

Minutes of the Joint Tri-Town–Bedford Bicycle Advisory
Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 8, 2021

BBAC Members present:

Mark Bailey David Enos Craig Jackson
Garth McCavana Peter Weichman

BBAC Members absent:

Samantha Baron

This is an online/virtual meeting, recorded through Zoom. A BAC quorum was present, and the meeting came to order at 7:30 pm, Mark Bailey presiding.

Also attending: Christopher Tonkin (ABAC), Linda Epstein (ABAC), Jack Johnson (ABAC), Lauren Hefferon (ABAC), Doug Mayo-Wells (ABAC), Muris Kobaslija (ABAC), Dave Armstrong (LBAC), Betty Gau (LBAC), Mike O’Connor (LBAC), Ram Ready (LBAC), Ralph Hammond (Bedford guest), Phillip Posner (Concord guest), Adam MacNeill (Guest), Xuan (Guest).

General introductions took place.

Discussion of Tri-Town priorities:

- Regional grant opportunities – a recent example being the state-funded pandemic recovery planning grant, supporting economic development along the bikeway.
- Bikeway access through neighboring private property. BBAC reported some recent success; LBAC less so (e.g., access from Trader Joe is not very convenient).
- Planning for Patriots Day 2022. A Bedford Day style booth was suggested.
- Recent bike-related events. Arlington had a costumed bike ride, and a Light Brigade.

Discussion of bikeway rules, signage, repairs, etc.:

- Setting speed limits requires State approval. Currently there are no enforceable rules. For this reason, police will not engage. Even advisory speed limits are of questionable legality. E-bikes, some of which can be ridden at high speed by inexperienced operators, are a major issue.
- The possibility of installing way-finding signs are being explored.
- The bikeway surface is becoming a major problem (tree roots, fading lines). We have lost ADA compliance in several areas. Repairs are accomplished on a Town-by-Town basis via their respective DPWs.
- Occasionally, wayward automobiles have found their way onto the bikeway. Lexington uses plastic barrels as barriers. Bedford has been trying to remove gates to improve biking access, probably to be replaced by something equivalent to barrels.

Phil Posner reported that Concord has been ramping up bicycle advocacy efforts. A bikeway bridge across Route 2 is in process. The Reformatory Branch of the Minuteman extension through Bedford is planned to reach the Concord border within the next couple of years. This will hopefully motivate further extensions into Concord.

There was some discussion of extending the TriTown forum into a more regional forum. Somerville, Medford, Waltham, etc., have some biking infrastructure. Phil Posner reported that Acton, Stowe, and Harvard have been organizing and are certainly eager to connect to TriTown, but without necessarily formally merging.

There was a discussion of regular TriTown meetings going forward, with rotating host. It was agreed that three meetings per year, with each town hosting one per year, appears most realistic. Lexington agreed to host the next one, with Wednesday, March 9 being the target date. This is one month before Patriots Day, which will help with the planning.

Win-loss-hope (rose-thorn-bud) highlights from each Town:

- Bedford reported on steady progress toward completion of the Reformatory Branch bikeway extension (rose). Effort to obtain separated bike lanes along Great Road failed (thorn). Very early planning has begun for paving of the Narrow Gauge rail trail, toward the Billerica border (bud).
- Lexington reported on its so far unsuccessful effort to obtain funding for a bike-pedestrian master plan (thorn). There are efforts to organize winter biking sessions (bud). Private donations for bikeway snow plowing this winter have been obtained (rose).
- Arlington has obtained CAP funding (more than was requested!) for a ‘future of the Minuteman Bikeway’ survey (rose). Toole (used in the past by both Bedford and Lexington) was considered as the consultant, but Kittleman was ultimately hired. They designed a very nice holistic survey that was well promoted and achieved a good response. Moving forward with any recommendations will require further resources (bud). Ideas include widening the bikeway (which has significant right-of-way issues); proper lighting installation; improved connectivity with the rest of Arlington (consistent with Complete Streets). Recently there was a cyclist death on Mass. Ave., and a second cyclist was significantly injured slightly later. A Town committee was formed to propose safety improvements. However, the plan that emerged did not pass the Select Board due to parking issues (thorn). However, an improved compromise did eventually pass that includes painted bike lanes (rose). A regional plan to link Medford to the Minuteman bikeway is being explored (dud).

At 9:00 pm, a BBAC motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

—*Minutes submitted by Secretary/Clerk Peter Weichman*