Present: Ed DeWitt, Chris McGuire, Alison Leschen, Ralph Herbst, Paul Dreyer, Jane Perry (joined at 7:15), Paul Grunden (departed at 9:03 pm).

Chairman Ed DeWitt called the meeting to order at 7pm. He read the Governor’s order about the Open Meeting Law changes. Chris McGuire stated that the Zoom meeting was being recorded for town records.

1. After a brief discussion whether the minutes correctly reflected the discussion of Complete Streets implementation and specifically 2020 paving maintenance, the minutes of the 1/14/2021 meeting were unanimously approved as presented via roll call vote. Motion by Ms. Leschen, seconded by Mr. Herbst.

2. Complete Streets – One Year Anniversary Review of Progress and Accomplishments. Mr. DeWitt read a prepared introduction to the discussion.

   A. Director of Public Works Peter McConarty noted that no new transportation projects were started in 2020 due to Covid and funding challenges. He acknowledged that roadway maintenance projects were completed including several repaving projects. The cost of repaving roads is approximately $1 million per mile. Design and implementation planning continues for a number of projects including Route 151/Boxberry Hill/Sam Turner intersection; Elm Road; Jones Road/Gifford Street intersection; Goodwill Park crossing all with attention to Complete Streets principles. He pointed some examples of Complete Streets principles incorporated into past projects such as the Maravista sidewalk project (completed 2019). Ms. Leschen noted the lack of shovel ready projects to seize upon grant opportunities for which the Town passed up on applying. Mr. McConarty agreed and noted the lack of resources for design especially larger scale projects. Mr. DeWitt pointed out that the Complete Streets Policy requires consideration of its principles in all things transportation including maintenance such as repaving. Mr. McConarty noted the challenge of carrying out maintenance without added and even reduced resources with these additional principles to consider.

   B. Director of Finance and Operations for the School Department Patrick Murphy noted the outstanding working relationship between the School Department and the DPW. He noted the commitment of Superintendent Duerr to Safe Routes to Schools included in the Town’s Complete Street’s Policy. The School Department has identified safe walking zones and embraces the 6 E’s of Safe Routes to Schools. Mr. Murphy noted the that the Covid 19 necessity of staggerd arrivals and departures has forced the schools to take a harder and broader look at transportation. He singled out the Maravista Sidewalk (completed in 2019) as an example of improving Safe Routes to School. Another example cited was the Shivericks Pond Walkway which has been designed, funded with a CPC grant but not yet constructed. No one offered an explanation in the construction delay.
C. Town Planner Thomas Bott noted that the Planning Department attempts to seize opportunities to improve private development projects and instill Complete Streets principles. He cited the Dome project in Woods Hole as an example. He pointed out the Davis Straits planning initiative currently underway and voiced optimism that Complete Streets principles would be fully incorporated. While reporting that changes to site plan review regulations and subdivision regulations are in consideration, no such changes were made or formally proposed in the past year relevant to Complete Streets.

D. Town Manager Julian Suso was asked about the coordination requirement in the Complete Streets Policy. He noted that projects are coordinated through the Development Committee which he oversees but could offer no specific examples of such review. He did not recall the discussion of repaving projects but stated he would send a report to the Committee. The Planning Department does not currently review DPW maintenance projects.

E. The Committee briefly discussed the presentations. Ms. Perry noted the importance of terminology in transportation such as the difference between a sidewalk and a pathway. Mr. DeWitt will redraft the report to the Select Board incorporating tonight’s information and present the draft at the next meeting.

3. Access to Downtown Report: The latest draft was reviewed. Mr. Herbst stated his comments were intended as grammatical and not substantive. Mr. Dreyer voiced his concerns about the use of the term “wayfinding”. The Committee agreed with Ms. Leschen’s clarification or distinction as “wayfinding signage” and “wayfinding apps.” Ms. Leschen will prepare a final report for adoption at the next meeting and submission to the Select Board. Select Board member Brown asked to see the draft ahead of the Committee’s next meeting.

4. Access to Downtown Survey: Beta testing has not gone as smoothly as hoped. There has been confusion among the beta testers for what they were supposed to do. The link will be shared with the Committee and will go live with a “friendly” audience to help identify glitches.

5. SSA Freight: Mr. DeWitt reported on a meeting with state legislators, their staff and the Southeast Massachusetts Regional Transportation Citizen’s Task Force (SMART). The purpose of the meeting set up with Senator Moran’s office was to discuss SSA freight operations and appropriate changes from a sound transportation perspective. There is a lack of clarity whether or not New Bedford officials support establishment of the port as a freight port for the islands.

6. Ms. Perry announced that due to personal reasons she will resign from the Committee effective February 1, 2021.

7. No correspondence or Zoom chat comments were submitted. Motion to adjourn by Ms. Leschen and seconded by Mr. Dreyer. Roll call vote unanimous at 9:46 PM.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.
Ed DeWitt, recorder