depends on plaza construction work completing before Thanksgiving

Tonkin: Is 1,000 rides good or bad?

Amstutz: Too early to say; already getting into low season. 2-year contract to start, need to reach ~1,700 trips/month to continue after 2 years w/o having to pay more (or pay for operations). Some of the expansion communities are skeptical about their ability to reach that goal.

10. New bike parking project initiative – capital funds for FY 2021.

Amstutz:

- Annual Town Meeting approved \$25,000 capital funds for bike parking in FY 2021
- Partly as follow up to revised bike parking zoning bylaw and Bike Parking Guidelines
- Initial locations recommended:
 - Ed Burns Arena/Recreation Offices
 - Hill's Hill playground (right off the Bikeway)
 - Bishop Elementary School
 - Public Works offices
 - Will not be pursued right now due to ongoing plans for renovation
 - Buzzell Field and playground
 - Magnolia Field and playground
- Questions:
 - Other priority locations?
 - Phil Goff suggested by Post Office/Orvis Rd
 - Artistic bike racks
 - Bike corrals (to replace a parking space)
 - Replace existing racks lacking safety/functionality
 - Prioritize more locations vs. sufficient racks at each location?
 - Should we re-collect bike rack data (4-5 years old)?
- Planning department will direct, DPW will install (unless contractor assistance is required)

Johnson: Can only install on municipal property?

Amstutz: Yes, at least for ease of installation

Johnson: Business districts, Arlington Heights, Arlington Center, East Arlington on Mass Ave would be good, but sidewalks are often too narrow to accommodate a rack. What happens to bike corrals in winter?

Tonkin: Arlington Heights has been challenging but there is demand (received communication from former ABAC member Jock Hoffman). Also suggests:

- Bottom of the stairs at Trader Joe's on the bikeway

- Hurd Field
- Reservoir

Amstutz: Racks at Trader Joe's are in the replace/upgrade category

Goff: Great to have this resource, rare opportunity to build a covered bike parking shelter (\$8K - \$15K), maybe in front of Town Hall or at a school (Thompson, Bishop, Hardy). Several vendors make modular awning structures that cover 4-6 rack space for 4-6 bikes.

Mayo-Wells:

- High School, supplant bike facilitation that has been cut out of the reconstruction budget?
- At Stop & Shop, is it possible to site a rack on municipal property nearby? (existing private rack is poorly designed)

Tonkin: What does Whole Foods have?

Mayo-Wells: Along sidewalk, wavy racks, not bad.

Greenfield: Post Office in Arlington Center, might be tricky to find location.

Amstutz: There is a rack there, but it is strange on USPS property (by fire hydrant).

Greenfield: Possible to work with area churches to site racks, even if it doesn't directly benefit congregation attending services?

Tonkin: Possible to negotiate bulk discount rates?

Amstutz: Possibly. Right now finding locations, creating a plan for each. Wouldn't buy a bunch, then find sites. Could make the argument that Stop & Shop rack is in public interest, might be able to purchase for them to install (but why don't they do it).

Tonkin: Likely not sufficient space on sidewalk at Stop & Shop.

Amstutz: Can raise with Allison Carter, Economic Development Coordinator

Smith: In Heights, for on-street corrals, approaches to cross-walks might be good candidates; don't want parking there anyway. Private rack at Walgreens in East Arlington is bad as well. Stop & Shop rack in Somerville is also bad, maybe coordinate with Somerville Bike Committee to pressure Stop & Shop to improve bike facilitation in both locations.

Tonkin: What are the next steps, should we organize survey re-do?

Amstutz: There may be new racks installed over the past 4 years that are not on the map, can be checked online, would be good to know. Also the map doesn't indicate rack type or quality.

Tonkin: Some recreation areas might benefit from racks on the bikeway side and street side.

Amstutz: Email with ideas, specificity is helpful (address, photo, streetview link).

11. Bikeway Study initiative to be funded by CPA

Amstutz:

- Funding CPA (Community Preservation Act) for Minuteman Bikeway expected to be approved by Special Town Meeting (Article 24) (postponed from annual Town Meeting due to pandemic)
- DPCD (Department of Planning & Community Development) will use funds to procure consultant to conduct a planning study:
 - To include community goals, priorities & implementation plan
 - Consultant will assist in developing conceptual designs
 - with actionable preliminary cost estimates
 - serve as basis for future grant applications
- Possible for additional CPA funds to address placemaking/wayside locations in undeveloped town-owned property as proposed in preliminary application by resident (John Ellis) for FY2022
- Study likely to include:
 - Safety issues
 - Entrances/access to bikeway, intersections, accessibility
 - Lighting
 - Path widening (assessing feasibility)
 - Drainage & environmental issues (invasive species)
 - Placemaking/waysides for stopping & resting activity
 - Art opportunities & locations (permanent art placement, best locations)
- Public involvement throughout the process
- Other issues to address?

Tonkin: Maintenance – root heaves, subsidence, resurfacing. How to budget? (vs. money for new bikeways)

Amstutz: Will consider how to place pavement preservation in context of study.

12. Arlington Shared Streets Pilot, update

Amstutz:

- Mary St. pilot installed 9 Oct 2020
- Testing 2 mini traffic circles (at Birch, Littlejohn), good reaction so far
- Pylons along edges to narrow street not working so well (but street was already narrow)
- Need to verify with Fire Department that ladder truck can get through

Tonkin: many mini-roundabouts in UK, some just plain, some slightly domed, can drive over

Amstutz: Yes, evaluating mountable curb strategy. Mary St. pilot will run through mid-November.

Kobaslija: Rotary working well, observed effective traffic calming. Has observed street-narrowing working more effectively with permanent installations in Europe, Seattle. What about Brooks St, or anything on the north side of Mass Ave (Amsden St)?

Amstutz: Residents have been pursuing Amsden/Waldo shared street; had to devote most of my time to Mary St. after grant funds were made available. Have been coordinating with Scott Mullen, Waldo Rd residents have been less enthusiastic. Will follow up, but may be too late to implement this season, try for spring.

13. Connect Arlington, the Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan.

Amstutz:

- Factbook and public input summary are now available
- Next engagement opportunities in mid-November and December
- Working to have survey analysis complete before Special Town Meeting
- Final forum between Nov and December
- Getting into strategies and metrics for tracking progress

14. Bike Friendly Community: reapplication

Amstutz: Application deadline delayed until Feb 2021; because of pandemic and because application has been revised/updated.

Goff: Arlington has a good shot at Silver status with bike sharing, rack improvements – could be 3rd or 4th Bike Friendly Community in Massachusetts to achieve Silver.

15. Update on the automated Bikeway counter.

Amstutz: Functioning normally since Sept 1. Some days over 4,000 trips. Still working to clean up bad pedestrian data which makes analysis difficult.

16. Next ABAC meetings

Tonkin: Should we book rooms, fix times for next year?

Amstutz: Yes, can address in November meeting.

17. Other Business

Mook: Heard something about TAC traffic/design study on Appleton, can anyone clarify?

Smith: Likely related to Appleton & Park Ave; traffic signal is being evaluated due to motorist crashes.

Tonkin: It's been a while since we had a tri-town (Arlington, Lexington, Bedford) meeting, should we try to hold a virtual one?

Holland: Sounds like a good idea

Smith: Yes, travel is easier

Kobaslija: Yes, not able to participate previously because of time

Tonkin: Will reach out to other towns and report back.

Smith moves to adjourn

Tonkin seconds

Adjourned