

**TOWN OF BELMONT  
COMMUNITY PATH IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**October 4, 2018**

(Committee disbanded prior to finalizing these minutes)

Present: Russell Leino, Brian Burke, Michael Cicalese, Heather Ivester, Vincent Stanton

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development

**8:05 PM Meeting called to order**

Continued Discussion on Phase 1b. Mr. Leino recapped the discussion from the last meeting. He stated that the MBTA expressed safety concern about the Path crossing Brighton Street from the south to the north side of the tracks. He added that the MBTA fully supports the Alexander Avenue Underpass and that MassDOT is willing to work with the Town to solve MBTA's concerns. He noted that the state agreed to fund the Underpass regardless of whether the Path is on the north or south side of the tracks.

Mr. Leino stated that it makes sense to move the Path to the north side since the project will not get funded without the support of the MBTA. He noted that 2 issues have caused him to change his mind: 1) MBTA's position and its rationale for that position and 2) the decoupling of the funding for the Underpass. Mr. Burke stated, however, that all citizens have said that they want the Path on the south side. He argued that the Committee should be more visionary and that the south side offered better views and access to Town facilities. He noted that the Town can access the pedestrian bridge in Alewife to get to the north side of the tracks without having to utilize the Brighton Street railroad crossing. He also noted concerns about flooding and contaminated soils on the north side. Ms. Ivester noted that the pedestrian bridge is further under consideration than when the Committee began this process and that there are lots of linkages being developed throughout the area. Mr. Burke stated that his understanding was that the bridge would be complete within 2-4 years. Mr. Stanton stated that the Town should talk with Cambridge about potential development in this area. Mr. Cicalese stated that this was a Community Path not just about a crossing at Brighton Street but also a crossing at Pleasant Street. Mr. Leino stated that the Path has to stay grounded in the Feasibility Study and that the Study was designed to be flexible. Mr. Stanton noted that the Path is going to be on MBTA land regardless of the north or south side. He noted that a Path on the south side from Brighton Street to Alewife has never been studied. Ms. Ivester noted that the easement on the French/Mahoney property isn't that safe either. Mr. Leino stressed that the Path cannot get funded if the MBTA is opposed to the crossing. Mr. Burke stated that he did not believe this. Mr. Cicalese stated that the Town has to work with the MBTA for the whole Path and not just this segment. Mr. Leino stated that the Cambridge bridge option seems like a fantasy. Mr. Burke stated that the Committee needs to have courage to utilize the Cambridge bridge and questioned why the Committee was boxing itself into a corner with pollution, contamination and drainage issues. Mr. Leino stated that the Committee is only looking at the design phase and that these

issues will be investigated under this phase and if they become a problem then the Town will have to look for other options. Mr. Stanton noted that the pinch point at Crate Escape on south side has less room than the north side.

Comments from the Audience:

1. Frank French stated that Cambridge Plating is willing to talk about the Path going behind its building.
2. Cosmo Caterino noted that since the Underpass has been decoupled then the Path can go around the Purecoat building by going to Concord Avenue and Hittinger Street. He emphasized that the state should work with the Town.
3. An abutter expressed concern that the north side was full of mature trees.
4. Cindy Taylor stated that the neighbors on Channing Road were happy with the south side solution.
5. Another abutter stated that the Town should be telling Senator Brownsberger and Representative Rogers this is what the Town wants. He also noted that a north side route is a commuter route while a south side route is a community path.

Ms. Ivester suggested that the Town talk with the MBTA about the bridge crossing in Cambridge and stressed the importance of looking at the whole picture. Mr. Burke agreed that the Town must investigate the Cambridge option. Mr. Leino stated that the Town needs to have a route since a new committee is about to take over.

Mr. Burke made a motion to support the south side of the tracks with input from Cambridge on the pedestrian bridge. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ivester.

Mr. Stanton stated that he wanted information from Cambridge before voting on Mr. Burke's motion.

Ms. Ivester and Mr. Cicalese stated that they wanted to stay with the Feasibility Study. Mr. Cicalese also stated that he wants to look at the whole Path, look at the western options as well. Mr. Stanton stressed that the Committee has received new information from the MBTA that should influence the routes location.

The Committee voted 3 -2 to stay on the south side. Mr. Burke, Ms. Ivester, and Mr. Cicalese voted to support Mr. Burke's motion while Mr. Leino and Mr. Stanton voted against it.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.**