



Appointed by Joseph A Curtatone, Mayor

Date: Thursday, August 19, 2021

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting using GoToMeeting: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/539724445>

Community Representatives:

Ted Alexander

*Ginny Alverson – Vice Chair

Jessica Bellow

*Laura Evans

Jessica Ferguson

Rauvin Johl

*Paola Massoli

*Audrey Orenstein – Secretary

*Vitor Pamplona

*Zach Rosenberg – Chair

*Julia Toof

Emily Vides

Ex-Officio:

Katjana Ballantyne, *City Council*

*Alexandra Kleyman, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*Justin Schreiber, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*=present

Guests:

*Tim Dineen

Acting Secretary: Vitor Pamplona

Call to order: 6:34 PM

Agenda Item 1: Procedural Business (10 Minutes)

* July Minutes approved unanimously. Motion to approve by Audrey, seconded by Vitor.

- Ginny Alverson – Vice Chair yes
- Laura Evans- yes
- Paola Massoli - yes
- Audrey Orenstein – Secretary - yes
- Zach Rosenberg – Chair - yes
- Julia Toof - yes

Agenda Item 2: Subcommittee Updates (15 Minutes)

Engineering update from Paola: We reviewed the slides from July's meeting. Pedestrian safety improvements are great. Graphic overlays are great. What's the status of Pearl St? More specifically, what's the status of the bike lane of Pearl St?

Vitor: how to give more priority for East somerville? It feels like a historically neglected part of the city.

Paola: Powderhouse redesign. There seemed to be different options on slide 22 and we are wondering if the city wants the committee to choose one of them. Vision Zero design and branding is great. The city should do more of those. We also need to recruit more people to the main committee and to the subcommittee.

Mobility update on Pearl St. Ali: Adam is the project manager and we should have updates on the September meeting. The city is also planning a second outreach meeting to get more consensus in the design with the neighborhood. This is scheduled for the next couple months.

Julia offers her time to flyer the community for the outreach event.

Ali: On vision zero, we are working with a graphic designer to make more obvious what Vision Zero is about and then a more obvious extension of that is to spread the logo all over the city. We are also working on the mailer from Vision Zero to enhance community engagement.

Ali: Powderhouse will be talked about tonight.

Vitor: The engineering subcommittee meets a week before the main committee meeting. If the city can send any slides for review a week before, we should be able to provide thoughtful feedback at the meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Review Sidewalk Snow Clearance Document Progress (15 Minutes)

Policy Committee update by Ginny: We reviewed the budget, the regulations around Snow Clearance and wrote a document with all of our findings. We are sharing it with all of you. The definition of who is responsible (between citizens, entities and city departments) for snow clearing is not clear. We should have a joint meeting with the city and city councilors to brainstorm ideas on how to make it clear who has responsibility for what. Can we use the city team currently to provide services to the people that most need it? How can we avoid moving snow into the curb clearance? How to better work with the liabilities of not cleaning properly. The committee would like to use heated sidewalks. We don't know why Somerville doesn't have them. Also, some sidewalks are not compliant to the 36in clearance requirement, which might require us to canvas the sidewalks of the city to support the compliance of landlords/tenants. Also, where is the city putting the snow it collects from the roads?

Audrey: Did you also talk about private plowers? They may also need to be considered in this policy.

Ginny: Correct. How do private plowers choose where to put the snow? Is there any regulation on where they should put it? What we come up with and what we implement can help everybody. We should talk to the bike committee, safe streets, and the disability committee. Do we need a group specifically for snow clearance?

Ali: First step is to arrange a meeting with DPW and the highway division. I can follow up on that.

Zach: Ted also included budget numbers in the document we are circulating. It varies widely from year to year. Feel free to take a look and comment on the document. Any ideas are helpful.

Julia: It's interesting that the policy isn't clear on who is supposed to clean the snow between landlords and tenants. This may be the reason why imperfect clearance happens so much around the city.

Agenda Item 4: Next Powderhouse Circle Neighborhood walk (10 Minutes)

Audrey: The Neighborhood walk was very well received. We had 12 visitors (not including Zach, Laura, Ted, and myself) that heard about it through social media and told each other. I think it was a good response considering the lead time of only a few days. I'm encouraged! Adam did a great job of talking through the changes and he answered lots of questions, and then we walked around the circle like Make Way for Ducklings. Before our walk, we did some scary traffic situations, with people cutting each other off and some squealing tires. The weather cooperated. We need to improve the data capturing information about how people hear about the event so that we can enhance our marketing activities moving forward.

Zack: We should do another Neighborhood walk after the project is done to show before and after the project is completed.

Audrey: We may do one of these walks focus in different projects every other month. We might do another one in Union Square soon.

Zack: We may do it in early October. Let's get ready for that.

Agenda Item 5: Recruiting new members (30 Minutes)

Zack: We need to design an open call to new members and find ways to spread the word to join the committee.

Vitor: We need to provide an interesting way to people to be reminded of the call.

Audrey: I updated the letter that Justin created two years ago to select people for the committee and we can use it again. We should send the letter to Sustainability Newsletter, Somerville Times, Social Media, City website, City councilors newsletters, post in the libraries.

Ginny: Are committee members supposed to screen new applicants? Justin: We can check with Brad, but we can also interview together. Ali: Please forward all the applicants to the city so that we can keep track of it.

Agenda Item 6: City Update (30 Minutes)

* Project Updates: Powder House Brook parkway intersection

Ali: This intersection sees thousands of cars and hundreds of bicycles in the rush hour, it is a high crash location. We want to simplify the intersection while retaining the largest number of trees as possible.

Ali discusses the timeline of the project, having conceptual designs finished last november. We heard a clear response for the signalized T intersection, instead of the modern roundabout. We will have another outreach meeting soon and finish the designs in the fall to start construction in 2022.

Ali presents the detailed plan. Major improvements currently implemented were the move from 4 to 3 lanes with forced turns and central islands with protected bike lanes and a residential "shared street"-style road.

Vitor: Has the city considered closing the road? Making a dead end? The issue is with the turnaround for garbage trucks and similar utility trucks and saving the green space. We could close the road, but we need to add a turn around point and that will lose a large part of the green space.

Ginny: Are we going to have tactile strips to make sure people know they are on the sidewalk? Ali: There is a Grass strip between the sidewalk and the residential road.

Vitor: Will it be asphalt or a brick-based road for the residential segment? Ali: It depends on the budget.

Vitor: The brick-based road is a better car stopper than regular asphalt. The road is technically a dead end for cars, since the red segment is only for authorized vehicles. We can just put a dead end sign and that should work.

Audrey: Did we do any research on the timing for the signs in this intersection. How long will the queues be? Ali: Yes. We have the numbers and it looks like the sign will increase the queue size, but just by a small number.

* Project Updates: Somerville Ave

Paving is complete. There is additional signage and flexpost will go in next week. Webster to Mansfield will be finished in October and Mansfield to McGrath finished next summer. We are working through some concerns of people accessing their driveways and the bus reaching the bus stop on beacon.

Ali Covers quick updates for Washington Street underpass, College avenue and Powder House circle and Union Square Plaza and Streetscape updates.

Ali: Upcoming meeting topics:

- GLX Updates
- 311 and Street Response
- Vision Zero Check in
- Bus Network redesign.

Vitor: Please add Pearl St. to the topic list.

Zach: If anyone wants to add another topic, please send it to the e-mail list.

Meeting ended: 7:58 PM