

STEP MEETING
JANUARY 31, 2005, VNA Assisted Living Center

1. Update on ACO Commitments, CLF, Somerville Lawsuits and Air Quality.

The Conservation Law Foundation and City of Somerville notice to sue filings against the state for not meeting its commitments was discussed. There was some discussion about the fact that Jamaica Plain has filed its own lawsuit against Secretary Graubauskas. It was also suggested that the Attorney General might also file a suit before CLF.

Following the canceling of the January 24th hearing due to the snowstorm, Wig noted that the amendment to the Artery Consent Order required that the Somerville and Jamaica Plain public hearings be rescheduled.

It was noted also that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) met for 4 days the week before the hearing was to occur. As a result of this meeting the DEP a statement about what was in violation and what would be done about it. The state believes that they are technically not in violation on the big projects. The question was raised as to when they would ever consider themselves in violation.

The state's position on the planning money left for the Green Line represents "real funding" and that the extension is in the long term plan. However, all that is stated is that the General Court will find the funding. This position is not at all convincing, nor is the fact that the Bond Bill does not include any funding for Green Line.

It was suggested that we request a funding schedule from the state as well as a timeline for addressing air quality/public health issues to push the state on its commitments.

The status of the Green Line Study and the Advisory Group Meetings was raised. There has been no activity since the end of November. It appears that the ACO/ Ozone SIP hearings have slowed the Green Line Study down.

Wig presented to Ozone SIP Committee on Somerville health stats. NESCOM (NE states for air use management) works for the Gov's on NE. They had done a lit search on particulate matter. They thought that if the fed standard were made lower, it would put the state in non-compliance.

2. Smart Growth, Transit Oriented Development and Air Quality

Need for transit oriented development (TOD) in Somerville if the state finally meets its commitment to extend the Green Line through Somerville. While there are plenty of

development opportunities around Inner Belt, it is important to make sure that that is not seen as the only possible location for TOD.

The Union Square Master Plan was mentioned as one area of focus, but it was recommended that during this year conversations need to be held in the city to identify TOD opportunities.

Smart growth and 40R are pushing development in urban settings, but this is happening without attention being paid to air quality.

Good sources of information on 40 R, TOD, Smart Growth, Climate, energy from the Environmental Business Council, Health Effects Institute and the California Air Resources Board.

Discussion about holding a community forum on the relationship of transportation to public health was held. Several formats were discussed and there was agreement to move forward with this idea. Efforts to do outreach in the past were discussed as was the video on the Green Line extension "Off Track" produced by Bob Nesson.

3. Transportation and Public Health Forum

Follow up on the forum idea will be done via email to determine topics, identify speakers and consider inviting other organizations to work with us on this as well as the city.

4. Voting By-laws, Election of officers, collection of dues

STEP members present at the meeting voted unanimously to pass the by-laws. This was followed by the first election of officers for STEP. Elections will be held annually.

The results of the election are:

Ellin Reisner, President
Andrea Yakovakis, Treasurer
Paul Morgan, Secretary.

Following the election Ellin gave Andrea STEP's state DOR and IRS numbers STEP now has to file with the Department of State for 5013C status.

5. STEP web site update

At the time of the meeting the web site was down. It is up again with a new domain name www.SomervilleSTEP.org. Through the efforts of Steve Mulder and Jim McGinnis we have contracted with a more reliable hosting company for our server. This will give STEP capacity to grow the website to include video, listserv, discussion forums, etc.

6. Dues and Fund raising

Dues for membership in STEP are \$10.00 per year. This money will be used for mailings, the website domain costs, printing, and fees for registering with the state to become a 5013C.

Other sources of funding were discussed briefly such as having STEP merchandise available for purchase on the website, donations and grants. J

Karen agreed to look into using Café Press

Andrew also offered help with GIS for STEP

7. # 89 Bus changes were discussed.

There appears to be both dissatisfaction and confusion over the changing of the route to send some buses to Davis Square from East Somerville and others going to Clarendon Hill. Concern was raised because Alderman Trane criticized the new route, yet some East Somerville residents appreciate that the bus now goes to Davis Square. It was recommended that rather than divide the community over this, that what is needed is more buses to increase the frequency of the buses. Part of the problem appears to be the lack of preparation by the MBTA of Somerville residents about the changes. We should request that the MBTA publicize the changes and recommend an increase in bus frequency.