

Letter to the Editor:

Thank you for putting forward both my offer of financial support for the bike path and my proposal to create city and homeowner revenue opportunities by allowing homeowners to contract with commuters to let them park in front of their houses during business hours.

Unfortunately, It looks like neither of these proposals is getting much traction. In the case of my proposal to contribute \$5000 to finish the bike path in exchange for naming it after my deceased wife, a few commenters seem to prefer an unnamed pile of railroad ties on a unpassable overgrown railbed to a named bike path. While they are entitled to their opinions, it would be helpful if they came up with a better idea, lighting a light rather than just cursing the darkness.

The point is moot. Showing the kind of can-do foresight that could be the envy of the CDC, a city functionary called to say that -- anticipating that someday Newton might actually be exposed to the possibility of a bike path -- they already have rules in place to retard their proliferation, by making people jump through hoops to contribute to them in exchange for naming rights. To put it mildly, I'm not feeling the love here, so I am probably withdrawing my own offer of financial support since I am informed I would have to beg the city to take my money when most other organizations, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, would be more than happy to swipe my credit card hooplessly.

More curious is the opposition to my idea to allow the city and willing homeowners near the Eliot T to contract with commuters to allow use of what are now "no parking" and "2-hour parking" spaces in front of their houses during the week, when the space would otherwise go unused, and split the proceeds and perhaps the city could use its share of the money to finish constructing the bike path.

The position of the supporters (n=2, and thank you to #2 for validating that I am not a loon), whom we shall call pro-choice, is that everyone benefits: the commuters, the homeowners and the city. The position of the opposition (n=3), whom we shall call "pro-waste," is that it is better to allow this space to continue to be wasted, for reasons that have something to do with South Boston and snowstorms. A city functionary also chimed in to say this idea would break the rules. I would note, though, that the city itself actually *makes* these particular rules and could therefore change them - -these particular rules were not decreed by the Commonwealth, the White House, or Moses.

The irony of the pro-waste position is that, like a Tea Bagger using food stamps, implementation of this proposal would benefit the pro-waste group despite their own opposition. They would experience fewer rush-hour light-cycle delays crossing Route 9 and also be able to grab a space in the Eliot Street parking lot perhaps as late as 9 AM.

The final point I would make is that this is not a Lady Macbeth issue. Unlike splitting the atom or invading Iraq, both these initiatives can be undone with no harm, no foul. If another source of funding replaces mine for the bike path or if residents prefer the path to revert to jungle, the city can refund my donation and un-name the path. Likewise if the parking initiative proves unpopular, Newton can un-do that as well -- even though at least one municipal employee seems to think city's hands would be tied, while awaiting a tablet from Mount Sinai.

Al Lewis

