

STEP monthly meeting

May 20, 2008

VNA Assisted Living Center

In attendance:

Ellin Reisner, Paul Morgan, Naomi Slagowski, Karen Molloy, Wig Zamore, Virginia Duffy, Andrea Yakovakis, Jim McGinnis, Ken Krause.

Notes taken by Naomi Slagowski

Green Line Update:

Wig gave a recap of the EOT meeting yesterday with aldermen and our legislative delegation:

Maintenance facility location concerns were discussed.

Getting street connections across to Brickbottom from McGrath seems to be the biggest planning issue, which hasn't been addressed by involved parties yet, it seems. Lowering the Fitchburg line would help make this a better street grid. This would also be of use in the Union Square/ Boynton Yards development to have depressed tracks.

Boston Engine Terminal: services only Commuter Rail (2/3 of it is for southern commuter rail trains). Is EOT planning a south of Boston maintenance facility in conjunction with the South Coast Rail? If so, would this offload some trains that are currently serviced in Somerville?

At yesterday's meeting, EOT stated that a Yard 7 Green Line maintenance facility would not be a good location option because it would interfere with the Inner Belt being connected on the Urban Ring.

Issues in addressing maintenance facility siting:

With expansion of South Coast rail, a new facility in that area will likely be needed; this could be beneficial to Somerville if it includes moving the servicing of some of southern Commuter Rail out from Somerville to a locale south of Boston.

Abutters issues (Noise to Brickbottom residents)

Having McGrath at grade and train depressed would be the best option

There is a meeting coming up next week sometime with EOT (EOT is setting it up) for a discussion about maintenance facility siting.

Jim made a point that mingling freight and passenger right of way does not sometimes work due to flooding, which is much more of a concern with passenger rail than freight.

East Cambridge Planning Team (ECPT) interested in keeping Lechmere station closer to them on the E. Cambridge side of McGrath rather than at North Point. They want a lot of good crossings for pedestrians and bikes. Depressing McGrath is probably out of the picture— infrastructure beneath is intimidating, and not pedestrian friendly to cross. ACN

(Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods) is interested in pedestrian walkways. East Cambridge group would like a stop at Twin City Plaza for the Green Line extension. Brickbottom has been meeting with EOT. The upcoming meeting at Brickbottom should clarify the community's sentiments on the maintenance facility and how it feels about a T stop nearby, either at Brickbottom or further on McGrath at Twin City Plaza or Pat's Tow.

Report from Medford from Ken:

MGNA (Medford Green Line Neighborhood Alliance) has had some public success lately, but they are still working on terminus. They are pushing for Rt. 16 terminus. Mayor and people in general are happy with Ball Square and College Ave. stops.

Medford people need Somerville advocates for Rt. 16 terminus – need to talk to the Aldermen about this. Tufts came to their meeting, and are happy about the Green Line with a stop at College Ave. It seems that Tufts would be a good ally to promote Rt. 16 terminus, as might Whole Foods. Ken mentioned how a LEED certified building to match those in East Medford would be a good thing for the city.

Cassandra Koutalidis – new city engineer in Medford (she used to be on Somerville ConCom). Ken spoke to her, and she is knowledgeable about mitigation. Cassandra has worked with HMMH (Harris Miller Miller Hanson), the environmental consultant on the project, and gives them high marks.

MGNA has a meeting at 7 p.m. on 5/27 at the South Medford Fire Station to talk about pressing for the proposed Rt. 16 Green Line terminus.

Ken will give the meeting DVD to Medford public access tonight. The taping went well (sound, etc.) at Green Line Advisory Meeting, and they will continue to tape these.

Jim update on Union Square:

Union Square Main Streets will hold a meeting with EOT at Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS, above Precinct bar) 9am Tuesday May 27th. No recommendations for the Union Sq stop will be presented (probably won't be ready until July) to discuss some Union Square options presented at last public meeting that don't work for the community, and to get an update. EOT and consultants will be meeting with Union Square Main Streets and some STEP members.

Virginia recited us a nice poem before she left!

Art Beat update from Karen:

July 19th, application due Jun 6th. Alan Moore is filing the application for the Somerville Bike Committee, which will host STEP in its booth again this year. Karen will coordinate preparations for STEP. She has been in touch with Mark Osterander (STEP's graphic designer) to design a new bumper sticker and possibly a bike sticker to match the STEP t-shirt design he created last year. Discussion continued about materials that need

updating, materials we would like to create, and booth setup. Planning will continue through email.

Ellin reported that at ArtBeat, there is going to be a scavenger hunt coordinated by Sustainable Somerville to ask questions of “green” groups, and we can think about what kind of little prizes or things can be given to people who come to the table.

Ken wondered if we could hold a raffle, for Charlie Cards? It is unclear whether a nonprofit community group is allowed to do this at ArtBeat, but this is a good idea for future events. Karen is checking if this is possible.

Other news:

Groundworks Somerville (w/STEP) was just awarded a \$100,000 CARE grant from EPA! Details about purposes and allocation are being sorted out.

People expressed interest in touring Boston Engine Terminal. Wig offered to set this up.

Wig brought up that the MBTA user survey recently came out. There have been some changes in usage since the introduction of the Charlie Cards. There are service changes coming up (this happens once every two years), and people can comment. **Look at the MBTA website for when these meetings are coming up.**

Next STEP Meeting: June 23rd. Location TBA. |