



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Date: January 17, 2024.

Time: 7:15 PM – 9:15 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes

Attendees:

- Executive committee: Christopher Tonkin (chair), Linda Epstein., Jack Johnson., Muris Kobaslija., Scott Smith (taking notes).
- Town of Arlington: John Alessi (Senior Transportation Planner).
- Members of the Public: Len Greenberg., Steve Revlak., Jim Cadenhead.

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

We introduced ourselves. Jim Cadenhead is a member of Friends of the Lexington Bikeway and the Lexington Bicycle Advisory Committee.

2. Approval of Outstanding Minutes.

With our regular Secretary out sick, there were no minutes to approve.

3. Report from COBWEB Officer.

No COBWEB officer.

4. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Report.

Scott Smith noted that TAC items (review of Mass / Appleton and Medford Street bike lanes) would be part of the Planning Department report.

5. Report for Select Board on E-bikes.

Jim Cadenhead reported that Lexington is working on a bicycle and pedestrian plan, to recommend that level 1 and level 2 e-bikes be allowed on bike-specific infrastructure. Although it is a sensitive topic, he said that the Lexington Bicycle Advisory Committee (LBAC) thought it was important that they come out with a statement in support of ebikes but setting boundaries. Jack Johnson asked

for a copy of Lexington's statement. Jim offered to bring it to the tri-town meeting. Jack asked that this be a tri-town agenda item.

6. ABAC Budget/Spending

Christopher Tonkin has not yet asked the Rec Center about renting the space for a bike rodeo but plans to. He asked for reminders from other ABAC committee members.

7. Planning Department Updates.

John Alessi had several items: Mass / Appleton, Medford Street, and two grant applications.

7a. Mass / Appleton preliminary design.

The plans and the consultant's responses to comments are located at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/Home/Components/News/News/12347/16#!/> John reviewed comments received from TAC and other groups.

There was a suggestion to put the eastbound bike lane at road rather than sidewalk level.

Separate the entrance (west curb cut) / exit (east curb cut) at Dunkin Donuts to reduce conflicts between cyclists and turning traffic. Town staff would reach out to Dunkin Donuts.

There was a lengthy discussion of design speed. Consultant had suggested 10-15 mph due to the area being congested. John noted that the taper (at the horizontal deflections) is enough to accommodate 15mph+, but might not be comfortable at 20 mph. Scott Smith recommended (and Linda Epstein agreed) that we should design for at least 15mph or cyclists won't use the facility. Experienced cyclists won't use the path at 10 mph.

What if a cyclist approaches the entrance at 20 MPH. What can be done to make the entrance to the separated bike lane clear? Bike lanes can be a different color from the sidewalk. Muris Kobaslija noted that the Beacon Street lane in Somerville has green textured asphalt...which has good friction (even in icy conditions). Jack Johnson added that this pavement has a bit more rolling resistance, which would be helpful for encouraging slower bike speeds. Linda Epstein noted that a different color is valuable (reminds people getting out of cars to look for bikes). Scott Smith agreed: Inman and Porter squares are both pedestrian congested areas where the green pavement provides a cue to pedestrians not to stand in the bike lane. We may wish to look at what Cambridge did at those locations for ideas to manage pedestrian conflicts. John Alessi noted that the consultant believes there is not enough room for an added vertical barrier by the bus stop. Muris asked if the bus stop will have a shelter...if yes, that may be enough of a barrier (similar to the shelter at Inman

Square). John replied that a shelter is planned. John also noted that the centerline was shifted a few feet to provide more sidewalk space.

Can bike lane remain at road level between Appleton Street and Appleton place? A textured area was added to discourage pedestrians from standing in the area.

The plan does not have a dedicated bicycle light, though a leading bike phase might be possible (in response to a comment from Petru Sofio). Scott Smith noted that, consistent with practice in other communities, turns should yield to bikes and pedestrians (this is also consistent with the fundamental traffic principle that a driver entering or crossing a lane yields to traffic that is already in the lane).

John added that someone asked whether there might be a bigger buffer between bikes and parked cars on the westbound side. The consultant responded that the buffer is needed more on the eastbound side (with higher bike speeds).

There is an online form in the Town's news release (will go directly to consultants).

Muris expressed appreciation that the comments were seriously considered.

7b. Medford Street bike lanes.

Link to the proposed plan:

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=68140&t=638404953639809782>

John presented the Medford Street proposed design, which generally includes 5' bike lanes, 2' buffer, and 11' general purpose (GP) lanes. Some parking was maintained by the cemetery. He added that in the past, there was some interest from DCR in short term improvements to the rotary. It would be nice to coordinate and DCR improvements with the installation of this bike lane.

Scott Smith recommended that for the eastbound section between Warren and Lewis, the bike lane should be closer to the GP lane, with the parking by the curb, for two reasons: make cyclists more visible to turning motorists at Lewis Street and facilitate snow plowing. The current design creates two intersections at Lewis, the existing intersection with Medford Street, and the intersection with the bike lane. Will motorists on this corridor know to check for traffic in the bike lane? Muris asked about snow plowing. John responded that new equipment will be needed for Mass Appleton. Medford street has no bollards planned, so plowing will be easy. Christopher Tonkin expressed a desire for DCR to do more at the rotary.

7c. Grant Applications.

John reported on two grant applications that were submitted at the end of December, asking for ABAC support.

The first is a request for \$575k to fund 25% design for the Broadway corridor to make it a Complete Street. This is going to the Boston MPO as part of their program to fund design projects. John presented a draft letter of support from ABAC. We added mention of improved connections to the Alewife Brook Greenway. **Motion to send this letter was made by Christopher Tonkin, seconded by Muris Kobaslija. Passed unanimously.** Scott Smith also recommended that a letter be sought from the Broadway Neighbors coalition, as these applications are often stronger if they can show neighborhood support.

The second is an application to the Boston MPO community connections program, for expanded bike parking. If awarded, ABAC would be asked to help finalize locations. Jack Johnson asked about our past grant from MAPC which required installation on public property. John noted that the same condition applies here. He presented a draft letter of support from ABAC. **Christopher Tonkin moved approval. Scott Smith seconded. Passed unanimously.**

8. Future Meetings.

Our next meeting in February will be replaced with the tri-town meeting (Bedford, Lexington, Arlington), rather than our regular meeting. A separate short meeting would be needed for any ABAC votes.

Christopher Tonkin mentioned some trail signs he saw in Wisconsin. These signs give specific location information (to used in calls to 911). Something like this might be useful for the Minuteman Bikeway. Add to tri-town agenda.

9. 2024 Tour of Arlington.

Sunday, May 19th is between Mothers and Memorial Day, and would be a suitable date for the planned 2024 Tour of Arlington. Jack Johnson noted the potential conflict with the Town's charity run early that morning, which closes the bikeway near the Rec Center.

10. Earth Day Trash Pickup.

Phil Goff is happy for us to coordinate with EALS on Earth Day trash pickup.

11. Any other business.

11a. Bikeway Block Party.

Jim Cadenhead, on behalf of Friends of Lexington Bikeways, reported that a Bikeway Block Party is under development, co-sponsoerd by Munroe Center for the Arts. The planned date is Sunday September 15th, and they are hoping that

it will become an annual event. One parking lot might be used as a food truck lot. He mentioned several ways to get involved:

- Sponsor a park (decide what programs are happening. Dance, music)
- Join the overall planning team,
- Create hype for this new arts/wellness experience,
- Get involved as performers/teachers.

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The e-mail address is bikewayblockparty@gmail.com. John Alessi offered a meeting with the Arlington Economic Development coordinator (Katie Luczai). Arlington Town Day is the following Saturday 9/24. Will there be a beer garden by the reservoir on 9/15?

11b. Winter Bike Counts.

Everywhere Arlington Livable Streets (EALS) is doing a winter bikeway count at the end of this month, and could use a few more volunteers (contact Jennifer Litowski).

12. Next meeting.

Wednesday, February 21. The tri-town meeting will replace the regular ABAC meeting.

Would like our March meeting to be hybrid.

Adjourned at 8:47 PM.