

NOTES FROM STEP MEETING 21 May 2007

May 21, 2007, 7-9 PM

At Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Center 251 Lowell Street

Attendees: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Karen Molloy, Steve Mulder, Andrea Yakovani, David Jordan, Ken Krause, Jen Lawrence, Laurence Paoella

Notes by Karen Molloy

1. Updates

David Jordan from Senator Jehlen's office reported that it's critical time for the Green Line Extension project in that we need State commitment for funding. Attention is being paid to the Fall River Commuter Rail needs. Need to have a working coalition comprised of members of community groups working on the Green Line (STEP, CLF, MGNA, East Cambridge) at the table. This collation group of stakeholders could meet monthly at Tufts. He will get back to us on the date for the inaugural meeting.

The current plan is to have the Extensions built by 2014, but there is a strategy underway to go after federal Funding, which would likely delay the project by two years. Upon Peter Calkutera's retirement, Wendy Stern will be heading up the Green Line project at EOT.

Ellin reported that the City is forming a citizen advisory board on the Green Line Extension, but there have been no details about it. There has been much in the media about the lack of funds available for new (T) projects but the Patrick administration has been visibly pushing for the Fall River Commuter Rail.

The NorthPoint project has stalled or collapsed at present due to dispute between the two developers. It's not clear what will happen to the plans for the new Lechmere Station, which were less than optimal for the East Cambridge community as designed (the design favored North Point while making East Cambridge access difficult and potentially hampered design of the Union Sq Green Line spur). If all had gone according to plans, the new Lechmere Station would be built as the last quarter of the project. How plans for the new station will be extracted from the NorthPoint project, and who will pay for it, is not known.

Wig reported that the IKEA waiver decision should be forthcoming.

New Urban Ring draft should be coming soon. Harvard has become the issue for the Urban Ring

Wig reported that the next MPO meeting, to be held this Thurs, will focus on EJ/air quality issues. This weekend will be Rachel Carson's 100 birthday. The MBTA's PMT is starting long range (T) planning, and will hold community meetings for input throughout the month. Wig will be attending a 3-day EPA meeting on particulate matter standards next month.

2. Planning for Upcoming Events and Proposed Activities

“How Art Grows From Community Activism” panel at Somerville Museum

Lawrence reported that STEP will be part of the upcoming exhibit at the Somerville Museum, with the timeline and map. The exhibit will also feature displays from Friend of the Community path and the Mystic View Task Force, among others. .

ArtBeat 21 July

Karen reported that we'll be sharing a booth at ArtBeat again this year, with either the Somerville Bike Committee or Groundwork (whoever is submitting an application). MGNA will join us. She will ask Mark Ostrander to create a new t-shirt design and coordinate STEP's ArtBeat planning. We updated the time-line and map for the recent exhibit at Brickbottom, so the remaining pieces to update are the main STEP brochure and the air quality handout. Karen will give Wig the air quality source file to update. Ellin will check inventory of buttons and bumperstickers. Ellin mentioned we have an account at the UPS store in Davis Sq with funds to cover the cost of xeroxing some materials for ArtBeat. She will contact the Bike Committee and GroundWorks (Jen had left the meeting before this topic) to see who is submitting the community vendor ArtBeat application.

STEP participation in Somerville Green Streets

Ellin reported that Somerville Green Streets has asked whether STEP would like to be a sponsor of the newly formed group (Somerville Green Streets). Sure! Their goals are in line with ours. Their most visible project is the Walk/Ride Friday, the last Friday of each month in which people are encouraged to leave the car at home and seek another form of transportation to work school: walk, bicycle or take public transportation.

Fall Fundraiser

Karen reported that she'd contacted Taza Chocolate to see whether they might be interested in doing a chocolate-tasting fundraiser for STEP this autumn. Turns out that the Taza Chocolate co-founder she spoke with, Larry Slotnick, has a transportation planning background and cofounded Livable Streets with Jeff Rosenblum. He said, “We'd would be more than happy to help STEP out”. Venue possibilities include the Taza Chocolate factory on Windsor St. outside Union Sq or the new Diesel, which will open in Union Sq

sometime this summer. (Taza is in talks with them about hosting chocolate tastings there.) Larry gave Karen the name of the Taza marketing contact to follow up with. Subsequent conversation with the contact resulted in a plan to check out the factory after ArtBeat (date TBA). Their factory can hold a chocolate tasting event up to about 45-50 people. (The STEP fundraiser held a couple of years ago at the Independent drew about 50 people.) Karen will pursue planning the fundraiser with Taza Chocolate after ArtBeat.

World CarFree Day (22 Sept)

Karen reported that we should start planning soon if we want to do something for World Carfree Day (last year we started thinking about it too late to get something together). It would be great if the whole Boston/Cambridge/Somerville area could acknowledge World CarFree Day, but unless an umbrella group like Livable Streets takes that on, the most we can do is get Somerville involved. Karen will contact the Bike Committee and Somerville Green Streets.

Next STEP meeting: 25 June 7pm location VNA