

**Town of Arlington  
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, June 22, 2004 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Jeff Maxtutis, Frederick Ryan, Scott Smith, David Walkinshaw.

Others present: Jacques Duranceau, Michele Kotiuga, Anna Payne-Tobin, Christopher Sacca.

**Administration**

The minutes of 5/25/04 were approved unanimously.

**Plans for the DNC Traffic Issues**

Chief Ryan briefed the Committee on the plans for the traffic impacts of the Democratic National Convention. He relayed that the current security plan calls for a partial closure of I-93 southbound during the morning commute, with the high-speed lane closed at I-95 in Woburn except to authorized vehicles. The current plan also calls for the complete closure of Route 93 southbound during the evening commute, with bleeder traffic being encouraged to seek alternate routes as far north as New Hampshire. Full closure of the highway will be at Rt. 60 in Medford. The Chief noted that the plan was still under development and will be locally monitored in real-time through the Democratic National Convention Regional Emergency Operations Center in Woburn.

Based on previous experiences of major traffic delays on I-93 south, the Arlington Police expect motorists to seek alternate routes via Woburn/Winchester to Mystic Street onto Pleasant Street to Rt. 2 eastbound, via Rt. 95 to Middlesex Turnpike (Burlington) to Lowell Street Lexington to Downing Square and out Park Avenue to Rt. 2, and via Rt. 60 Medford to Rt. 60 Arlington and either out to the Parkway via Massachusetts Avenue or out to Rt. 2. In accordance with the current DNC traffic plan it is recommended that there be two shifts of extra traffic safety officers staffed to minimize the anticipated disruption. These officers would be dispatched to several key locations in Arlington during the morning and evening commutes. The plan will be flexible and may be modified after the first day.

It was suggested that the traffic plans be publicized and that Arlington residents be directed to reduce the traffic volume during the peak periods. It was suggested that many people may decide to use public transportation during the DNC, only to be confronted with insufficient parking at Alewife; monitoring vulnerable areas of East Arlington and issuing citations for parking violations should be part of the plan. It was also suggested that a playbook of contingency plans be developed.

**AHS Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam Demonstration**

The Arlington High School Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam demonstrated their prototype system for a pressure-activated pedestrian crosswalk device. This device detects a pedestrian entering the crosswalk and activates a sequence of LEDs in the roadway to alert motorists. The detection system uses piezoelectric technology, allowing the team to construct a reliable and inexpensive system that bypasses patent conflicts. The Team reported that the device would cost roughly \$1,000 per crosswalk and that funds remaining from the Grant would be used to help implement the system.

The Committee expressed its gratitude to the attending members of the Team: Michele Kotiuga, Anna Payne-Tobin and Christopher Sacca, and their adviser, AHS teacher Jacques Duranceau. TAC members Mike Rademacher and John Sanchez will continue their work with the AHS team to choose a site and implement the system in Arlington.

## **Symmes Transportation Update**

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported that it was likely that the TAC would be tasked to make recommendations on Symmes transportation issues. She also reported that the Redevelopment Board has been meeting regularly with the Developer Team to iron out issues for the schematic design to be submitted to Town Meeting, and that the neighbors had held a Citizens' Public Hearing to air their concerns and share information on density, zoning, traffic, construction and quality of life issues relating to the Symmes development.

Elisabeth reported that the presentation of traffic concerns at the Hearing called for a comprehensive traffic study from an impartial source, a traffic management plan and realistic mitigation measures. A map showing convenient cut-throughs and problem intersections that was distributed at the Hearing was distributed to the Committee. Howard/Stein-Hudson is currently conducting a traffic study for the Symmes Redevelopment Associates Team. It was suggested by various Committee members that the Symmes development may present an opportunity to address several transportation problems in the area.

## **East Arlington Parking Study Update**

Scott Smith reported that he had made an announcement about the East Arlington Parking Study at an East Arlington Good Neighbor Committee meeting and that he had formed a Working Group to address the issues. The Working Group members are Scott Smith (leader), Jeff Maxtutis, Paolo Marinelli, Lt. Jim McHugh and George Laite. The Group is seeking a local business representative and is planning to meet again in August. Scott stated that one item that could be considered is the use of diagonal parking on Mass Ave near Lake Street.

## **Downing Square Update**

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported that the Working Group had held a public meeting to present background material to Downing Square neighbors and listen to their concerns and suggestions for the area. Over 50 people attended, including neighbors from both main and minor streets and local residential developments, the Traffic Supervisor for Downing Square, a prominent local business owner and the Rowsell property developer. Elisabeth reported that the Working Group will meet again tomorrow night to assess the information and plan how to move forward.

## **Right Turn on Red**

David Walkinshaw reported that he was in the process of completing a matrix of the signalized intersections in Arlington, which he plans to present to the Committee. The matrix will be presented in concert with a walk-through of the intersections under consideration for removal of Right Turn on Red signs. David added that, upon completion of these tasks, he would likely be resigning from the Committee due to work/travel conflicts.

## **Route 60/Mass Ave Update**

Jeff Maxtutis reported that the Working Group had developed a sole source RFP to expand on an existing Synchro model for the Mass Ave & Route 60 intersection. The proposal, which has just been received, will be evaluated by the Group to determine if it meets the requirements set forth in the RFP. The Group expects to model four signaling scenarios.

Jeff also reported that the Working Group had met with Tri-State regarding regulation, maintenance and upgrading of the traffic signal equipment. Currently, the Mass Ave & Route 60 signal runs on the same sequence at all times. New turning movement, pedestrian and bicycle counts have been taken at the intersection for the weekday AM/PM and Saturday peak periods. In addition, Kevin O'Brien has authorized BSC to perform traffic operations observations to be conducted before the end of the school year.

## **Multi-Use Tools Update**

Scott Smith reported for Anne Lusk that the proposal for Arlington multi-use tools was now in the hands of the donor. Scott distributed a draft of one of the Arlington Center signs, which includes information discouraging sidewalk riding as well as a map of the Center and a local business directory. It is hoped that the Arlington Chamber of Commerce will offer assistance with the signs, which would be posted near the two access points for the Bikeway in the Center. Scott also reported that he and Anne were exploring options for the safe route to school stencils. Anne will be assisted by an intern in this work over the summer.

## **Crosswalk Working Group**

Scott Smith reported that Larry Englisher had presented an update on the progress of the Crosswalk Working Group to the Board of Selectmen. The update included the crosswalks that were converted to thermoplastic last year, those which will be converted this year and the ongoing installation of yellow-green crosswalk signs at the Town's critical crosswalks.

## **Town Day 2004**

Scott Smith reported that Town Day will be on September 11th this year. The TAC will request a booth location beside the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee and Walking in Arlington. Ideas fielded for the booth were: the Mass Ave & Route 60 simulation, the AHS Lemelson-MIT demo, advertising future TAC events such as the East Arlington parking study and a Committee Charge display. Scott agreed to request electricity for the booth, in the event that either the Mass Ave & Route 60 simulation or the AHS Lemelson-MIT demo will be used.

## **Results of Mass Ave Corridor Bid**

Scott Smith reported that two proposals had been received in response to the RFP for the Mass Ave Corridor. The proposals, from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin and Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, will need to be evaluated and scored based on the criteria established in the RFP before the price proposals are opened. Scott made a motion to form an ad hoc group consisting of himself, John Sanchez, Ed Starr, Kevin O'Brien and Elisabeth Carr-Jones to conduct this evaluation for the Committee before the July meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. Scott encouraged all Committee members to read the proposals and submit comments to him.

A question was raised regarding whether Howard/Stein-Hudson's work on the Symmes project would constitute a conflict of interest if they were chosen for the Mass Ave Corridor work. It was agreed to consult Kevin O'Brien and John Maher to determine if there would be a conflict.

## **Status of Voted Actions**

The Committee reviewed the Status of Actions to be Done. Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported that the angle on the school crossing sign on Gray Street at Quincy had not yet been corrected. Scott Smith reported that the "Stop Ahead" sign on Rawson Road had been moved to a better location, but that the "No Parking" signs on Broadway at Rawson had not yet been installed. Scott also reported that the signal at Lockeland Ave was not working properly, causing traffic backups on Mass Ave; the issue may be a malfunctioning loop detector.

## **DPW Update**

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported for Ron Santosuosso that the Town's painting and thermoplastic contract has been signed, and that they are awaiting the Certificate of Insurance before commencing work. This is a three-year contract with the same contractor that was used last year. Elisabeth also relayed for Ron that the Summer Street reconstruction crew would be mobilizing on Monday the 28th on the Lexington line.

## **Traffic Division Update**

Chief Ryan reported that a pedestrian had been struck and seriously injured in the crosswalk on Massachusetts Avenue at Bartlett Avenue. He stated that the driver was also injured in the crash and would be cited.

Chief Ryan also briefed the Committee on the Police Force's commercial vehicle enforcement program. The program involves Officers performing Department of Transportation checks for weight and general equipment violations, and issuing citations from a mobile office. Arlington's program currently relies on borrowed equipment, but the hope is to purchase equipment for the Town and conduct more frequent enforcement.

**The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.**

### **Handouts:**

Meeting Agenda of 22 June 2004, Meeting Minutes of 25 May 2004, Status of Actions to be Done, and draft of Arlington Center sign - from Scott Smith

Map from Symmes Neighborhood Hearing showing convenient cut-throughs and problem intersections - from Elisabeth Carr-Jones