

January 10, 2014

Dr. Jeffrey M. Roth
Director
Belmont Bike Path Advisory Committee

Dear Jeff:

We thank you for the comprehensive presentation about the various possibilities for extension of the bicycle pathway through Belmont. In particular, you had asked the members of the school committee for their counsel about the proposed routes with special attention to a route proposed to run along the south side of the MBTA railroad tracks behind Belmont High School, a path that is projected to cross between athletic fields on the west side of the building.

The consensus of the School Committee is that the route from Hittinger Street through the high school parking lot and along the fire lane on the north side of the building to emerge on a connector between athletic fields is a plan that the board could not support. The plan would cross a busy parking lot and compromise an indefinite number of parking slots. It would transgress an emergency staging area as well as infringe upon available playing fields. Furthermore, with future renovation or rebuilding of Belmont High School in play, such a path would be impractical since the some portions of the area would be staging locations for construction and might well have to be closed for several years.

The members of the school committee appreciate the conscientious efforts to improve recreational pathways in town. However, as a board the School Committee remains neutral in judgment about any of the remaining possible routes for a new pathway.

Sincerely,

Laurie Graham, Chairperson
Belmont School Committee

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORK SESSION MINUTES
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE ROOM
January 10, 2014

Present: Ms. Laurie Graham, Chair
Ms. Anne Lougée, Secretary
Mr. Kevin Cunningham
Ms. Lisa Fiore
Ms. Elyse Shuster (arrived at 8:35)
Dr. Thomas Kingston, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Absent: Ms. Laurie Slap

Guests: Mr. Jeff Roth, Co-Chair, Community Path Advisory Committee
Mr. Jim Davis, Director of Athletics and Extracurricular Activities
Mr. Fred Domenici, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
Mr. Dan Richards, Principal, Belmont High School
Mr. Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Coordinator, Belmont Office of Community Development

1. **OPENING BUSINESS**

1.1 Call to order

Ms. Graham called the meeting to order at 8:20 a.m.

2. **MAJOR BUSINESS**

2.1 Discussion of the Community Path

Mr. Roth explained that the Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC) has been charged with exploring possible options for creating a community path in Belmont. He delivered a PowerPoint presentation that provided background information on the objectives of establishing a community path in Belmont and results thus far of CPAC's efforts over the past 18 months. The presentation also illustrated several possible scenarios for siting the path utilizing land at Belmont High School.

The committee and other attendees discussed with Mr. Roth the pros and cons of the options presented as they relate to the BHS campus and the future renovations needs of the facilities. Mr. Richards offered his concerns about a path that utilizes the fire lane behind the school building, specifically issues of security, access to the loading dock, and the potential audible and visual distraction to learning (particularly in the warmer weather when windows are open).

Ms. Fiore left the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

After further discussion the consensus of the remaining School Committee members was that the route from Hittinger Street through the high school parking lot and along the fire lane on the north side of the building to emerge on a connector between athletic fields is a plan that the board could not

support. The plan would cross a busy parking lot and compromise an indefinite number of parking slots. It would transgress a heavily used delivery location and emergency staging area as well as infringe upon available playing fields. Furthermore, with future renovation or rebuilding of Belmont High School in play, such a path would be impractical since the some portions of the area would be staging locations for construction and might well have to be closed for several years. However, as a board the School Committee remains neutral in judgment about any of the remaining possible routes for a new pathway.

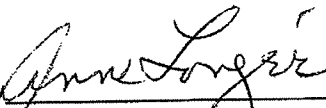
In closing Dr. Kingston said that the School Department/Committee would send a letter to the CPAC outlining its responses to the use of school property in the development of a community path through Belmont.

3. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:40 a.m. on a motion offered by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Ms.Lougée, it was

VOTED 4-0-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by


Anne Lougée, Secretary

Belmont Public Schools
Facility Change Guiding Principles
(Version 1, 5/2/2013)

Any significant change of facilities that are controlled by the Belmont School Department should be congruent with the long-term plans of the Department, and in any case should not create an obstacle with respect to those plans. Any decision about a facility change should consider the impact on the flexibility of the Department with respect to options for future development of the system as a whole.

In general, any change of facilities should allow the Department to maintain service comparable to, or enhanced relative to, the current service, with regard to, but not limited to:

- furthering the educational objectives of the system
- compliance with state, federal, and other laws and regulations
- safety of the facility
- accessibility for emergency responders, maintenance staff, facility users
- the provision of relevant equipment, services, and facilities
- program costs
- maintenance costs
- other recurring costs
- maintenance of the same or greater effective usable space
- control of programming by the School Department
- impact on services indirectly related to the facility (e.g., impact on adjacent campus use, effect elsewhere on the campus or in the system, etc.)
- minimizing the displacement of non-school programs who use the facility.

Notwithstanding the above, a temporary reduction of services may be necessary during the process of transition; best efforts should be taken to minimize downtime during construction.

In addition to these considerations, if a request to transfer control of land comes from agents beyond the School Department (e.g., for the schools to release control of some parcel, either on its own or as part of a "land swap"), additional considerations would apply:

- The costs for the transition should not fall on the School Department, either capital outlay or one-time or ongoing operational costs incurred as a result of the transition.
- If land is exchanged and the use of the new parcel is shared by multiple agencies, the School Department should retain full control of the new parcel, and not merely "program input" to some other controlling agency.
- The transfer of land should satisfy a vital community need, to a degree not available without the transfer, in the assessment of the School Committee.



Figure 9-14: Eastern Belmont on South Side of Fitchburg Line.

Pros

- Entirely off-road path segment uninterrupted by any driveways or roadway intersections.
- View sports fields outstanding. Improves safety compared to on-road/cycle-track options.
- Direct access to Belmont Center and Belmont Commuter Rail Station.
- Provides a direct route to Alewife Station and new Alewife Wetland Reservation park.
- Potentially makes Belmont Station ADA compliant.
- Safe for all users and all abilities since no live road and no live railway crossings. Direct access to path to Alewife.
- Provides historical appeal and preservation given Mass Central Rail-Road railway heritage, particularly at Belmont Center.

Cons

- The School Committee has expressed serious reservations about routes that traverse the High School campus. School property access would need to be negotiated.
- Small window to erect underpass near Tennis Courts; angled underpass design would be expensive; requires MBTA approval and coordination.
- Platform station in Belmont Center needs to be modernized to meet ADA access standards. Could add significant expense.