



Town of Sudbury

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Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, July 24th, 2020

10:45 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Sandy Lasky, Doug Frey, Adam Duchesneau, Debra Galloway, Dan Nason

Advisory Group Absent: Charlie Dunn, Scott Nix, Beth Suedmeyer, Bethany Hadvab, Lisa Kou-chakdjian, Ellen Joachim

Guests: Linda Faust, Kay Bell, Janie W. Dretler

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as chair convened the meeting at 10:47 AM. A quorum was confirmed.

Selection of Clerk

Alice volunteered to take meeting minutes.

Community Compact Grant

Adam noted that the Steering Committee for the Making the Connections initiative (Mass. Community Compact Grant) has been on hold since the start of state-wide pandemic shut-down. However, he was in touch with Nelson/Nygaard, the proposed grant Program Manager firm, and will reach out to them again in terms of updates on Uber (see agenda item, below).

MAPC COVID-19 Taxicab, Livery, Hackney Transportation Partnership Grant

Travis Pollack called Alice to let her know that MAPC had been so inundated with proposals that they are still in the process of reviewing them. He apologized on behalf of the agency and emphasized that Sudbury should not hesitate to get in touch if there were questions. Now, the likely date for communication of the review outcome is the middle of August.

Alice asked the Committee if there was still a need for transportation to medical appointments, etc., and Debra responded that about 18 people were on a list, should service become available. Given the protracted waiting time on the MAPC grants, Alice asked the committee to consider a stop-gap program, using a few thousand dollars from mitigation funds towards (1) WAV transportation by JFK, and (2) taxi transportation by Tommy's Taxi for service until MAPC results are known (e.g., about 3-4 weeks). Once the grant outcome is determined, the town could continue on its own (i.e., we do not receive funding) or transition to the funded proposal. Sandy asked if taxi service would run

concurrently with the GO Sudbury/Making the Connections program, and Alice responded that was a very likely scenario. Sandy also noted that we would likely discover residents needing transportation to employment in the area, as well as to medical and related appointments.

Linda asked about safety policies for Uber and Lyft, as well as the taxi firms. Alice noted that policies of the TNCs are very similar, due to the competitive nature of the business and the fact that drivers very often are driving for both companies. She also said that there is a strong likelihood that long-term employees who have a relationship with their manager—such as drivers for JFK and Tommy’s Taxi—will conform more consistently with safety policies than contract employees. In other words, although COVID risk cannot be eliminated entirely, the risk of riding with one of the selected taxi firms may be lower than the risk of riding with Uber. Both taxi firms take vehicles out of service for thorough cleaning between riders.

Alice asked about MWRTA vehicles (CoA vans and Dial a Ride). Debra said that the CoA vans were being retrofitted with vapor barriers and more space between seats and should be available for service in the near future.

After a brief discussion, Alice moved that the Transportation Committee should seek approval for use of mitigation funds (probably under \$5,000), to provide WAV and taxi service until MAPC grant results are disseminated next month. The purpose is to meet current health care and other transportation needs of vulnerable residents. Doug stated that the Commission on Disabilities endorsed such a stop-gap program for accessible vehicles. Dan Carty seconded the motion, and all core members voice-voted in favor.

To follow up on this motion, Dan Carty will communicate with the Town Manager and inquire about Select Board vote on use of mitigation funds, and Adam will ask counsel to review the current drafts of the waivers for data sharing and COVID safety. (These documents are based on the Uber waiver and another town’s safety waiver, respectively, and have been reviewed by the Committee.) The time needed for counsel review would be contingent on projects currently under advisement, and could be at least 1 week.

Members reiterated that this experience with the taxi firms will be valuable for the GO Sudbury and Making the Connections activities in the future. And, the team of Doug, Debra, and Sandy will begin work on a communications strategy for the proposed stop-gap program. All emphasized the requirement for informing all residents of the service, along with parameters of use and duration of the initiative.

Update on Uber

Dan Carty thanked Adam and Alice for following up with telephone calls, both with Gregory Jacobs of Uber and with Sudbury and Uber corporate counsel for their review of the Uber Dashboard agreement. Adam and Alice will talk again with Gregory about safety policies, based on the Committee discussion today, as well as how Sudbury might continue to move forward on the GO Sudbury initiative. Adam will report on this call at the next meeting.

Discussion of BFRT Letter

The Committee reviewed a draft letter from the Transportation Committee to Mass. DOT about Phase 2(D) of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT), written by Adam on behalf of the members. Given the number of road crossings for a portion of the Sudbury trail, members discussed the need for careful safety measures and ADA compliance. Doug emphasized that “sight lines” (see excerpt below) are different for an individual walking and an individual in a wheelchair or recumbent bicycle. Based on several comments about the last sentence, third paragraph, Dan Carty revised the original to say:

...The Transportation Committee was also excited to see the proposed trail roadway crossings displayed in the public hearing video which will create safe roadway crossings with high quality sight lines for good visibility and safety (for both trail users and vehicle drivers). The Transportation Committee believes that safety and ADA compliance along the trail as well as at road and major driveway crossings are paramount to all users of the trail. We look forward to seeing these needs addressed as the project advances; we are available to answer any questions as needed.

Adam moved to approve sending the amended version on behalf of the Committee, Doug seconded the motion; all voice-voted in favor.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for two prior meetings, June 26 and July 10, were reviewed for approval. Sandy moved to approve June 26 minutes, Alice seconded the motion, all voice-voted in favor with the exception of Debra, who was absent that day. Adam moved to approve July 10 minutes, Debra seconded the motion, all voice-voted in favor with the exception of Alice, who was absent that day.

Administrative/Other Items

Kay asked if materials from Sudbury meetings were accessible to the visually impaired. Linda noted that some PDF files were not accessible, but others were. Dan Carty stated that the town is working with external consultants to ensure accessibility within a reasonable period and thanked Kay and Linda for their important input.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is 7 August 2020 at 10:30 AM via the town Zoom service.

Adjournment

Dan Carty moved to adjourn, Doug seconded the motion, all voice-voted approval. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.