



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Date: September 20, 2023.

Time: 7:15 PM – 9:15 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes

Attendees:

- Executive committee: Scott Smith (acting chair, TAC liaison)., Linda Epstein (pending)., Muris Kobaslija., Jack Johnson., Doug Mayo-Wells., Adam MacNeill.
- Town of Arlington: John Alessi (Senior Transportation Planner)., Grace Carpenter (co-chair, Disability Commission)., Officer Brendan Flynn., Tim Ross (ADA coordinator).
- Members of the Public: Len Greenberg., Petru Sofio.

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

Scott Smith notifies attendees that the meeting is held online pursuant to the order of Governor (as extended) and that 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. Smith confirms the committee members and others in attendance for the meeting.

2. Approval of outstanding meeting from previous meetings.

ABAC voted to approve the August minutes. Proposed by Adam MacNeill, seconded by Scott Smith, carried unanimously.

3. Report from COBWEB Officer.

Officer Flynn does not have any major incidents to report. It seems like bicycle safety has been working well on Mass ave in the high traffic areas.

4. Adaptive Bicycle Parking Near the Recreation Center.

Tim Ross and Grace Carpenter discuss a lack of accessibility to the Minuteman trail, and proposed bike storage to be installed by the Recreation Center.

The bikeway itself is accessible, but individuals with recumbent or adaptive bikes typically need assistance in getting their equipment to the bikeway.

The proposed storage is modeled on a system in use in Acton. Residents would be able to store their own equipment in a protected building (with fob access), and some number of bikes would also be available to rent. The plan also involves adding additional handicapped spaces at Ed Burns arena to facilitate loading and unloading the bikes. A grant proposal has been submitted and the Disability Commission expects to learn in mid November if the project is selected for funding.

Initially the Town intends to have 2 or 3 bikes available to rent. Acton, which is roughly half the population size of Arlington, has been seeing every slot for their bikes booked through the summer months, and use of the Disability Commission's "floating" wheelchair suggests that there will be significant demand.

5. Announcements.

- Medford street bike lanes approved by Select Board (5-0)

Between Chestnut Street and the rotary at Medford line, with parking removal as needed (low parking occupancy, and residential vs. commercial). Unfortunately, plans will likely not be available for striping this painting season.

- Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) report

The Bedford Bicycle Committee has a new chair, Peter Weichman.

6. Mass Ave / Appleton Revised Design

See <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/66849/>

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/66851/>

Revised plan has been released and the Select Board will vote at the September 27 meeting. Key changes:

- 11 parking spaces have been added with no removal of bike facilitation.
- 1-way access to Appleton place has been restored.
- Dedicated egress phase for 1165R access (removed crosswalk on east side).

John Alessi notes that the meeting on the 27th is for the Select Board's general approval, so there is still an opportunity to evaluate raised crosswalks, etc. in final construction plans.

Petru Sofio points out that if the cross black phasing is exclusive, the east crosswalk could be retained directly under the signal (there is precedent for this, e.g., Summer/Brattle and Longwood/Jamaica Way).

The committee expresses concern about visibility between driveways (need to make sure that cars making turns can see cyclists and vice-versa).

Officer Flynn notes that this intersection is a key enforcement focus for APD and likely to remain so.

ABAC voted to write a letter in support of the revised design, noting that adequate visibility should be maintained between driveways and intersections, and clarifying that ABAC supports bike and pedestrian access through neighborhoods to schools. Proposed by Scott Smith, seconded by Muris Kobaslija, carried unanimously.

7. Town Day Final Preparation.

ABAC/TAC booth is #63, in front of the Library.

Although ABAC had authorized the purchase of BlueBike passes, Lyft provided 20 adventure passes at no cost.

8. Fall Bike Tour – Looking at Invasive Plants.

Elaine Crowder (Arlington Invasives Removal) had proposed a focus on invasive plants, and a tentative ride date of October 25 had been discussed. The Committee determines that there is not adequate time to plan/promote a ride in October, and that the weather is likely to be unfavorable for an organized ride through the winter. Further the Committee believes that an invasive plant overview may be better suited to a walking tour (not necessarily safe places for a large group of bikes to pull over on the bikeway where invasive plants are observed).

9. Planning Department Updates.

John Alessi clarifies that a Town committee such as ABAC cannot directly make a capital request, however a committee can recommend a capital request to a Town department (e.g., for repaving on the Minuteman bikeway).

Additional bus/bike lanes on Mass Ave will be managed by MBTA, coordinated by the Town. Will likely be implemented in spring, but 2 rapid flashing beacons may be installed sooner.

Kickoff was held for bike lane design guide update, with Doug Mayo-Wells representing ABAC. Kickoff had broad representation with a focus on making sure the consultants understood stakeholders' priorities. A draft is expected sometime in October (Doug will circulate for ABAC to provide feedback).

A prioritized list of projects has been submitted to Mass DOT for potential Complete Streets funding (up to \$500K for construction). Will work with DPW

on feasibility, alignment with maintenance plans, and figure out additional funding sources (grants).

BlueBikes contract renewal has been slow because of difficulty accessing FHWA funding which was awarded in joint grant with Watertown and Newton. The two new stations will not be installed until spring (because they would have to be removed/stored for winter). The Planning Department is working to make all BlueBike stations available year-round because the cost of un/re-installing every season is a budgetary drain with no value for the Town.

Further expansion of the network is discussed. Scott Smith suggests filling in the network with a station near Mass Ave/Rt 16 (either in Cambridge or Arlington). Doug Mayo-Wells suggests expanding the network to the west (with the goal of eventually reaching the Heights). Linda Epstein notes that 77 bus service has been unreliable, and that a station at Drake village/Sunrise could help offset that. Muris Kobaslija asks if volume at Arlington High School may be sufficient for BlueBikes to provide peak time Valet service.

10. ABAC Budget Spending.

Christopher Tonkin is awaiting a response from MassBike.

11. Tri-Town Meeting Agenda.

The Tri-town meeting will be held virtually on October 25.

Tentative agenda:

- Updates from each community.
- Plans for the Bikeway that could involve capital expenses (bid from multiple jurisdictions).
- Making the Bikeway more inclusive (ensuring compliance with ADA regulations).
- Response to recent State e-bike legislation.

Additional items for potential discussion, time-permitting:

- Lexington Repaving.
- Bluebike usage.
- Reformatory Branch extension.
- Bikeway signage.

12. October Meeting – Zoom or Hybrid?

ABAC agreed that the October 18 meeting will be conducted as a hybrid meeting.

13. Any other business.

Doug Mayo-Wells mentions a Somerville resolution [link: <https://somervillema.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6285560&GUID=6A422A99-D567-47A2-B46C-95BA8CE3771E>] calling on the Chief of Police to “adopt a policy of de-prioritizing enforcement against cyclists who treat red lights as stop signs when it is safe to do so (the “Idaho Stop”) in recognition of the compelling United States Department of Transportation data supporting this practice.” Councilor Ewen-Campen references a NHTSA fact sheet [link:<https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2022-03/Bicyclist-Yield-As-Stop-Fact-Sheet-032422-v3-tag.pdf>] in support of the resolution. Mayo-Wells wonders if neighboring communities may be pressured to adopt similar resolutions.

Officer Flynn expresses concern that APD cannot enforce every traffic violation; they try to educate where possible. Officer Flynn expresses skepticism that this resolution will not have adverse effects, especially given the prevalence of distracted driving.

14. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.