

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
August 20, 2008**

Present: Victor Pap-Chairperson
Kenneth DiFazio
Robert Conlon
Thomas J. Lacey

Not Present: Kevin Whitaker

Also Present: Councilor Mathews
James Clarke-Planning Director
Mary Jordan-Representative Murphy's Aide
Melissa Dullea-Manager of Service Planning (MBTA)

Recording Secretary: Diane Hachey

Discussion Concerning Expansion of Bus Routes to South Weymouth

Chairperson Pap called the Economic Development Committee Meeting to order at 7:02pm.

James Clarke distributed proposed routes developed by the MBTA for bus Routes 222 and 225. He explained that the MBTA has been working for quite some time investigating the extension of routes, notably with the opening of Southfield. The need for bus service for the South Shore Hospital and notably the opening of the new cancer center were reasons behind this. Mr. Clarke mentioned that all major hospitals are assessible by train and expressed the need for the same for South Shore Hospital. JBL dropped service most recently, resulting in an additional need for extension of bus services.

Mayor Kay met with John Andrews (President of JBL), Dan Grabauskas (MBTA), Representative James Murphy, and James Clarke on August 6, 2008 and discussed the matters of extension of bus Routes 222 and 225. Mr. Clarke proceeded to walk the committee through the details of the extension of said routes.

Mary Jordan, on behalf of Representative James Murphy, approached the committee and concurred with Mr. Clarke and expressed Representative Murphy's desire to potentially tie the current bus routes into MBTA train stations to further assist those attempting to travel via train. Representative Murphy wants to ensure that all avenues would be considered. She announced that a public hearing would be held on September 15, 2008 at 7:00 PM at Abigail Adams Auditorium- at which time citizens would be encouraged

to attend and deliver their comments and suggestions for incorporation to the 2008 service plan.

Melissa Dullea, the manager of service planning for the MBTA approached the committee and explained that both requests from legislators and the ceasing of the JBL bus line services prompted the MBTA to investigate rerouting of bus lines 222 and 225. During the MBTA's discussions with JBL it was determined that ridership substantially decreased since opening of the Greenbush commuter rail-resulting in ceasing of JBL bus services. The MBTA is investigating an intermediary carrier to handle the riders who have been displaced-until the proposed plan is up and running. Ms. Dullea explained that their goal is for the line to run approximately 30-40 minutes during rush hour with services extending until 10-11 at night to accommodate hospital traffic. The MBTA has to date received positive feedback from both the hospital administration and our legislators of this proposed plan.

Councilor Mathews asked about the timeline as related to service commencement. Ms. Dullea stated that outreach meetings should be completed by the end of September. The Board of Directors has scheduled a vote in November, therefore implementation of these proposed plans could potentially be up and running in the summer of 2009.

Councilor DiFazio wanted to ensure that the bus stop in lower Jackson Square is included in the proposed plans. Ms. Dullea confirmed that the stop at that location will continue.

Chairman Pap requested from Ms. Dullea a list of proposed stops, which would aid individuals in the public hearing process. She agreed to deliver a list of current stops and will email to the Council.

Councilor Lacey questioned what the impact on the bus service would be as related to Route 225 and the Weymouth/Braintree Greenbush line. He requested that Ms. Dullea bring back to the MBTA consideration of a stop at the Weymouth Landing station. Ms. Dullea expressed her concern surrounding adding a bus stop to a highly congested station, but agreed to bring back this request to the MBTA. Chairman Pap additionally requested of Ms. Dullea to submit to the Council the costs and traffic data surrounding Councilor Lacey's request. Mr. Clarke confirmed that at the August 6th meeting, this issue was raised in addition to consideration of a stop at the East Weymouth station.

Councilor Mathews asked if consideration was given to expanding bus service further into South Weymouth-specifically into Columbian Square. Ms. Dullea confirmed that the MBTA did not take this into consideration and would consider resources versus ridership.

Chairman Pap thanked Ms. Dullea for attending on behalf of the Economic Development Committee. At 7:25 PM Chairman Pap entertained a motion to recess for a few minutes- so moved by Councilor DiFazio and seconded by Councilor Lacey.

The meeting reconvened at 7:29 PM at which time Chairman Pap recognized Councilor Mathews. Councilor Mathews suggested an additional Economic Development Committee occur prior to the September public hearing, at which time the Mayor, Representatives Murphy and Mariano and Senator Hedlund would be invited. This would ensure that everyone is in agreement as to the proposed bus routes. Additionally comments from the Council would also be solicited. A letter inclusive of these parties' suggestions would be submitted at the public hearing. Chairman Pap concurred with this unified communication.

Councilor Lacey agrees that the full Council should be involved in the comment process but does not believe that an additional committee meeting is necessary--reporting out to full Council would suffice.

Chairman Pap recognized Irving Murstein (463 Broad Street) for a brief presentation.

Mr. Murstein extended his gratitude to Governor Patrick who passed his proposal onto the MBTA-he walked through the details of Routes 222 and 225 and suggested a "mini-bus" for purposes of transporting riders from one complex to another-without a charge for ridership. He further thanked Senator Hedlund and Representative Murphy for their efforts surrounding this situation. He suggested Charlie card machines be installed in Weymouth MBTA stations-as they are in Braintree.

Discussion on North Weymouth Revitalization Plans

Chairman Pap stated that the Fore River Bridge is the gateway to Weymouth and a plan is needed to be submitted to Administration in order to effectively accomplish much needed revitalization efforts. He would like to open a discussion surrounding suggestions for revitalization efforts in North Weymouth. He is soliciting suggestions from the North Weymouth Civic Association.

Approximately 7 North Weymouth residents were present.

Councilor Conlon commented that the problem surrounding funding for the new Fore River Bridge is an issue and once resolved should aid in the aesthetics of that area.

Mary Dorey of 46 Beach Road feels that much work needs to be done to improve the aesthetics of North Weymouth which was once beautiful. She

noted the historical buildings and the fact that North Weymouth is waterfront property but is in need of many enhancements.

Domenic Giannone of 47 Pearl Street cites Bicknell Square as an eyesore and suggests razing it and relocating the entire square further back with parking redirected to the rear. The facades of the buildings should be improved to look more professional.

Councilor Conlon suggests that businesses in the area unite and improve landscaping and other aesthetics as the town does not have the funding at this time to undertake a large project as suggested by Mr. Giannone.

Chairman Pap wants a set of principles to start a dialogue to ensure that these plans dovetail with the Mayor's plans for tourism in the town. He requested that constituents email or write to him with their comments and suggestions.

Sandra Gildea of 47 River Street stated that funds have been expended for all other squares in town with the exception of Bicknell. She suggests that illegal signage and sprucing up of public areas would help. She suggests approaching businesses to encourage that they maintain the public areas surrounding their businesses.

Chairman Pap thanked everyone in attendance and wanted the record to reflect that North Weymouth needs improved greenery and clean-up, in addition to investigation as to potential improvements to Bicknell Square.

Councilor DiFazio motioned to adjourn at 7:54 PM, Councilor Lacey seconded and was unanimously voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane T. Hachey
Recording Secretary