

HARVARD TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE Meeting Minutes

Date: March 9, 2022

Time: 7:00PM

Place: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Stacia Donahue, Bruce Leicher, Gabriel Medjanis, Jim Lee, Rene Turnheim, Suzie Allen, Pam Marston

Others Present: Chris Ryan (Director of Economic Development); Jefferson Burson (Harvard Climate Initiative Committee), Jane Thomsen

Gabriel Medjanis called the meeting to order at 7:00pm virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, under M.G.L. Chapter 30A S20 and Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125

1. Discussion of Climate Action Plan Transportation Element:

Mr. Burson discussed the HCIC and the developing Climate Action Plan. Harvard's plan, similar to the State, will have different timelines for its various goals. One of the goals to focus on was Transportation related. HCIC wants to partner with TAC on the transportation plan update so that it covers climate related goals which will serve both the TAC and HCIC goals. Many of the goals in the plan are likely to overlap. Mr. Ryan noted that he is meeting with MRPC staff this coming week to review their first draft of the transportation plan update. It was originally submitted and TAC found to document lacking and submitted many comments. Mr. Ryan will review the comments TAC submitted on the first draft. MRPC used DLTA funds to create the first pass and will be using EDA grant funding for their second try. Mr. Ryan hopes that the next pass will involve MRPC staff actually talking to both the TAC and the HCIC about what the groups want and expect to see in the plan. The TAC noted that the first draft was not shared with HCIC because it was found to need heavy editing before it was ready for a larger audience. TAC is willing to give MRPC another chance at a second draft on the plan to see about moving forward. HCIC noted that moving toward electric vehicles in the municipal fleet is something HCIC had discussed they would like to see in the plan and asked if that would be in scope. Mr. Ryan noted since the Transportation plan is a chapter in the Town's Master Plan, that this sort of thing would be applicable

Mr. Burson noted in general, the two main focus area for Harvard to help get us to net zero by 2030 will be our buildings and our transportation since Harvard has no heavy industry or other major contributors.

TAC and HCIC discussed how to review the final draft of the transportation plan to get the appropriate input from all interested parties.

Mr. Ryan noted that he will report back to both groups (TAC and HCIC) after meeting with MRPC later this week.

2. Follow up from Old Mill Road Trail Connection Public Meeting:

Mr. Medjanis noted that after the public review/hearing, some neighbors on Old Mill/Blanchard expressed more concerns to him personally. Ms Donahue noted that she reported to Park & Rec about the trail meeting and they were in full support of the proposed plan as it connects to the playing fields at Devens and extends the recreational path that starts at Depot Road. P&R noted that they are in full support and if TAC needed their endorsement when we apply for MassTrails grant in 2023 they are willing to put it to a vote to endorse. She also noted that P&R reported that there is no plan for trail maintenance for the newly upgraded trail from Depot to Lancaster County Road by either P&R or DPW at this time. P&R noted this is something that needs to be addressed. Ms. Allen asked if she should ask School Committee to vote for an official endorsement. She felt in general they were in support of it when it was discussed, but they didn't

take a formal vote. The TAC felt that maybe it was too early for an official vote and that waiting until more of the details were worked out would be better.

Mr Leicher and Mr. Medjanis noted that even though many seem to be in support of the trail connection, there are neighbors that are against it. They questioned how heavily should abutters concerns be weighted? If the main sticking point is emergency access, then maybe pushing against just that point as the design progresses is the way to go. Mr. Ryan noted that he would talk to the police chief and fire chief to determine what the real needs might be for emergency access. The group is also concerned about Mass Development holding up the process because they're holding it for leverage as Devens and the stake holders progress toward disposition. Answering the question of if they would considering moving forward with the project before the disposition is settled seems like the next step. TAC feels pushing this issue to the Devens Jurisdiction committee for some help with resolution would be a good idea. Mr Ryan will review with Ms. Minar as she's the representative to the Devens Jurisdiction Committee.

3. Ayer Road TIP Public Hearing:

The date for the meeting with MassDOT and the consultants is set **March 30th at 6:30pm**. Mr. Leicher noted that the 25% did not include any of the TAC and Town comments from the 10% design plan review meeting. It's not clear that the TAC comments from the 10% phase made it to MassDOT from our consultants. A memo from the TAC to the Select Board, DPW, and TEC to express the TAC concerns was sent after the 10% review meeting, but it has not been confirmed that the memo ever made it to the MassDot level for review and response/comment. Mr. Leicher asked how TEC became to consultants for this project. Mr. Ryan noted that they probably won the bid for the contract when issued by DPW and that they have done various projects in town previously. Mr. Leicher is planning to meet with Select Board members Stu Sklar and Kara Minar to talk about the non-response from the comments.

Ms. Donahue asked about marketing to try and get as many people to the meeting as possible. Mr. Ryan noted that links and posts are at 3 locations on the town website currently. Mr. Ryan noted that he would send the Harvard Press a press release to get it in the notifications section. Ms. Donahue asked if anyone was willing to post on NextDoor about the meeting since she is too chicken to do so herself. Generally, everyone seemed unwilling to post about it, but agreed that it would get noticed there even though NextDoor is not recognized as official channel for information distribution. TAC does not have funds to support a mailer or any other paid advertising.

4. Meeting Notes:

Mr. Leicher motioned to approve the minutes for 2/3/22 and 2/16/22 as submitted. Ms. Marston 2nd. 6 for and 1 abstained. Approved as submitted.

5. Other Business: None

6. Adjournment:

Mr. Medjanis moved to adjourn. Mr. Lee seconded. Unanimous agreement. Adjourned at 8:14pm.

Next meeting: TBD