



Town of Sudbury

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

Sudbury Transportation Committee

Minutes

Friday, February 24, 2023

10:30 AM

Via Town Zoom Conference Call

Core Members Present: Daniel Carty, Alice Sapienza, Debra Galloway, Kay Bell, Bob Lieberman

Core Members Absent: Adam Duchesneau

Advisory Group Present: None

Advisory Group Absent: Martha Welsh, Scott Nix, Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Silvia Nersessian, Mary Warzynski

Guests: Ana Cristina Oliveira, Lynn Puorro (Sudbury TV), Linda Faust, Mark Thompson, Ryan Poteat

Confirmation of Quorum: The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as Chair convened the meeting at 10:33 AM. Dan Carty made an announcement that this was a public meeting, and the meeting was being recorded via Zoom and by Sudbury TV. He took roll call, noted a quorum was present, and announced that he was making Deb Galloway co-host of the Zoom session.

Selection of Clerk: Dan volunteered to take meeting minutes.

Administrative Updates: Dan summarized the major topics for today's discussion—not necessarily in the following order:

- Come to consensus on Go Sudbury Ride Limits
- Qualifications for Annex Transit
- AARP Grant due March 15
- Town Meeting presentation as time allows
- Meeting minutes

Dan reviewed and the group discussed the Action Items from last meeting:

- Adam – update on MAGIC funding of approx. \$10,000 – still open as Adam was not able to make this meeting
- Ana – Annex pilot program rider feedback; clarification provided about the number of riders thus far (one) and how potential additional riders are being communicated with

- Alice – AARP grant; to be discussed later in meeting
- Dan – talk to Town Counsel regarding qualifications for Annex vs. Uber – Dan reported that this would be discussed later in meeting

Public Comment:

Linda Faust 189 Boston Post Road inquired about how much the Annex pilot had been publicized. Ana answered that it had not yet been widely publicized as we are early on in the pilot phase. Discussion then ensued about how best to get additional riders involved in the pilot.

Go Sudbury Ride Limits:

Dan started the conversation by saying he would like for the group to come to consensus today on whether or not to change the Go Sudbury ride limits and if so what those limits would be. Alice pointed out that other towns had not only set ride caps but also had established co-payments. Deb noted that Uber took co-pays into account already but for taxi we would have to manually administer and did not believe doing so would be practical. She did suggest setting up a mechanism that would allow for donations to the program and Alice inquired as to what type of accounting might need to be established. Deb offered to look into it with the appropriate town staff.

Ana stated that she was seeing that people were bumping up against the ride caps for Uber but not as much so for taxi and believed the need for more rides was greater with Uber. Deb commented that we continued to see new rider applications each week. Bob commented that the ride limits were put in place prior to our receiving additional grant funding and that we all agreed the caps were fairly drastic in nature, but they were required for the survival of the program. He also questioned whether or not we should be changing them again so soon and he did not believe we should get into the practice of changing them frequently as it would be confusing to riders. Kay spoke next and noted the interplay between ride caps and finances and that she desired our limits be between the previous 20 and the current 6 for taxi and 4 for Uber. She also inquired as to the current number of subscribers and the rate at which they are joining. Dan noted that we asked all riders to resubscribe in July but since that point we had 156 Uber subscribers, 11 had signed up in January, and so far 9 in February. He added that we had 191 people enroll in the Taxi program, of which 10 had signed up in January and 7 thus far in February. Kay inquired as to the profile of usage and if there were any important patterns to be discerned. Bob stated that of the roughly 300 people enrolled it would be helpful to know how many of them were active riders, as simply enrolling had no fiscal impact. Dan offered to take the action item to detail out how many riders were active and show any applicable rider data distributions for the next meeting.

Discussion ensued about increasing the ride caps to satisfy a small number of riders versus handling as exceptions. Kay expressed concern with the use of the term *power user* and added that with exceptions come judgements and she did not want the program to be put in a position of being questioned about favoritism. Dan commented that feedback from the Select Board regarding a small number of people taking large numbers of rides needs to be considered. Alice stated that the issue of equity requires us to think about coverage, which is value-based (e.g., serving riders with a disability) and patronage, which is simply numbers per vehicle and fare box recovery. Kay suggested a dozen rides per month on Uber. Ana suggested keeping taxi at 6 rides per month and bumping Uber to 10. Alice added that recent history of number of Uber rides have not shown much variation and estimated that our current funding would support approximately 10 months of Uber rides with a cap of

10 per month. Dan confirmed that ~~is~~ it certainly would last until Town Meeting, when funds could be replenished. Deb stated she was willing to go to 12 Uber rides per month. Dan mentioned that we still had the \$1,500 with the Town Social Worker for those that have urgent needs. He then asked for a motion for number of rides. Bob questioned the urgency to do this today. Deb stated that although the number of impacted riders may sound small it was significant. After deliberation by the group Deb motioned that as of March 1 Uber rides be increased from 4 per month to 10 and we keep taxi at 6. Alice seconded. Bob asked for clarification that this is effective as of March 1 and that we do not intend on changing it again in the near term. Dan confirmed. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

Dan then asked about communication out to riders and dispatching about the change. He stated that he would notify dispatch that nothing changed with taxi rides, and noted they were not impacted by Uber. He added that he would follow up with town staff to get the appropriate web pages updated. Ana stated she would notify the Uber user base of the change. Dan would notify Adam to make the appropriate technical changes with Uber effective March 1. Kay asked Dan to try to provide data projections based on these new limits and Dan agreed to have that for next meeting.

Qualifications for Annex Transit:

Dan started the topic discussion by saying he had met with new Town Manager Andy Sheehan, Town Counsel Lee Smith, and Assistant Town Manager Maryanne Bilodeau to discuss how we should handle qualifying riders to take Annex Transit. The initial feedback received was that our current qualifiers should work whether they were for Uber, JFK Taxi, Tommy's Taxi, or Annex and that we should look to maintain consistency. Dan added that they would all review and provide further feedback as warranted. He added that they believed Annex should be offered to anyone with a disability that prevented them from taking Uber, not just those in wheelchairs, and from a financial standpoint we would want to start with the Sr Center Van, then Uber, then Annex, then the taxi companies. Alice clarified that taxi should go before Annex due to our historical relationships. She then talked about the difference between door-to-door service versus curb to curb and that JFK and Annex offered door to door. Ana added that Tommy's was curb to curb. Kay asked for clarification of the financial hierarchy and Alice stated we had not yet received bills from Annex for our few rides. Kay also asked about who a person with a disability would ride with and Dan stated that adding Annex was an attempt at providing a reasonable accommodation for Uber and that anyone that could not take Uber for any reason other than convenience should be able to take Annex. Kay stated that we should accept a subscriber's self-declaration as to why they cannot take Uber. Linda Faust asked if Annex would only be for medical rides like the taxi and Dan said not, it would be a companion service to Uber so whatever the reason someone would take an Uber would apply to Annex. Linda inquired as to when this would become available, and Dan answered that we were in early pilot stage at this time. Kay asked if dispatch of Annex via CrossTown Connect would be an option and Deb answered yes. Kay then asked how CrossTown Connect would know who was eligible and Alice stated that we would have to keep them informed of who was eligible much as we do currently for taxis. Dan noted that we had only had one rider thus far but when we were ready we would do the appropriate outreach. He concluded the discussion by saying he would inquire back with Town Counsel to see if there was anything else we should be aware of before rolling out Annex more widely.

Town Meeting Presentation:

The group had a very quick discussion about the upcoming Town meeting presentation for the Go Sudbury! program. Kay stated that she thought Alice's material presented to the MAPC was very good and should be considered for usage. Alice added that CTPS would be providing us with more graphics. Dan stated that the presentation last year was well formatted and informative, and that we had approximately 2 months before Town Meeting, and we would discuss in more detail at an upcoming meeting.

Minutes: The draft minutes of Friday February 3rd were screen-shared by Dan. Dan added that Alice had gathered comments and synthesized into this document and asked if anyone had further edits. Hearing none he called for a motion and a second, then the minutes were unanimously approved via roll call vote.

Next Meeting: The next meeting was scheduled for Friday March 3, 2023, at 10:30 AM via Zoom.

Closing Comments: Dan let the Committee know that the Select Board would be discussing hybrid meetings in their next meeting on Tuesday Feb 28 and thus hoped to have more information on the same for this committee at the next meeting. Brief discussion ensued with regards to the status of legislation at the state level and its possible impact on in-person versus remote or hybrid meetings.

Adjournment: Dan called for a motion to adjourn and a second, then adjournment was unanimously approved via roll call vote at 11:59am.