

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Natick Transportation Advisory Committee and Natick Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, November 28, 2017
Morse Institute Library – Lebowitz Meeting Room
14 East Central Street, Natick MA 01760

Members present: Joshua Ostroff, David Gutierrez, Betty Scott, Eva Willens, Joe Weisse.

Joshua Ostroff, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:34

Election of Clerk

David Gutierrez nominated Eva Willens, seconded by Betty Scott and unanimously voted.

Slow Speed Limit update

Josh reported that a recommendation had been provided to the Selectmen and the Town Administrator to investigate local acceptance of this legislation. The matter was referred to the Safety Committee, who discussed it at their October meeting and elected to take no action. There was no report or discussion provided by the Safety Committee, so we would seek a joint meeting to further discuss the issue, perhaps with the benefit of learning from other communities that had adopted it.

Complete Streets

The Town was advised that we could not apply for a new grant until the previous one had been fully expended. This was likely to be done in the coming weeks, and we would pursue another opportunity in 2018. A groundbreaking for a signalized crosswalk at the Community Senior Center had been held earlier in 2017.

MBTA station

Josh noted that the MBTA was investigating a third, express track through portions of the Framingham-Worcester line, including Natick, and until the alignment of the track was decided, design for the station was on hold.

Future meeting topics

The committee discussed a public meeting to better inform the community about the MWRTA; the MBTA station; upcoming Complete Streets grants.

Joint meeting with Selectmen on South Main Street design

Town staff and consultants from Green International joined the meeting.

At 7:05 PM, Jonathan Freedman opened the meeting of the Board of Selectmen with Susan Salamoff, Michael Hickey, Amy Mistrot and Rick Jennett also in attendance. Jon welcomed members of the public, and explained that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to allow the public to ask questions and offer comments on the design alternatives; no votes would be taken, as this was intended as a public comment

session. Josh advised that the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting was already in session, and that the project information about South Main Street was available at natickma.gov/tac.

Jeremy Marsette provided an overview of the project.

Eric Atkins of Green International went through a presentation of the design alternatives.

Q. For any of these options, would land be acquired, or just easements? A. Mainly easements

Q. For what purposes would easements be needed? A. Temporary for construction, or permanent for widening of a sidewalk, e.g.

Q. Who decides on which plan? A. We need public input, then the BOS would select the preferred alternative, which would proceed to design.

Q. How will this be funded? A. Would be funded by Town Meeting, likely through borrowing as with other roadway projects.

Q. Why was option 2 preferred by the TAC? Josh Ostroff explained the Complete Streets policy and how this option was most consistent with policy from a transportation perspective.

Q. What outside funding is leveraged by this? A. Outside funding is not being requested.

Comment. Concerned about the character of the neighborhood with limited setbacks.

Comment. Option 2 is least preferred.

Q. What about phasing of project? A. Timing of construction was reviewed.

Q. What are the relative costs? A. Rough estimates are \$1.6mm for option 1, \$4 million for option 2, \$2.7 million for option 3.

Comment. Concerned about loss of trees; concerned if we remove trees for this project. Only prefers alternative 1.

Q. What land do people actually own? A. Jeremy explained layout and property line.

Q. What about the strip between sidewalk and roadway? A. Depends on which design is chosen, but that would likely be public land.

Comment. Fix the road, fix the sidewalk and go away.

Q. Where would these bicyclists go? A. described traffic counts.

Q. Who pays for this, would taxes be raised? A. it would be paid by the tax levy, not planning to increase taxes to pay for it.

Comment. People knew they could not bike on South Main when they bought there.

Q. Residents were concerned about the speed of traffic on South Main and would widening road have an impact. A. Wider roads tend to increase speed, but that depends on the design and lane width.

Q. Preference for shared use path is for safety; existing condition is unsafe. Has not seen effort with speed warning devices, etc. A. described engineering and enforcement impacts.

Q. Opposed alternative 2; asked about shared use path and where else it is used. A. described where shared use path was in use including General Greene Ave.

Comment. Saw a shared use path on option 2. That was as a buffer between vehicles and path.

Q. Asked about amount of property lost in option 2. Described how the 3 to 6 feet would be used.

Q. Would trees be replaced? A. Those would be replaced in consultation with the tree warden.

Q. What are the benefits of option 2? A. Not so much dollars and cents but the benefit to users.

Q. Is this on the capital plan? A. yes; would be paid by tax levy borrowing.

Q. Asked about relocation of utility poles. Process described.

Q. Favors alternative 3 as a bike rider. Wants to understand Alternative 3. A. Explanation of impacts on abutters.

Comment. Resident on S Main whose front step is 10 feet from the sidewalk; objects to this project, or at least alternative 2.

Q. If moving a fence back can we move it past a property line? A. Would work with DPW; show preliminary design and work with abutters.

Comment. Different setbacks may impact driveways.

Q. Is this the only shared use path? A. It would be one of few, but we might look at others in the future.

Q. Anyone want Alt 2? (No one spoke.)

Q. How does this compare to Cottage. A. Similar in scope, timing, cost (\$1.7 million).

Q. Asked for assurance that people have been heard. A. This was affirmed.

Q. OK with option 1 or 3. Wants to know about process for compensation. A. Bill Chenard explained process.

Q. Asked about the process by which it is approved at TM. A. This was explained.

Comment. Further opposition to option 2.

Comment. Wants to see alternative 3.

Comment. Most people seem to prefer option 1.

Comment. People would like to see example of option 3 – ideally a picture.

Comment (Rick Jennett) Would not be supporting Alternative 2.

Comment. Wants to understand the width of the project.

Comment. Wants to have more/better public notice.

On a motion by Jon Freedman, seconded by Mike Hickey the Selectmen's meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

On a motion by Betty Scott, seconded by Eva Willens the TAC voted to adjourn at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joshua Ostroff