



Town of Sudbury

<https://sudbury.ma.us/transportation/>

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, February 26, 2021

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

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

Advisory Group Absent: Charlie Dunn, Scott Nix, Beth Suedmeyer, Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Ellen Joachim, Lisa Kouchakdjian

Guests: Linda Faust, Kay Bell (COD), Pat Guthy (COD)

Confirmation of Quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as chair convened the meeting at 10:32 AM. After doing a roll call, Dan C made an announcement that this was a public meeting, and the meeting was being recorded via Zoom and by Sudbury TV for future viewing.

Selection of Clerk

Alice volunteered to take meeting minutes.

MAPC Taxi Grants: Current and Future Status

Alice reminded the committee that there was no official announcement, yet, of the second round of MAPC taxi funding. As soon as Mass. Development makes the awards public, we will be notified and can plan for and communicate about the result.

Adam brought the group up to date on taxi rides and funds. All of the original MAPC grant funds have been expended, as have about \$7,500 in supplemental funds (these included Bay Path, Coolidge mitigation, and a draw-down of Uber funding, the latter two approved by the Select Board and CoA). For that reason, the taxi rides program has been “paused,” with appointments now being made only for trips to vaccination sites. Alice stated that MassHealth will provide free transportation for their insured, and Debra noted she was able to advise a resident about that service.

There was discussion about the approval process for using more Meadow Walk mitigation funds to carry over taxi service as needed, until Uber service is fully operational. Adam recommended (and the group agreed) that we wait another month to get a better idea of what, if any, funding was required.

Sandy reminded the group that the CoA (and Select Board) had agreed on another tranche of \$5,000 to be used for taxi service, withdrawn from original Uber funding of \$20,000, leaving that with \$10,000. The next Select Board meetings are on 9 and 16 March and 6 April. Dan Carty suggested we prepare a presentation on “transportation sustainability” for the 16th meeting; Alice and Sandy will take the lead on a draft.

Doug asked if there was anything we could have done differently, so that we might have a more planful use of money for the taxi rides. Alice pointed out that we had no certain knowledge of what the need was, and that the pandemic was a complicating factor because CoA vans no longer ran. Dan C noted that probably everyone was surprised by the need, especially for healthcare purposes. Doug said he heard there was a state fund called “free money” for special projects, and also said that the Commission on Disability might be a source of money for the taxi rides. No one in the committee had heard of the free money fund, although there could be COVID-related funds earmarked in the state budget.

With regard to more planful use of money, Debra brought up that several residents were very concerned about the continued uncertainty of available funds. One, for example, had two medical appointments in March that probably could not be served by taxi funds. Dan C pointed out that we have been candid from the start, saying this was a grant that we knew would end, and that we went “above and beyond” to extend funding this long. Now that we have a better idea of need, we should be able to be more specific about timing as well as restrictions (e.g., number of rides in a given period) associated with future funding.

Sandy asked, if we are awarded MAPC funds, when the town would receive them. Adam noted that it could take 6 to 8 additional weeks, because contracts have to be signed, etc. That is why we might have to go back to the Select Board and CoA for more mitigation funds. He also noted MAGIC (our regional planning agency) might have potential funds. Dan C offered to speak to Marilyn at The Sudbury Foundation about their grants, as well as seek information on grants from the Cummings Foundation. Ana Cristina was familiar with the latter from her prior experience.

All agreed that, in the coming weeks, we would have to communicate in as much detail as possible what transportation options might involve, such as priority destinations, individuals in most need, funding limits, and so on.

Rider Feedback

Alice said we needed final feedback from the taxi riders, both for our purposes and for MAPC final reporting (the due date is likely to be in early April). Sandy had provided a draft user survey, and Debra recommended a small edit. When the survey was revised, Debra would ensure it was distributed to all who had used the service.

GoSudbury! Uber Service

Although we had hoped to enroll about a dozen beta testers in the subsidized Uber service (part of the state’s Making the Connections grant), there was a sizable “bug” in the Uber software because of our desired geofences. These are defined by town rather than mile (e.g., within Sudbury, to/from towns contiguous with Sudbury, and within 25 miles of Sudbury).

The software was fixed by 23 February, and Uber engineers used the smartphone app to “book” rides that before were not able to be booked. Since then, two residents have booked and used rides. Linda said she was unable to book a ride a week or so ago and had many problems with trying to use the service. Debra urged her to try again and to let her (Debra) know if there was any difficulty. Debra also noted that the TRIPPS webinar would be offered next week, and she will let the beta test riders know about that.

Alice described a webinar on the use of Uber in a regional transit system (California) on 8 March at 2 PM. Several members of the committee expressed interest.

Future Tasks

- Dan C will find out if a presentation can be put on the agenda for the 16 March Select Board meeting.
- Dan C will attend, briefly, the next COD meeting (March 4).
- Alice will send information on the Uber webinar to Dan C, Doug, and Debra. She will also resend her comments on Dan C’s minutes from last meeting to Dan for revision and distribution.

Meeting Minutes

Approval of minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The group agreed that the next Transportation Committee meeting will be Friday, March 12th, at 10:30 AM.

Adjournment

Alice moved to adjourn, Doug seconded, and the motion passed 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 AM.