

NOTES FROM STEP MEETING 27 March 2006

March 27, 2006, 7-9 PM

VNA Assisted Living Center 259 Lowell St. Somerville

Present: Ellin Reisner, Wig Zamore, Andrea Yakovakis, Karen Molloy, Jim McGinnis, Bob Nesson, Laurence Paolella, Dori Peleg, Steve McDonald, Megan Russell, Jared Ingersoll, Michael Elliott, Mallory Morton

Notes written by: Karen Molloy

1. STEP Governance

a. Membership update and dues collection for 2006

Membership is \$10.00; payment and attending 2 meetings in a given year enable a member to vote in the annual meeting.

b. Election of officers for the year March 2006-March 2007

Unanimous votes for: Ellin Reisner as President, Andrea Yakovakis as Treasurer, Karen Molloy as Secretary.

2. Bus service in Somerville and development of bus survey on website

STEP will conduct a survey to determine the greatest needs among Somervillians (bus riders and potential bus riders) regarding their experience with local bus transportation. With collected data we can go to the T and ask for improvements. Some issues might be negotiated as mitigation until the Green Line is built.

Target audiences

- Current bus riders
- Former bus riders who gave up on riding buses for some reason(s)
- People who have not ridden buses but might do so if certain conditions improved (they are interested enough to fill out the survey)

Categories of issues

- Service coverage
- Customer service
- Schedule adherence

Proposed means of distributing the survey

- Have people fill out the survey on the STEP website, and post an announcement about the survey on the STEP listserv
- Pass out survey-flyers to riders waiting at bus stops
- Distribute survey-flyers to places we usually flyer: City Hall, libraries, cafes, laundromats, etc.
- Print the survey in the Somerville Journal and Somerville News

The bus survey subgroup (Karen, Jim, Dori Peleg, Mallory Morton) will follow-up through email to compose a list of survey questions. There was a suggestion that we might do a bus diary. Discussion ensued about how the City is collecting bus service concerns (so this survey dovetails with that effort)

implementing more (T) bus service in one area means dropping service elsewhere, the (T) buses now have GPS units.

3. Green Line Extension Update

- a. The Green Line meeting at City Hall last week with City, STEP, and our legislative delegation**
The Green Line meeting at City Hall last week with City, STEP, and our legislative delegation had the goal of getting everyone in the loop on what needs to be done. The Green Line Extension is the lead project in the DEP Ozone SIP, but apparently the DEP is not going to issue its decision until the summer (delayed from January.) The original SIP commitment was to build the Green Line to Medford; the Union Sq piece may be at risk, especially because there is increased competition/pressure for the Red/Blue connector.
- b. DEP ruling on SIP projects**
The aforementioned DEP ruling delay has further delayed the project. Peter Calcaterra has been appointed project manager for the Green Line Extension at the EOT; he states that the Union Sq. part of the project would lag behind the Medford effort.
- c. STEP to meet with Medford and East Cambridge about Green Line**
STEP is interested in setting up a meeting with Medford and East Cambridge. At some point all three communities will need to work together on corridor planning (see 3d below). Recently Spaulding and Slye gave a presentation in East Cambridge on North Point which included some info about the Green Line (station).
- d. Land use & transportation planning, community outreach**
Regarding land use, TOD, we're looking into complementing the City's efforts by involving the community in some charrettes (with the possible aid of National Charrette Inst., BSA etc).

SCC AHOC is starting to look into affordable housing around the Green Line.

Ellin and Karen are planning to visit outdoor T stations to take photos of various station design approaches in use now in an effort to start visioning what Somerville stops might look like. Bob Nesson might do the same to add to his film Offtrack, which he is starting to update.

Steve McDonald (with Bob Nesson) is interested in starting an effort for STEP to hold community presentations that educate the Somerville community on what to expect from building the Green Line project. (Helps to dispel anxiety of not knowing what a project of this kind entails.) We could have speakers address some engineering/construction scope & issues, station footprints, duration of project phases, and the impact of a similar well-known project: the Red Line extension (for example, we could invite Lee Auspitz from the Davis Sq Task Force to talk about the Red Line Station at Davis Sq.)

4. Discussion about sponsoring the showing of film: "The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream"

Quote from the endofsuburbia.com website: "As we enter the 21st century, serious questions are beginning to emerge about the sustainability of the American way of life. With brutal honesty and a touch of irony, The End of Suburbia explores the American Way of Life and its prospects as the planet approaches a critical era, as global demand for fossil fuels begins to outstrip supply. World Oil Peak and the inevitable decline of fossil fuels are upon us now, some scientists and policy makers argue in this documentary. The consequences of inaction in the face of this global crisis are enormous. What does Oil Peak mean for North America? As energy prices skyrocket in the coming years, how will the

populations of suburbia react to the collapse of their dream? Are today's suburbs destined to become the slums of tomorrow? And what can be done NOW, individually and collectively, to avoid The End of Suburbia?"

Comment from Karen Molloy about the documentary: The title of this documentary is a bit of misnomer, should be "End of our oil-reliant culture as we know it" or something because it's not just about suburbia's reliance on oil but about the reliance on oil of urban and country-dwellers too, all who buy food and clothing transported from far-flung places and commute in cars. The film delves into how US will be in competition for diminishing oil resources with countries that are increasingly adopting our oil-based lifestyle (such as China).

People at the meeting expressed interest in STEP hosting a public viewing. STEP could perhaps host it at the Somerville Library (Main Branch). It was proposed that this could be the start of hosting other films, perhaps other advocacy groups in the area would be interested in hosting a film series with showing other documentary. Karen will look into obtaining the film (renting or buying it) and what it entails to host a film at the Main Library.

5. Other Business

a. Medford Green Line group update

Mini-charrette is being planned for April. Working with Tufts grad school, architects in the planning. Also they are getting a website and logo underway. Next Medford Green Line meeting is 4 April, at Wild Oats.

b. MPAC forum on transportation and health

Ellin and Wig attended. Purpose of the forum was to bring to the attention of policy makers the research that the stats on the issues of transportation and public health. The forum was attended by Harvard researchers and transportation policy makes. A clear message from the experts to the transportation planners was that people living within 100 meters of a highway have a greater chance of suffering from or dying from a pollution-related illness. Unfortunately, ½ the Smart Growth projects for affordable housing in the State are within 100 meters of a highway.

c. Livable Streets

Livable Streets is getting office space soon at MIT.

d. ArtBeat

STEP wants to be at ArtBeat again this year. It's a huge opportunity for outreach for us; our table had crowds of people seeking information last year and in 2004. STEP application for 501c3 is still in process. Ellin will see whether we could share a table with another organization, such as Livable Streets, which is 501c3 this year. Livable Streets in particular would be a really good partner for STEP at ArtBeat.