

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of July 10, 2013 Meeting
Public Services Administration Building
Needham, MA

IN ATTENDANCE

TMAC Members: Jeffrey MacMann, Anthony Del Gaizo, Lt. John Kraemer, Richard Merson, Glen Schneider, Robert Meltzer, Donna Mullin, Thomas Stokes, and Mark Rosen.

Technical Advisor: Robert Wilson.

Guests: David Montgomery, Alex Walley, Liesl Christie, Jennifer Kirby, John Kirby, Sarah Gibbons, Jon Gibbons, Michael Mathias, Felicia Mathias, Walter McDonough, Kathleen McDonough, Joseph Barr, and Liz Lee.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was convened at 7:01 PM by Mr. MacMann.

I. Intersection, Crosswalk, Speed on Hoover Road/Webster Street and Hoover Road/Manning Street

Deferred due to absence of applicant or designee.

II. Crosswalk, Speed, Signage near 566 Great Plain Ave.

Ms. Kirby presented her concern of a dangerous curve located at 566 Great Plain Ave., near the intersection of Great Plain Ave. and Wilshire Park. Her residence has a blind driveway, blocked by trees, that creates a hazard when cars speed by around the curve; further cause of concern is the crosswalk at the curve that is frequented by children. Ms. Kirby suggested a blind driveway sign on Great Plain Ave., removal of the trees in question, and a modification to the crosswalk. She was advised that the intersection was reconstructed several years ago, and the trees were purposefully kept because they were, at the time, healthy. She was informed that street trees are public, and are governed by laws that require petitions, evaluations, and hearings prior to removal. She was also advised that the crosswalk, as currently designed, meets the appropriate sightline regulations. **The Committee passed a motion** to send a letter of request to the property owner to trim back the bushes near the trees in question in an effort to increase visibility, to have the tree warden evaluate the trees in question for health and removal suitability, and to talk to the sign manager about the feasibility of placing blind driveway signs on Great Plain Ave.

III. Intersection, Crosswalk, Speed at the Highland Avenue/Webster Street Intersection

Ms. Mathias presented on behalf of a contingent of neighbors. She indicated the neighborhood's thanks for a new sign and repainted crosswalk stemming from a petition in December, 2012. However, she indicated that they are still seeing the same problems with traffic taking a right on to Highland Ave. northbound from Webster Street, being that traffic does not come to a full stop on red, creating a danger for pedestrians crossing even with a dedicated walk signal. They indicated that some drivers taking a right turn on red makes it unsafe to walk across that

intersection with their children heading to school. The petitioners noted that particular signs at that intersection appear to be contradictory or too small to be noticed by drivers, that visibility looking left before taking the right onto Highland Ave. northbound is obstructed by a telephone pole, that the dedicated pedestrian light is too short, that a crossing guard might be effective for children getting to school, and that eliminating the right turn on red option may solve the problem. The Committee informed the petitioners that this is an issue that is frequently acknowledged, but that a right turn on red is necessary to control the flow of traffic on Webster Street, and that there are simply not enough funds to supply a crossing guard at that intersection. However, police enforcement has been increased at that location. The Committee recommended implementing the walking school bus to safely shuttle children to school on foot. Further, the Committee strongly recommended to the petitioners that they report to the School Committee that TMAC has tried to accommodate safety and safe crossing at that intersection for students, but it is not possible to accomplish a fully safe crossing, in an effort to perhaps redistrict the elementary schools to allow for safer routes to school. **The Committee passed a motion** to remove the “right turn on red after stop” sign at the intersection of Highland Avenue and Webster Street, to schedule light timing and adjustment for the appropriate dedicated pedestrian light timing, and to look into painting the sidewalks green.

IV. Signage at Broad Meadow Road and Bird Street

Deferred due to absence of applicant or designee.

V. Crosswalk at the Bottom of the Stairs at Memorial Park

Deferred due to absence of applicant or designee.

VI. Signage at McColloch Street, Castle Place, Hasenfus Circle, and Glen Gary

Ms. Lee is worried about the safety of children when cars are lined up to pick up children on the streets surrounding Hillside Elementary School. Specifically, cars are parked bumper-to-bumper when school is letting out on both sides of the roads that make up the loop. This results in a narrow strip for through traffic, with the occasional traffic jam when vehicles are going in opposite directions. Safety is a concern when vehicles are parked like this because children cannot see around the vehicles and sometimes run out into the road. Ms. Lee recommended turning the streets into one-ways, resulting in a one-way loop, or making one side no parking. She was advised that it is not feasible to turn the loop into a one-way, and that nothing practical can be done. However, there currently are two police officers and one crossing guard detailed to the school to ensure the safe and swift movement of vehicles. She was advised to consider a grassroots effort to train and educate other parents for a more fluid drop-off/pick-up process.

VII. Speed, Signage on Rosemary Street

Mr. Barr presented his concern about the speed of vehicles on Rosemary Street in between Webster Street and Highland Avenue. He recommended rumble strips or increased signage. The Committee agreed it would put up the mobile speed board featuring a yellow “children” sign to increase the awareness of children in the area.

IIX. Signage, cars parking on side of road on Broad Meadow Road near Dawson Drive

Mr. and Ms. McDonough are concerned with parked traffic at Ms. McDonough’s house. Specifically, it is difficult for her to get in and out of her driveway as individuals park all day

very near her driveway, reducing visibility. She requested either “no parking” or “two hour parking” signs be installed on both sides of the street. She was informed by the Committee that the process is to gain the consent of her neighbors for the entire street as particular spots cannot be restricted. She agreed to have her neighbors sign a petition of support to turn the road into a two hour parking area, and then report back to the Committee with the signed petition.

VI. Other Business

- **The Committee passed a motion** to cancel the August meeting.
- **The Committee passed a motion** to table items 1, 4, and 5.
- **The Committee passed a motion** to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2013 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 PM.

Minutes compiled and summarized by Robert Meltzer.