

South Acton Train Station Advisory Committee
February 11, 2010
Meeting Minutes - DDM

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TOWN CLERK, ACTON *met*

Committee Members Present:

David Martin
Dore' Hunter
Jim Yarin
Michaela Moran
Nick Zavalas
Pat Clifford
Peter Berry
Tom Campbell

Committee Members Not Present:

Sean Hanley

Other Attendees:

Bruce Stamski
Jaime Eldridge
Pam Harding-Barrett
(members of the public)

Mr. Berry called the meeting to order at 7:30.

In the interest of full disclosure, Mr. Berry announced that his law firm has done work for the MBTA and the Town of Wayland and may do work for them in the future. Mr. Berry doesn't believe that it interferes with his responsibilities on the committee.

The committee voted to recommend John Sonner to replace Greta Eckhardt on the committee. Until it is official, Mr. Sonner will be an associate member of the committee.

The committee voted to accept the minutes from the previous meeting with minor changes.

Mr. Eldridge reported that our representatives have called the MBTA and Secretary Mullan's liaison with regard to the letter from the town. He has not yet received a response from the state.

There was discussion of track crossing alternatives. At-grade vs. safety was discussed. A tunnel alternative is popular, if the problems can be solved.

The committee heard about progress on advocacy issues:

Access ability - The committee would like a copy of the accessibility letters that have been sent out.

Historic - Ms. Moran reported on the letters that were sent out by the HDC, one to the FTA and one to the MHC. They will be posted on the SATSAC site.

Environmental - Mr. Zavalas asked whether the committee should file a notice of project change to the Secretary of Environmental Affairs for the project's 1990 MEPA filing. The committee decided to consult our legislators about the appropriate strategy.

Economic - Mr. Berry briefly reported on the Metro Area Planning Council, the Fitchburg Line Working Group, and Mass. Highway and the Assabet River Rail Trail. The committee decided to put the ARRT as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Mr. Martin presented a spread sheet analysis of design alternatives and design goals, which might help evaluate new MBTA proposals.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7:30 Thursday 25 January 2010 at the COA.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45.

Links:

<http://www.acton-ma.gov/index.aspx?nid=244> is the SATSAC page.

http://www.mbtta.com/about_the_mbtta/projects/default.asp?id=15585 is the MBTA site about the project.

An updated analysis with a tunnel alternative is attached.

Design Feature	Helps Requirement	Comment
Architectural Detail	Compatibility with Historic District	Roofline should be similar to historic Acton station. Finish should mask steel construction.
Dual Platform	Compatibility with Historic District	The south-side destination removes the requirement that the rail-trail add a second new bridge over the tracks.
	Improved Accessibility	4' high ramps on the outsides of the platforms provide emergency egress without redundant elevators. The effective length of ramp that needs to be traversed per round-trip commute is about half.
	Increased Security	Residents feel trapped on a center island platform.
	Integration with Rail Trail	The south-side platform provides rider access to the station without traversing bicycle switchbacks.
	North-side Access	The north-side platform allows quicker access to parking during outbound commutes. Only half of the ramps or elevators need to be traversed per round-trip commute.
	South-side Access	The south-side platform provides excellent south-side access for all.
	Elevators	Improved Accessibility
Replacing Ramp with Redundant Elevators and Call System	Compatibility with Historic District	More than any other element, the hundreds of feet of covered ramp completely change the character of the station.
	Increased Security	Residents do not feel secure with the long tunnel structure.
Tunnel	Compatibility with Historic District	The only above-ground structure would be platform canopies.
	Improved Accessibility	Assuming a high-strength tunnel ceiling under the tracks, the ramp length could be about 2/3 the length of above-ground ramps. When combined with dual platforms, the round-trip length of ramp that needs to be traversed is about 1/3 the length of the MBTA proposal with a center island and above-ground ramps. Could also be combined with elevators.
Walkway to Martin Street	South-side Access	Provides good access from Jones Field parking and from Stow. Residents of Maple & Stow Streets still have a long walk.