

Sudbury Transportation Committee Minutes draft

Thursday, August 12, 2022 10:00 AM

Dan Carty, Chair, called the virtual meeting to order with roll call at 10:08 AM

Core Members Present

Dan Carty, Chair; Deb Galloway, Adam Duchesneau (left at 11:10 AM), Bob Lieberman, Alice Sapienza (joined at 10:12 AM), Kay Bell

Core members absent - none

Advisory members present - none

Advisory members absent

Martha Welsh, Dan Nason, Chief Scott Nix, Representative Carmine Gentile, Bethany Hadvab, Beth Suedmeyer, Silvia Nerssessian, Mary Warzynski

Others present

Ana Cristina Oliveira, Linda Faust, Sandy Lasky

Confirmation of quorum

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, Dan Carty as Chair convened the meeting at 10:08 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, then announced that he was making Adam Duchesneau co-host of the Zoom session.

Selection of Clerk

Kay was next on the roster and was present to take the minutes.

Administrative Updates

1. Adam shared the most up to date spreadsheet showing that Tommy's Taxi came in about \$1000 less in July than in June at \$2371 which is closer to the level in April and May. JFK Taxi invoice is pending but the rough figure is \$4798, not unusual. These are back to what could be considered our standard

level after a period of higher use. Dan said he looked at the July data and they reflect the old arrangement before adjustment to copays and ride cap that began in August.

2. Dan reported that he sent Leila Frank, Town Manager & Select Board Office Manager, a thank you for the nice graphics she included in an article describing GoSudbury! on the Town website. Adam confirmed that registration information is updated on the Town website as well.
3. Dan reported that he, Alice and Adam met with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Assistance group on August 9 and that the Transportation Committee has a tentative place on the Select Board (SB) agenda on September 13.
4. Dan updated the figures on signups for the new rules program: from 49 Uber and 58 Taxi at last meeting to 83 Uber and 138 Taxi. On the old registration we topped out at 117 Uber and 187 Taxi. He will keep us updated. Ana Cristina said for the Taxi we lost about 20 riders between people that “passed” and people that moved. We lost 60 for Uber. About four heavy users have not reregistered for the Uber despite repeated outreach.
5. Adam suggested we decide when we need to cut off previous riders if they do not reregister after being contacted multiple times. Ana Cristina reminded members that there had been discussion of September being the cutoff. Members discussed aspect of different possible dates and sending written notice of the deadline to people. Linda Faust suggested right after Labor Day as a cutoff. Ana Cristina has repeatedly reached out by phone and email to seek responses. Sandy Lasky suggested that 5 phone calls and ten emails should be the cap on reaching out. Kay said that if a rider does not register, they will be unable to use the program and if they wish they can then register. We are not closing anyone out of the program. The date agreed is the day after Labor Day: September 6.
6. Annex Transportation was unable to send a representative to this meeting.
7. Dan described how some GoSudbury! users are visiting the old registration site and are being directed to the new site. Ana Cristina reported that some have had an email glitch due to an old email address being present and wanting to

change to a new email address. Dan and Ana Cristina will work on that outside the meeting.

8. Uber has requested to use two quotes from GoSudbury! given in a customer survey. "Current service and modifications (by Uber) to fit our needs are excellent." "The nearly automatic management of our service in Sudbury is much appreciated." With no objection Dan suggested that would be fine as long as they are attributed to "Transportation Committee, Sudbury, Massachusetts," not Sudbury as a town since we cannot speak on the Town's behalf without authorization.
9. Alice had a helpful exchange with Karen Dumaine of CrossTown Connect regarding several JFK Transportation ride requests that were cancelled. It was just an anomaly that a number of riders requested rides close to the 24-hour lead time and JFK drivers were unavailable, so the rides were provided by Tommy's Taxi, so there was no real problem.
10. Debra requested that we issue another survey of riders. Alice agreed and suggested using a survey similar to the previous one (with thanks to Sandy Lasky) in order to derive consistent data structure.
11. Alice reported that we have not yet heard from Mass Development on the taxi grant.
12. There was a Making the Connections meeting on August 8. Adam summarized: We have a deadline to expend those funds by end of year. Nelson Nygaard is working on getting the final figure with an additional funding request. Stow's town counsel (also from KP Law who serves Sudbury) heavily marked up the Uber contract that was found acceptable for Sudbury, so Stow will not be participating in the Uber program. Acton is the only remaining community interested and they are close to agreement. Nelson Nygaard will compile data for reporting by the end of the year – including the pitfalls like the attrition of towns for a variety of reasons. Alice added that they agreed to include data gathered from taxi and livery services to portray ridership and destination patterns, plus attribution of various sources of funding. Next Making the Connections meeting will be in the week of August 29.

Presentation to Select Board Discussion

1. Of the who-what-where-when-why of our story, Dan suggested that we have covered the “what and why.” There has been consensus that eventually we want option 3, the bigger regional approach. And why is well established. We can provide our prior information for reference but now let’s cover the who, when, and how at our next two meetings.
2. Questions to answer about the larger regional concept are “What’s the buy in from other towns?” and ‘What is the timeline?’”
3. Dan sees this as a multi-year effort. We are in fiscal year ’23 and planning for FY ’24 starts very soon. We’re not likely to get to the regional solution in one year so, we may need to operate another year about as we are and progress toward the regional plan. We will have to lay out how we make the jump from one to the next.
4. Alice sees the possibility, suggested by Paul Christopher, of using MPO technical assistance, staff support, and potential funds to use FY 24 to run a near-term small expansion as a proof of concept, then in FY ’25 expand further. This is when we start seeking support from MA Department of Transportation and the federal government as we confront the challenges of getting multiple regional transit authorities (RTA’s) to work together and potentially linking in with commuter rail, etc.
5. Alice suggests that “transportation equity” be a focus for our near- and mid-term planning. Paul, of MPO, has asked for what our priorities would be for starting an initiative in October to which he could bring additional MPO resources.
6. Alice observed that to implement collaboration among multiple towns and agencies requires staff. Acton and Concord probably both have transportation staff and that makes them powerful and good collaborators. And we need someone like the folks at MPO to help bring the smaller towns (Maynard, Bolton, Stow) in on the regional option. So the “who” is the MPO because they have the greater resources and a greater purview.
7. Alice mentioned that Cross Town Connect (a transportation management association - a TMA), could be doing these things, but they are not. Nelson

Nygard and others have said that we are essentially acting as a TMA. Alice asked: should we take it over? It would be a big step. If we had that status, it would bring a whole other set of resources. We've been leading the collaborative effort for two years and though few towns have made it through so far, the collaborative work of all parties has been valid. MPO values that.

8. Dan said that it's a chicken/egg issue. To be a TMA we'd have to have staff and that would be hard get support for.
9. Alice said that if we can get more grant funding for initiatives that could carry us through then in FY'24, we might ask the town for the same \$100,000 to apply to staff rather than the subsidy.
10. Adam, speaking from nine years of dealing with Cross Town Connect (previously in Boxborough), has seen collaborative discussions among the many towns but the regional shuttle of system just hasn't come to fruition. Maybe in working with MPO they can help figure out next steps. Sudbury taking on a larger role would be a big step.
11. Alice suggested a two-prong Approach for the near-term initiatives: Continue addressing the needs of seniors strongly and reliably and add a focus on filling the transportation equity gap for other populations in town. We have a larger than average number of female head of household families in poverty along with developments housing lower-income individuals and families. If we prioritize transportation equity for these populations to access services and opportunities, that ties in the regional transit authorities and their MA DOT priorities. It removes the need to show specific ridership numbers if we people to programs/service that lead to getting out of the poverty cycle.
12. Debra asked for an example some kind of small project. Alice described that MetroWest RTA (MWRTA) provides shuttle busses for MassBay Community College in Framingham, Wellesley, and Ashland and among those campuses.
13. Dan mentioned that the MWRTA has a new director and that could be a fresh opportunity. He suggested that perhaps a loop up into Sudbury added to the route in Framingham that connects to the Nobscot shopping area could be a good idea. Maybe MPO could help with that kind of thing. Jonathan Belcher, the MPO route planner knows the new director of MWRTA. Debra said we

have been advocating for years for something like that or an extension into Sudbury of the Marlboro line that stops at Wayside Store on Rt. 20.

- 14.Dan: Our presentation to SB will start with a five-year vision. Everyone think on that. Dan also wants to think in terms of challenges such as:

- Cross Town Connect and strengthening regional collaboration
- Multiple RTA involvement due to geography
- New director of MWRTA

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- 15.Dan: What opportunities do we see?

- Transportation equity concept
- Sustainability
- Clout of the Town of Sudbury behind the committee

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- 16.Alice: In Newton their TNC (?) is Via. The vehicles are hybrids and they are visibly marked with the program name. They don't have to market anymore. She suggested that growth to a certain scale means it takes over on its own.

- 17.Dan: Members need to think of a 5-year timeline with milestones, deliverables, challenges, costs. Alice asked that sooner than the next meeting people get back to her on what "proof of concept" initiatives might be so she can give MPO our thoughts so they can engage resources by October 1.

- 18.Dan shared Alice's data report showing the presence of residents living in poverty, present of children under age 15 in poverty, adults lacking high school diplomas, female-head-of-household. The report lists targeted learning and training opportunities, mentoring, direct services such as childcare, and tax preparation. A transportation equity program would make it more feasible to get the benefit of those resources. Kay supports Alice continuing the discussion with MPO of these ideas as an incremental expansion of our program. Debra sees this as an establishment of need and as more of a long term idea in our plan. Alice said as a proof of concept project we would keep it small and MPO would actually take over as they have some staff and there is funding for doing that. It would not take us away from our current program.

Dan sees the transportation equity effort as a way to get the RTA's to the table to work with us.

19. Bob suggests that for the presentation FY 23 and 24 be explained with a good level of detail and with confidence that we can achieve what we say, but that the longer-range information needs to be given more broadly and without so many details and acronyms, etc. He suggested that appendices with details and background could be given and wants us to work out how we will make the presentation at our next meeting. Dan sees a one-page timeline and then backing information.

20. Sandy Lasky related that the shuttle to Mass Bay in Wellesley, which gets brisk use, is an example of that transportation equity idea. Debra will make a point of meeting with the new director of MWRTA for a high-level conversation about what Sudbury is doing transportation-wise.

Minutes

Dan's draft minutes for the July 27 meeting will be considered at the August 26 meeting.

Next meetings

Friday, August 26, 2022 at 10:00 AM

Wednesday, September 7 at 10:30 AM

Adjournment

Kay moved and Alice seconded the motion to adjourn. Dan took a roll call of the votes of the five members present. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kay Bell.