

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of August 13, 2014 Meeting
Public Services Administration Building
Needham, MA

IN ATTENDANCE

TMAC Members: Anthony Del Gaizo, Stephen DeLisi, Lt. John Kraemer, Robert Meltzer, Richard Merson, and Donna Mullin.

Technical Advisor: Bob Wilson.

Guests: Shirley Pratt, David Sewall, Katherine Haney, Gary Simon, Kathleen Leahy, and David Volante.

Appointment of Acting Chairman

The Committee passed a motion for Mr. Merson to act as Chairman for this meeting.

Call to Order

The meeting was convened at 7:00 PM by Mr. Merson.

I. Parking on Pickering Street:

Ms. Pratt informed the Committee that vehicles park along the length of Pickering Street at Greene's Field, inhibiting the view of passing motorists of any pedestrians that may enter the roadway. She noted that more vehicles park along this road since the senior center relocated, and that most of the parked vehicles probably belong to those using the field and play structure. A significant concern is that vehicles driving down Pickering Street will not be able to stop in time if a child runs into the road from the field or playground. Ms. Pratt suggested installing some sort of signage on Pickering Street near the intersection with Great Plain Avenue. The Committee noted that a "playground ahead" would probably be most effective. **The Committee passed a motion** to install a "playground ahead" sign with a 20 m.p.h. speed tab on the east side of Pickering Street near the intersection of Great Plain Avenue.

II. Speed, Signage on Washington Avenue:

Mr. Sewall informed the Committee of increased volume and speed of vehicles on both sides of Washington Avenue between Great Plain Avenue and Edgewood Street, which is used as a cut through between Great Plain Avenue and Brookline Street. This is especially concerning due to the proximity of Mitchell School and the twenty children under the age of ten that live on this stretch of Washington Avenue. Mr. Sewall suggested installing signage or deploying the mobile speed board. **The Committee passed a motion** to place the board in an appropriate location of Washington Avenue after school begins.

III. Speed, Signage on Elmwood Road:

Ms. Haney informed the Committee of speed and traffic problems on Elmwood Road, which is a "U" shaped road that intersects with Great Plain Avenue at both ends. In particular, Ms. Haney's residence is located at one of the bends, making her driveway blind to those driving along Elmwood Road. This problem is exacerbated by a neighbor's thick and overgrown bushes,

which inhibit the visibility of drivers coming around the bend. Ms. Haney suggested installing “blind driveway” or “children” signs, and cutting back the bushes in question. The Committee informed Ms. Haney that since the bushes are not located at an intersection, the corner clearance by-law is not implicated. The Committee suggested that this would be a suitable location for an emotionally intelligent sign, and it was determined that the best place for this sign would be on the odd-numbered side of the road prior to the blind driveway, near # 147 or # 153 Elmwood Road. **The Committee passed a motion** to inquire as to the availability of any emotionally intelligent signs and to determine the appropriate location on Elmwood Road for such signage. Ms. Haney agreed to seek consent from both the residents of # 147 and #153 Elmwood Road in anticipation of the installation of a sign. Further, the Committee will ask the Parks Division to investigate if the bushes at # 171 Elmwood Road impede pedestrian access.

IV. Signage on Nehoiden Street:

Ms. Leahy presented her concerns about the truck exclusion on Nehoiden Street. Although some signs are posted, there are no posted signs at May or Rosemary Streets. Further, when Ms. Leahy has called the Needham Police Department to report violations, some dispatchers are unaware of the new regulation. She has also called some truck companies directly to notify them of the new regulation, with reasonable success. She has noted that most truck traffic is between 7 and 9 A.M. The Committee informed Ms. Leahy that the regulation change was annotated in the police log book and that motorcycle officers have been patrolling Nehoiden Street at various times. In addition, the hours of 7 to 9 A.M. are the busiest hours for the police department for various reasons, but the department will try to increase patrol of Nehoiden Street during those hours. **The Committee passed a motion** to install “Truck Exclusion on Nehoiden Street” signs on May Street at Garden Street, at the end of Parish Road at Rosemary Street, and at the end of Rosemary Street at Parish Road.

V. Signage on Central Avenue at Volante Farms Entrance:

Mr. Volante informed the Committee that traffic on Central Avenue at Forest Street will back up due to the new traffic light, which blocks the Central Avenue entrance to Volante Farms, preventing northbound vehicles from using this entrance. He requested that a “do not block driveway” sign be posted on southbound Central Avenue prior to the entrance to the property. The Committee noted that “do not block driveway” signs have very limited effectiveness, and that the most effective solution would probably be to encourage vehicles to turn onto Forest Street and utilize the Forest Street entrance. **The Committee passed a motion** to install a directional sign on the Central Avenue/Forest Street traffic light indicating “Volante Farms” or “Access to Volante Farms” with an arrow.

VI. Speed on Great Plain Avenue/Central Avenue and Highland Avenue/West Street:

Deferred due to absence of petitioner or representative.

VII. Intersection at 4th Avenue and Kendrick Street/Nahanton Street:

Deferred due to absence of petitioner or representative.

VIII. Crosswalk from Memorial Field at Highland Avenue:

Mr. Simon informed the Committee that pedestrians leaving Memorial Field by means of the stairs across from Subway have no direct access to a crosswalk to cross Highland Avenue. Mr.

Simon suggested that the Town install a crosswalk at the Memorial Field stairs across from Subway, or perhaps to install traffic calming devices such as speed humps. Currently, crosswalks are located at the Highland Avenue/Rosemary Street and Highland Avenue/Oakland Avenue intersections, which are each less than 500 feet from this location. No pedestrian accidents have been reported in this stretch of Highland Avenue. The Committee informed Mr. Simon that traffic calming devices are not allowed on principal arterial ways like Highland Avenue. Further, a crosswalk at this location would be considered a mid-block crosswalk, and such mid-block crosswalks have very strict warrant requirements that are controlled by law. The proposed crosswalk could only be installed if the strict warrants are met, and it is unlikely that they are in this case. In addition, the installation of a crosswalk would eliminate several parking spots on both sides of Highland Avenue and it would be expensive to build the crosswalk ramps to be ADA compliant. The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Public Works to repaint the “slow” markings on both sides of Highland Avenue in this area.

IX. Other Business:

- **The Committee passed a motion** to approve parking passes for 20 Williams Street, 68 Dawson Drive, and 66 Eaton Road, providing that a permit is purchased for each vehicle sought to be parked on the street. The Committee noted that the permit applies to the vehicle, not the vehicle owner.
- **The Committee passed a motion** to approve the minutes from the July 9, 2014 meeting.
- Mr. Merson informed the Committee that the Town is meeting with a consultant to review posted signage to ensure compliance with state law. Presumably, a list of signs to be upgraded or replaced will be forthcoming.
- The Department of Public Works informed the Committee that a traffic study is forthcoming for the purpose of attempting to change the timing of the traffic lights at the May Street/Chapel Street/Highland Avenue intersection. After the study is completed, the Town can petition the state to change the timing.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Minutes compiled and summarized by Robert Meltzer.