

Check Attendance

TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS
DOWNTOWN STREETScape MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
October 14, 2014

MEETING MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS:

Brian Packish, Chair
Doug Abdelnour
Erik Albert
Christine Todd
Gail Barmakian
Bob Whritenour
Amy Billings
Duncan Ross
John Bradford

ATTENDEES:

Scott Dario
Craig Lowe
_____ Bettencourt
Renee Balter
Jeremiah McCarthy

Terry McCarthy
Mark Morris

The meeting of the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Committee was called to order by Chairman, Brian Packish at 1:08 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room at 56 School Street in Oak Bluffs, MA.

Brian Packish: Hoping Chuck Sullivan could make it today because he has some maps given to him by Bob Whritenour

Gail, what is that project in North Bluff called?

Gail Barmakian North Bluff Walkway Plan

Last week - still on the North Bluff

Stephanie Mashek talked about potential traffic patterns and solutions that were not listed on this plan that I thought were interesting. We were eager to talk to Scott about moving the buses – largest vehicle that moves in and around the North Bluff. Do you have any thoughts on this?

Scott Dario From past conversations about five years ago – feels not to get in a rush to making it one way like to better signage to help direct the folks coming off the boats (Island Queen and Quansett) and direct toward the harbor front, which is already clearly marked as a designated walking area to get them into town.

A few things you can do to make better:

A staging area with IQ/HY- Line on left side gives blockage, not apparent you are supposed to walking on the harbor front – 500 people waiting for IQ – causes this congestion that naturally happens when people exit the boat and no one there representing OB to welcome and direct them.

The town could have an Ambassador welcoming people into the staging area. Need official spokesperson or representative for the town. I would rather see our money spent and allocated instead of making it a one way.

Brian Packish

Scott you're saying change staging from left side to right side – when people come off have an open way.

Scott Dario

Huge difference - can see people waiting

DISCUSSION: QUESTION ABOUT TRAFFIC PATTERNS?

Brian Packish

Traffic patterns concerned – we don't need to make a recommendation to the board at this level at this time that is absolutely going to happen That conversation is further down in the planning process what we need to discuss now per conversations with the consultants

Basically, they are looking for us to come with a statement – the SCPC supports reviewing potential traffic pattern changes to help accommodate more parking, better flow, whatever your reasons would be and then from there have to look for funding – this creates a bigger piece of dialogue as to what it looks like.

We have a list of Calibrated Goals – we are working on now is the first Calibrated Goal:

- Create a North Bluff plan to improve ferry logistics, and we added welcome experience increase safety and capitalize on waterfront public space.

They need us to produce three to four bullet points to incorporate into a conceptual plan. For example;

We support a pedestrian travel lane from the Island Queen to the Strand Theatre it really should be that broad.

Potentially find funding and really narrow it down and that is more a public process. We could get bogged down in material etc and takes months to get through

John Bradford

If there is a traffic pattern that everyone is opposed to, we can let the people in the area know.

Brian Packish Minutes being generated – reflect conversation and clear ideas of what we know. One way in and one way out was not supported by anybody; the majority not in favor of that significant of a change.

REFERENCE TO MAP –

What we did here – both positive and negative towards was the potential people being able to loop back around in a way that works better than what’s here now. Loop back if waiting for a boat once in do not have to come all the way out

Brian Packish Brian noted Mike Santoro’s thought on a lack of information in the plan being discussed

Gail Barmakian Discussed and pointed on the map (one way)
Alternative was discussed at the last meeting, she likes because it gives people an option to go there or there and alleviates this two-way and make this one way and reverse the direction.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION REFERRING TO THE MAP – UNCLEAR

Gail Barmakian No one wants to make one way – change this direction to go one way this way and change this one to go one way in the other direction. People have a choice to go into town or to leave this way – this will alleviate this here give us more room on this road because we do not need this lane which is only used to go right.

John Bradford UNCLEAR – making this way

Renee Balter In 2007 the commission did an exhaustive study on traffic plans buses ferries and there was a public hearing. They came up with a workable plan and what happened because the bulkhead was being repaired – eventually all tossed.
Plan to get people to board the boats on one side and when come of go down toward town – place for taxis etc. Form follows function
What is functioning-- ferries, taxis walkers and the commission took into consideration and came up with a plan
signage should be a priority and beneficial and look at the commission maps and see how to do it according to the traffic patterns in that report/plan.

Brian Packish Some of the points in the plan are potential options. You are right, however those are not specifics that we are charged with and not within our scope at this time. We did hear some clear things and everyone in the room can agree with the following five bullet points:

1. We support a pedestrian travel lane from the Island Queen to the Strand Theatre there is existing one there probably needs to be redefined better

2. Better signage – we need to inform people - who what when where –what is next and where they need to go.
3. Connect the Harbor Walk (that runs along the harbor) with the new boardwalk that is going to be built on the North Bluff. At this point we feel it may happen and so we will talk like it is going to happen. We can all agree we need to figure out at the very point of the North Bluff, what type of space we want to define that makes it a clear transition to from the harbor walk into a clear safe common area for people to come into as they make their way over to the boardwalk that exist on the North Bluff.
4. We all agree we need to provide better services at the Island Queen
5. Better /reconfigure the existing the staging/drop off area services at the Island Queen: staging right instead of left – potential for welcome experience or info booth or a covered area for inclement weather

The most discussed is the traffic pattern situation, we just do not have enough information. Certain patterns clearly not supported, but the committee supports the review of existing traffic patterns, parking and pedestrian safety.

The group we are working for is not looking for a decision to be that clear from this committee. If we narrow too far – using this to fund potential projects and may put us outside an RFP – limiting us.

As far as the North Bluff is concerned for *Calibrated Goal # 1: Create a North Bluff plan to improve ferry logistics, welcome experience, increase safety and capitalize on waterfront public space.*

I think those five bullet points and we can obviously discuss the language something that addresses potential traffic discussion in the future and that closes out what we are charged to do at this time. Not to say we may get to the last one and opt to revisit add or tweak – however in the name of moving forward in a way that defines what our charge is – coming up with actual items for each calibrated goal.

Christine Todd

Can we on the committee get copies of the maps to review prior to meetings to avoid lengthy discussion ‘

Brian Packish

I think we have discussed every possible configuration with what we have available and I do not think it is our job to make a decision as to what to do. Each of these items they potentially find funding and the some items become a stand-alone project, at that point multiple public hearings, I

imagine some things will have to go to town meeting and warrant, there is a whole process.

John Bradford The traffic pattern will dictate some of the other design concerns. I would really like to let the design people know that the committee is not comfortable with some of their original concepts. We must be clear about the necessity to access at the Strand Theater and the SSA both out and in.

Gail Barmakian I agree with John ...predominantly not interested in changing direction, at least let them know in soft terms so that that may be off the table because of the signage.

Brian Packish Are we making decisions with enough facts?

John Bradford Let them come back with plans with some other alternatives that we can hash out

Brian Packish Overall we do not like the original concept plan:

1. First concept – NO
2. clear necessity to still be able to access IN at the Strand end
3. able to get both IN and OUT at the SSA end.

Gail Barmakian Put in the bullet points along with what John said ... *with avoiding to change traffic patterns* so you are not blocking it out.

Duncan Ross I do not necessarily agree with that ..we can have a conversation

Brian Packish What we know is we do not like the first concept.
We know we need TWO WAYS IN – one way IN at the Strand and one way IN at the SSA and we need an OUT and an IN up at the SSA end and we are clear on that

Duncan Ross Out at the Strand is difficult to do the concept, because you'll be trying to make it up Circuit Ave across three lanes

Mark Morris I live across from the Lookout. I do not see the big deal the only time there is traffic when the SSA ferries come in and out Signage directing people example ED, because everyone goes into town and up by Giordano's.

Agrees with something for people to stand under at the Island Queen,
Should be a sidewalk on Main Street – people walk in the middle of the road surprised no one has gotten killed

Fix the sidewalk on Pascat

Nothing needs to be done to the traffic because there is only so much you can do.

Brian Packish Sounds as though we are reaching a consensus

Erik Albert You look at the roundabout – we built it and I like it – my cab friends like it. We should try to do something

AD Two way traffic into the North Bluff because if an ambulance has to get in there – it can be dangerous – I am elderly and it is important to have access

 I live on a dirt road that comes out onto Seaview Ave. Ever since they changed parking to diagonal it has become very dangerous area when we exit our road – there is very little room for two cars to pass each other. You cannot make a turn without entering into oncoming traffic and people walking and the mopeds it is a dangerous area

Mike Santoro As the Chairman of the Roads & By-Ways we did a study and the Chief people were cruising up there to monitor the area because there are speed issues. You can take any road in town and when people are backing-up is going to be an issue. People have questioned why we do not go by federal guidelines and if we followed we would not have any parking in town on Circuit Avenue. The Chief brought up the fact that diagonal parking does tend to slow people and the traffic coming down that road. With that said we came up with the fact that and Kathy Burton presented it and we looked into it that we should do some initial surveys to have sidewalks going up that side of the road. Property lines obviously extend way beyond – on the home side, the Lookout side. There is room to put sidewalks up in that area and again with signage and and the new walkway too.

 DISCUSSED AT LENGTH LAST WEEK

John Bradford I would like to get to the consultants Seaview Ave Extension/Circuit Ave Extension up to date maps of those areas with actual dimensions.

Brian Packish Back to the traffic piece – stay on task. All of these tie back to traffic piece:

1. First concept – NO
2. clear necessity to still be able to access IN at the Strand end
3. able to get both IN and OUT at the SSA end.

 Anything else specific to add

Erik Albert AT THE MAP
Lake Avenue – Two ways going to the Island Queen

Mark Morris
Mike Santoro Traffic would be backed up on Pasque Avenue

Brian Packish Both sections of the Harbor drive heading up Pasque Avenue

Mike Santoro Potential back-up

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ABOUT TRAFFIC – ALL AT ONCE

John Bradford One way up to and through Saco Avenue and then two way coming down?

Brian Packish Any potential change is going to put a burden on any of these roads here

Depends on re-configuration at the bulkhead

Small roundabout /circle at the bulkhead

Manage and define

For me personally - okay with the pattern as is with exception with minor tweeks.

Gail Barmakian I say avoid traffic patterns. There are problems with any of the alternatives. ...keep as is.

Duncan Ross Open to suggestions – but major changes would be problematic.

Erik Albert Open

John Bradford Traffic problems at the end of the bulkhead and that needs to change

Brian Packish The statement we want to make to the consultants is to encourage them to work with the existing traffic (current) patterns and provide us with as many options for the parking lot at the North Bluff as possible.

Scott Dario I agree with Gail I would not change the traffic patterns, but Duncan and Regan who was spearheading it, about seven years ago that traffic committee had my blessings down at the Island Queen. All the selectman, as well as the committee came down and met me and we made an agreement then and a determination that the way it was, the old way was better than trying to change it. We did have several meetings with the buses down there just to let you know.

Brian Packish That's why so important that we wanted to talk to you, Scottie because the buses have been there for a long time. There has got to be some way to do better with the massive piece of paving and the parking – some way to do better.

Renee Balter Biggest problem we have is the number of people – the people need to be directed even more than the direction of the cars and parking.
Take into consideration –
People exiting the boats have no direction of where to go

Map commission came up with addresses the issue of handling the pedestrian traffic: Staging on the side of the Island Queen (right) gives options
Beautiful harbor
Car and bike rentals on the opposite side of street
Walk on sidewalk near houses (if there was one)
Split sidewalks near Nancy's
Priority: Signage and walkways

Brian Packish Would you say all that we have discussed since the beginning of this project fall under

1. A pedestrian travel lane
2. Better signage
- 3 Connect the Harbor Walk and boardwalk
- 4 Better services/configuration at the ferry area
5. Better /reconfigure the existing the staging/drop off area

Renee Balter Yes, and keep traffic going the same way

Mike Santoro You discussed a shelter down there for the Island Queen you addressed it once at the harbor committee meeting. We are starting to pursue that and he came to one of our meetings and the Phil Reagan Plan (1990's) was shot down. But Road & By-Ways to pursue Resident (Dr. Lew) currently on the committee

Brian Packish Encourage that all interested parties work together. Is that what we want to put forth.

No change in traffic pattern
We will send information to (HW) consultants to work on while we move to next item. We are providing them a clear vision as to what we support.

Duncan Ross Suggestions:
Sidewalk from Nancy's to Strand
Police down there to manage the flow

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE NORTH BLUFF PLAN

Brian Packish North Bluff Boardwalk
Working on as well as with StreetScape
Funding sources

Craig Lowe Move staging area (corral) over to the jetty side

AD How does she get her cars in and out of the "green" buffer sonzes?

DISCUSSION REGARDING GREEN BUFFERS

Jeremiah McCarthy Good

Mike Santoro Shared streets? Separate crowd control (ballards)

Brian Packish Dockside – Strand (bottleneck) define between street and the people. Scott needs to get in and out and the (ballers) not conducive to buses

Mike Santoro Tourist/Pedestrians don't want barriers – just want to feel free

Brian Packish Part of the problem

Scott Dario Designated sidewalks

Mike Morris

Brian Packish One items we will have to eliminate – unfortunately knocking out the cobblestone (withdrawn from Calibrated Goals)

CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING TRAFFIC FROM UNIDENTIFIED MALE

UNIDENTIFIED MALE REFERENCED A MAP AND SUGGESTED A LEFT HAND TURN

Brian Packish Was there any discussion with the state?

MOTION: John Bradford make a motion to send to the consultants the following:

Read by Brian Packish:

1. A pedestrian travel lane
2. Better signage
3. Connect the Harbor Walk and boardwalk
4. Better services/configuration at the ferry area
5. Better /reconfigure the existing the staging/drop off area

SECOND Erik Albert
VOTE 5-0-0

Our next meeting will be Monday, October 20, 2014 at 1:00 PM to discuss Calibrated Goal #2. *Improve/enlarge the Circuit/Kennebec Avenue pedestrian experience while providing a net parking gain within a 5-minute walk and preserving parking near convenience businesses and welcoming pedestrian experience.*

Erik Albert Clean-up Day tomorrow at 5:00 PM, Wednesday October 15, 2014

Motion MOTION TO ADJOURN @ 2:14 PM ERIK
SECOND Gail
VOTE: 5-0-0