

Friends of the Community Path
www.pathfriends.org/scp/

Thursday, January 13, 2011 Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Minutes taken by Jonah Petri

Next Meeting: February 10, 2011 (2nd Thursday each month)

I. News/Updates

A. Green Line extension Project (GLX) (Lynn Weissman, Alan Moore)

- Alan: MassDOT must extend Green Line (GLX) because of legal requirement of the Big Dig (Central Artery Project in Boston) to offset the addition air pollution caused by the extra traffic going through the Central Artery. MassDOT must report yearly to Dept of Environmental Protection (DEP) about GLX and other projects. There was a report from MassDOT to the DEP in July, and there is another coming at the end of January.
- Lynn: This report is public, but is not announced. Lynn has asked MassDOT for the report once it has been given to the DEP. Because of the GLX delay, there must be an interim offset project, to mitigate the losses in air quality which the GLX would have provided, were it to be built on time. We hope that MassDOT will announce what they're doing, but they've not yet done so. Kate Fichter, General Manager of the GLX, said that MassDOT does not have to announce the interim offset measures until they're just about to undertake it. Once MassDOT releases their proposals for interim offset measures to the DEP, the Friends may conduct a letter writing campaign.
- We'd like future letter campaigns to be a combination of individuals and groups. We've had success in the past at getting a significant number of individual letters from individuals and from groups. We'd like to add more letters from groups in Boston, Cambridge, adjacent neighborhoods, and from state and national organizations.

B. Upcoming Meetings relevant to the Community Path

- **POSTPONED, TBA - 1/15 (Sat) Green Line Station Area Walk**
10:00 am Lowell St. Bridge - 1st location where path meets with GLX
11:15 am Gilman Sq.
 - Cancelled very late (10:15), but some people showed up anyways, and because of that there was an impromptu tour. It's been pushed back until the spring (via Ron Leaks).
- **1/18 (Tues, 6:30pm) Community Corridor Partnership (CCP) Green Working Meeting: Ron Leaks of Groundwork Somerville**
 - Ron: CCP coalition has 3 working groups, housing, local issues, green spaces. Ron is part of the green spaces group. They want to engage

voices who are normally left out (minority, low income) and is interested in the progress and prospects for the path.

- There is a CCP green working group meeting soon. Ron's current focus is to do community engagement. He also wants to meet community members who have past experience with green spaces, & past projects. Past engagement (station walks, etc) haven't been met with enough energy, so Ron is planning to become more aggressive with recruiting people for station walks, community path tours, etc.
 - Meeting is @ 165 Broadway, old firehouse, 2nd floor, tuesday @ 6:30 PM.
 - **Ron will send Lynn something to post on FCP site/FB page.**
- **1/19 (Wed., 5:30 pm) Cambridge Bike Committee Meeting**
 - **Alan is going to attend to try to gauge interest and reach out to CBC on SCP issues.**
 - Ron: CBC hasn't had a direct stake in SCP before.
 - It was suggested to find members of Cambridge/Somerville who bridge both communities, and could help us engage the Cambridge community.
 - **1/19, 7 PM Grand Junction Rail Meeting in Cambridge**
 - Grand Junction Rail Trail meeting rescheduled.
 - <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=144961868893728>

The East End House, 105 Spring Street, Cambridge, MA.

Update from Lynn Weissman, who attended:

In summary, those present seemed to feel that the proposed passenger line from Worcester to North Station through Cambridge would cause major traffic tie-ups, additional noise and pollution, safety concerns for pedestrians particularly students walking to school over the crossings, and a negative impact on property values, with no particular benefit to the residents of Cambridge.

When I asked about using the Grand Junction rail line as we all had hoped, for a combination bicycle/pedestrian pathway to connect Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, MassDOT said that needs to be considered in our decisions regarding a rail line, both could work, and one doesn't necessarily preclude the other. Link to longer report:

http://pathfriends.org/scp/ECPT%20MINUTES%201_19_11.doc

- **1/21 (Fri, 2-5 pm) Great Neighborhoods Initiative (GNI) -- THIS MEETING WAS POSTPONED: DATE TBD**
 - Lynn & Alan: GNI is not a grant program, but an initiative by the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) <http://www.ma-smartgrowth.org/campaigns/gn> to help local partners access resources, such as technical assistance and grant givers. This is the 1st year of this initiative. A joint application for the GNI (by these 4 partners: Somerville CDC, Groundwork Somerville, STEP, and Friends of the Community Path) was selected by the MSGA . It is very good that our partnership has “won” selection for this initiative, though we are not exactly sure how it works. More to come on this.
 - Alan: GNI has staff, which would be a great asset to us, as we’re completely volunteer based.
- **1/31 (Mon, 7:00 pm) STEP meeting: VNA**
 - **Lynn and Heather Van Aelst will attend.**
- **2/2 (Wed, 1:00 pm) MBTA Board meeting:** We hope that the MBTA Board will approve the a contract for the GLX Preliminary Engineering Team/Contract. Could happen in March instead.
 - MBTA will soon propose their selection GLX Preliminary Engineering Team for the GLX preliminary engineering team to the MBTA Board, along with a contract. Both require approval by the MBTA Board of Directors (which happens to be the same people as the MassDOT Board of Directors).
 - It’s important for the Friends to establish a good relationship with the GLX preliminary engineering team, and gauge their experience level with projects like GLX, SCP, etc. The contract, which isn’t public until it’s voted on, will contain details about the scope of the GLX design contract, and we are interested in seeing what parts of the SCP is included. The details of the contract will be very important to the future of the SCP. Lynn and Alan plan to attend.
- **Date TBD: Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC)-** wants set up meetings with a key congressional members: in-district meeting with Capuano.
 - RTC is trying to set up a meeting with Rep Capuano, date TBD. We may be able to attend. It is hoped that Capuano can work for of federal funding for bike/ped projects.

C. Updates: Path Sections

- DEP registered site on at the stretch of the existing Comm Path near the Lexington St. playground (former site of the brownstone train station). (Region which is fenced off.) Alan and John Wilde will work with the city to try to push the clean-up forward.
- Cedar-Lowell section
 - MaxPac site developer just received approval to slightly change their building plans. They have a schedule. Current plans should not interfere with SCP extension plans, and the developer's requested changes at the meeting didn't interfere with the SCP.
 - Lynn: This section will be built. It may take some time, but it will be built.
 - Alan: City must sign a construction contract for this section by September (to receive funding by the Boston MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization). The engineering designer contract should be started soon and design must be completed by end of September 2011 in order to get a construction contract signed. There isn't a deadline for the City to have the path built - just to have the contract signed.
- Lowell-Inner Belt section
 - One issue is how far MassDOT will design into Inner Belt. Lynn contacted Late Fichter at MassDOT, who indicated that MassDOT will design the Path to the site of the Urban Ring Bridge, which is not built now and has no funding to be built in the foreseeable future.

At this point, the attendees of this meeting went to view the SCP preliminary design maps, and review the geography of proposed Community Path extension.

III. Online Social Networking

A. Facebook: From 24 to 83 members now

B. Website update tabled until next meeting (when Shoshana is here.)

C. Meeting announcements

Meeting announcements - Lynn thanked the members who were helping to distribute our meeting announcements. We're trying to expand our attendees beyond Somerville, so sending the announcements to other communities is very helpful.

IV. Connecting with other groups through personal connections (Lynn Weissman)

A. Community Corridor planning: Green Working Group (Chelsea Clarke, Rebecca Schrumm, Kent Elliot)

A. See update on CC planning from Ron Leaks above.

B. Roller derby update postponed to when Chelsea Clarke is here.

C. We should outreach to residents of Boston, Cambridge, and other towns to join our group

D. Enlisting Tufts University (Michelle, Alan Moore)

- Preliminary exploration of contacts, but no results yet.

E. Enlisting Livable Streets, MassBike

- Alan is connected to MassBike, and can get letters of support when required.
- Jonah asked about Charles River Path groups, Lynn said that we have the support of the Charles River Conservancy.
- Ron Leaks pointed out that the Tiger II grant was helped by many letters of support from many groups outside of Somerville.

F. Developing a Presentation

A.No update. **Ken and Alan will update at next meeting.**