



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Minutes

Date: Nov 17th, 2021

Time: 7:15PM

Location: Via Zoom conference

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

Town of Arlington: Daniel Amstutz (Sr Transportation Planner), Officer Brendan Flynn (APD, COBWEB)

Members of the public: Ed Blundell (resident), Roderick Holland (Member-at-large, Town Meeting precinct 7), Petru Sofio (Member-at-large)

Reference materials:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/updated-guidance-on-holding-meetings-pursuant-to-the-act-extending-certain-covid-19-measures>

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/58791>

1. Greetings and Introductions, ground rules for online meetings.

Christopher Tonkin advised that the meeting is held remotely related to COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency. Tonkin notified attendees that 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. Tonkin confirmed the committee members and others in attendance for the meeting.

2. Approval of the outstanding minutes for previous meetings (August)

Doug Mayo-Wells moves to approve minutes from September, as amended by Daniel Amstutz and Scott Smith

Christopher Tonkin seconds; motion carries 6-0

Christopher Tonkin moves to approve minutes from October

Adam MacNeill seconds; motion carries 4-0 with 2 abstentions

3. Report from COBWEB Officer.

Officer Flynn advised via text that he is unable to participate due to technical issues.

4. TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) report

Smith reports that last month's meeting was canceled due to the tragic, sudden passing of the chair's husband, Jim Swan. Both Laura and Jim have been active in the community. There is fundraising to support the family (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/in-memory-of-jim-swan>) and a trash pickup around town scheduled for Sunday. Daniel Amstutz also shared an online memorial to Jim:

<https://www.yourarlington.com/easyblog/entry/73-people/3071-swan-111121>

5. Reappointments to the board, Succession of the Chair, drawing in new members

Christopher Tonkin is planning to resign as chair within 6 months. Doug Greenfield is planning to resign from the executive committee sooner. ABAC will advertise for one new member now through Town posting, mailing list, MassBike, at upcoming Jingle Ride and reaching out directly to individuals with prior involvement, like Karin Turer and Linda Epstein. A prior advertisement for an open position in 2018 can be used as a draft. It was noted that the ABAC bylaws do not have a minimum age requirement and that some other committees have youth representation. It was further noted that improving the diversity of representation within the committee would be helpful.

Action: Christopher Tonkin, Daniel Amstutz, Jack Johnson to review/revise advertisement.

6. Tour of Arlington for 2021, virtual event

Doug Mayo-Wells has not been able to work on a self-guided tour website; however given current trends of the pandemic it is likely feasible to do an in-person ride in the spring. Tentatively scheduled for May 22, may adjust based on Bay State Bike Week timing.

Also tentatively scheduling a trash pickup on the bikeway for April 24 (close to Earth Day). It is noted that some trash dumped on the bikeway, e.g., sawn-up furniture by a dumpster east of Hurd field may be a code enforcement issue.

Action: Christopher Tonkin to send photo of dumping to Daniel Amstutz to forward to Building Inspections

Action: (to be assigned) Coordinate with DPW and Recycling Coordinator Charlotte Milan to arrange collection of collected trash

Action: (to be assigned) Contact the Conservation Commission and East Arlington Livable Streets to solicit volunteers

7. Mass Ave/Appleton intersection, Arlington's first protected bike lane.

A recent aggressive driver incident was reported: While using the marked shared lane by Appleton, resident Brian Ristuccia and his daughter were tailgated, honked at, passed unsafely, verbally assaulted, and threatened. This underscores the need for bike lanes on both sides of Mass Ave.

Paint has been applied. The flex posts in the center of the road have been installed. Signage and flex posts for buffered bike lanes have not yet been installed. Motor vehicles were still observed in the bike lane, but overall safety for cyclists and pedestrians has been improved. Should explore extending safety features to Lowell and Forest. Observing some vehicles turning between flex posts, so spacing may require adjustment, they also have been struck by vehicles.

The Planning Department has been conducting observations, e.g., of traffic patterns around Ottoson arrival/dismissal times. Comments can be sent to the Planning Department, Select Board or Town Manager, but primary focus is on longer-term

changes to intersection geometry. Parking study data is currently being analyzed and will be included as part of a presentation to the Select Board, likely in December or January.

The point was raised that a brief period of enhanced traffic enforcement might assist in modifying driver behavior, along with the possibility that newly-available infrastructure funds might provide an opportunity to accelerate implementation of the long-term plan.

The Appleton protected bike lane implementation represents a potential model for bike facilitation elsewhere in town.

8. Development of new rubric for road markings, bike lanes with and without protection

Planning Department is working on this, seeking to modify process with several goals

- build in public engagement component,
- use national and State guidance, as well as other communities, to make the case for/against protected bike lanes based on objective data like traffic speed and volume
- reflect the recommendations of the Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan

The parking study currently underway is also an opportunity to build a template for analysis on other streets, and some aligned revisions to the Town's Complete Streets program are also being considered.

A point was raised that although removing parking is always contentious, emphasizing pedestrian accommodation may be beneficial in winning community support (particularly parents of school-age children), and framing as street re-design guidance rather than bike lane design guidance.

A point was raised that it is frustrating that opportunities for change are created only reactively in response to a crash/injury/fatality or when a road is already scheduled to be resurfaced.

Joe Barr (Cambridge Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation) and Galen Mook (Executive Director, MassBike) were mentioned as individuals who might be able to provide suggestions on managing public engagement for productive outcomes.

9. ABAC Budget, MassBike classes, bike rodeos, other suggestions?

Background: ABAC received a bequest from Cutler West Foundation via area cycling advocate Nancy Peacock, earmarked for bike education. Some of the funds have been used to fund ABAC's costs for educational programming, but approximately \$3,000 remains, and it should be used now to ensure that it is applied as intended. (The Town may be entering a difficult situation in the next few years, an override could be sought for FY24 or FY25, and it is possible that unused funds might be called back through the budgeting process.) It is also possible even with financial difficulty for ABAC to request funding in the Town budget if there is a clear plan/purpose, e.g., TAC receives funding to run traffic counts, so there is little benefit to holding these funds unencumbered.

Suggestions for use of the funds include:

- Seed money for MassBike educational programs in Town schools, possibly in conjunction with PTA, depending on costs
- Bike rodeo (bicycle safety clinic for children, typically 4-13), possibly in conjunction with APD
- Expenses for the Bikeway (web site maintenance, maps (although the Town recently received a shipment of bikeway maps from Lexington))
- Updated Bicycle Friendly Community signage
- Middle/High School/adult education (focus new/returning "bike boom" riders, emphasize safe riding in traffic)

Action: (all) Consider these or other proposals with view to prioritizing/voting next month.

Action: Christopher Tonkin to contact Galen Mook to clarify potential offerings/costs, identify PTA contacts with input from Daniel Amstutz

10. Tri-Town Meeting scheduled for December 1st, need to post agenda

ABAC will likely have quorum in the meeting, so need to post on the Town website (before November 29th, at the latest), with agenda. Meeting link will also be posted on the Town website. Possible topics include:

- root heaves
- update on Bikeway study
- Mass Ave/Appleton update
- ABAC Recruiting new members

11. lights, quick update

Lake Street and Mystic

At Mass Ave/Lake St, observed drivers are not using the right turn lane, bike lane is often blocked, turn lane is used by drivers picking up food, etc.. May be possible as a short term project to move the bike lane to the far right, and separate the signal phases similar to Mass/Mystic.

Observed another instance of a car turning onto the Bikeway from Lake Street while distributing lights as part of MassBike Lights Brigade program. Might help to move bollards closer to the intersection. No motor vehicle access signage might help (there is a small no left turn sign, which is actually incorrect for bikes).

It was noted that the signals on Lake Street are difficult for drivers to see in advance, the signals are designed to prevent confusion between the lights at the Bikeway and at Brooks Ave. It has already been adjusted, but it may require further adjustment.

Bike detection seems to be working well westbound (but eastbound has been unreliable), and pedestrian signal timing has been adjusted. It might be good to clarify the meaning of "wait for green," – it doesn't actually indicate that a bike had been detected.

12. Daniel:

General updates from

See: <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/58791>

a. Minuteman Bikeway Planning Project

- Over 1,650 responses to Bikeway survey
- 50-60 attendees for Nov 3 public meeting (recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xz3sMfMxkKU>)
- Kittelson to deliver existing conditions memo to Town staff next week
- Next public meeting purpose/date TBD
- Will discuss maintenance policies with DPW and Town Manager's office
- The public meeting was regarded as effective, makes the point that the Bikeway was designed 30 years ago, and much has changed
- Lighting identified as an issue of particular concern, especially given that Bikeway is now open 24 hrs; the Somerville Community path has some options that could be viable

b. MassTrails grant – Mystic River to Minuteman Bikeway Feasibility Study

- Contracting with Toole Design Group, hoping to finalize contract within a week
- Will create plan for creating trail connections and review alternatives for route alignment and intersection crossings
- Upcoming kick-off meeting to determine public outreach and project milestones
- Must complete by June 30, 2022

c. Data update Swan Place Eco Counter and Bluebikes

- Swan Place: Total trips YTD: 516,453 (+38,051 since last month), Bike trips YTD: 278, 889 (+21,087 since last month), Highest trip day in last 30 days: Sunday October 17, 3,010 trips.
- Bluebikes: 9,062 trips YTD (+847 since last month)

d. Bluebikes winter relocation

- On-street stations to be picked up week on Nov 22
- Off-street locations operate year round, avoid \$2,500 per station storage fee
- Railroad lot @ Bikeway location approved by Select Board, but addressing abutter feedback
- Linwood St @ Bikeway location required DPW to install new sidewalk section

e. Other projects of interest

- Stratton Safe Routes to School infrastructure project
<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/planning-community-development/transportation-planning> (early stages, construction slated for 2024)
- Park Ave & Wachusett Ave accessibility bus stop changes proposed by MBTA – public meeting to be scheduled in December
- Local Rapid Recovery Plan available for review; "Three Business Districts and One Bikeway... Getting Past COVID"
<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/Home/Components/News/News/11206/16?page=2>

- Arlington housing plan update <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/town-governance/boards-and-committees/housing-plan-implementation-committee>

Action: Daniel Amstutz to send updated numbers to Christopher Tonkin in response to rail to trail query

13. Tales from the Bikeway, matters arising from the Bikeway e.g. encroachment and center line markings.

Excitement is expressed about progress of the protected bike lanes on Mass Ave in north Cambridge, flexposts have been installed and painting is in-progress. It will likely have a substantial impact on eastbound commuting from Arlington and further west.

Noted that DPW was removing leaves from the bikeway.

Need to get repainting the center line on the bikeway onto DPW docket for next painting season. It might be worthwhile to identify more durable paint. Dashed line is specified per code where passing is allowed (although Somerville does not follow this guidance; MA vehicle code allows passing on single solid line, but not double).

- Contacted Daniel about the damaged fence at former Gold's Gym, wire was hanging over the bikeway. The wire has been removed, however, there's still a hole in the fence, over a culvert where there has previously been flood damage. May still need assessment/fixes.
- Received email from Kevin Falcone of Lexington Bike Advisory Committee, he will be leaving Lexington and resigning as Chair. He reminds us that we have a Tri-town Bike meeting scheduled for November.

14. Other Business

MassDOT just held design review for extension of the Northern Strand to Nahant. Progress on the Northern Strand trail has been good.

Tentative schedule for 2022, third Wednesday of the month: Jan 19, Feb 16, Mar 16, Apr 20, May 18, Jun 15, July 20, Aug 17, Sep 21, Oct 19, Nov 16, Dec 21. These may be adjusted if there are conflicts with holidays.

Christopher Tonkin moves to adjourn

Adam MacNeil seconds; motion carries, 6-0

Adjourned