

HARVARD TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes

Date: August 2, 2023

Time: 7:30PM

Place: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Gabriel Medjanis, Jim Lee, Bruce Leicher, Rene Turnheim, Stacia Donahue

Others Present: None.

GMedjanis called the meeting to order at 7:32pm virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, under M.G.L. Chapter 30A S20 and Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 125.

1. Climate Action Plan (CAP)

- a. TAC needs to report back to HCIC that the MART response for adding public transportation has been received and TAC was in favor of moving forward with the proposal. GMedjanis will reach out to ELeicher to let HCIC know about the progress toward completing the public transportation CAP goal.

2. MART Stop(s)

- a. TAC reviewed the RFP response from MART for the suggested 2 stops for 2 morning and 2 evening train connections at the Littleton T-Stop. The cost to Harvard would be zero as it would be covered by the MBTA assessment we're already paying as a Town.
- b. As an advisory committee, we can only advise Select Board (SB) so TAC discussed what to give as a suggested path forward. TAC feels we should at least try for 6 months or a year of the service to see if people use it.
- c. TAC will need to do outreach and see if we have people that will show up. We have no funds for polling, but we can do outreach in the Harvard Press. Once we get approval from SB, SDonahue will reach out to the Press to determine how they feel we can get the word out the best (editorial? Letter to editor? Consider This piece?). Additionally, we will want it posted on the Town's website.
- d. Discussion about when it would be best to start. Will September be too early? BLeicher reported that the MBTA is going to adjust train schedules starting in September as the ridership numbers are increasing so the scheduling needs to be adjusted to accommodate the new growth. BLeicher hoped the express trains will be reinstated. The feeling was that starting in September would be the earliest we should try the new MART service and that possibly waiting until winter might be a better idea.
- e. Parking availability discussed. It's not a requirement for MART, but it would be a good idea to see if at least a few spaces could be available at both Hildreth House parking lot and COA parking lot in case people do park and ride instead of being dropped off or walking to the shuttle stop. We will need to ask Select Board if it's acceptable to reserve a few spots at COA and at Hildreth House in case people drive to the shuttle.
- f. Discussed timing of trains and using the express trains as the in/out according to the new schedule. The MART proposal lists specific trains based on the current schedule. This will need to be amended or adjusted once the new schedules are issued in September.

JLee motioned for TAC to advise SB to accept the proposal from MART with minor adjustments on the timing based on final MBTA schedules. Additionally, looking for guidance on parking locations. TAC proposes starting sometime in the Fall in accordance with the revised MBTA train schedules. SDonahue seconded. Unanimous vote.

GMedjanis will ask RMaorie (SB) to get on the next SB meeting agenda to discuss. SDonahue can attend meeting as MRPC rep and BLEicher can attend as MBTA rep to support the Chair with the discussion at SB.

3. DLTA-A funding update

- a. Harvard/Devens SUP. This has not moved. There seems to be a stalemate over who owns the land under the bridge with the easement. SDonahue will discuss with MRPC to see if they have hired a grant writer to help us hire attorneys to determine ownership. At the same time, BLEicher and JLee will reach out to our local representatives (Eldredge and Sena) and Representative Trahan to see if we can get some political help to get Devens unstuck and the project moved forward.
- b. NRG Network Expansion Signage – Mass Trails. The grant will cover buying the signage to show the locations of approved biking routes. We (Harvard) would have to provide matching funds with installation by DPW or can we get funds from CPC to get installation of the signs.

JLee moves that TAC approve the grant opportunity with NRG to get signage. We should additionally let SB know that we would like to add the NRG signage if the MassTrails grant is awarded and signs are made available. Gabe seconded. Unanimous vote.

4. Transportation Related Projects Updates

- a. SUP between town center to Depot Fields – JLee will be sending the .pdf's of the original project to the SB and will review with RMaorie to see how to proceed. Should it go just to Town Administrator as a request or go to SB public meeting? JLee will review with RMaorie.
- b. JLee has checked in with Town Hall and updated the TAC's webpage on the Town's website.
- c. SDonahue updated TAC on the PB Strategic planning session. TAC will need to be involved with the next Master Plan which will start sometime in late 2024 or early 2025 to be completed in 2026. Additionally, TAC will need to be involved with the Town Center Overlay district bylaw when PB works on it in 2024.
- d. GMedjanis noted that he is due to touch base with TKilhart at the DPW to check status of the Ayer Road TIP project. He will also review the possible NRG signage additions and the proposed SUP for Town Center to Depot Road for when the new water main is installed.
- e. TAC is due to review our Complete Streets list to see if any updates or amendments are needed at this time.

5. Approval of Minutes (3/28/23 and 5/17/23).

- a. No comments or amendments.

JLee moved to approve minutes form 3/28/23 and 5/17/23 as submitted. BLEicher seconded. Unanimous vote.

6. Other Business: None tonight.

7. Adjournment:

GMedjanis moved to adjourn. JLee seconded. Unanimous agreement. Adjourned at 8:39pm.

Next meeting: TBD in late September or early October 2023