

Minutes
Traffic Management Advisory Committee
Tuesday, January 12, 2022
7:00 P.M.
Zoom Meeting ID #841-9107-5052

MEMBERS PRESENT: Justin McCullen, Chair; Seth Bauer, Vice-Chair; Rhain Hoyland, Superintendent of Highways, Lt. John McGrath, Suzanne Stein, Donna Mullin, Barry McNeilly.

STAFF PRESENT: Thomas Ryder, Acting Town Engineer; Robert Wilson, Engineer; Clay Hutchinson, Zoom Coordinator, Tyler Gabrielski, Administrative Analyst.

PUBLIC PRESENT: Emily Sullivan, Brooke Kane, Susan Mirageas, Janice Epstein

1. INTRODUCTION AND ROLL CALL

Mr. McCullen, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and Roll Call was taken.

2. IN MEMORIAM – ANTHONY DELGAIZO, TOWN ENGINEER

A moment of silence was held in honor Anthony DelGaizo, who passed away December 7, 2021. Mr. DelGaizo, served as Town Engineer for 30 years and was a key member serving on the TMAC.

3. MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2021

Vote: Lt. McGrath moved to accept the Minutes of October 13, 2021. Ms. Stein seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. STATUS REPORT UPDATE

Mr. Wilson reported the following project updates:

- **Stevens Road- *Children Playing*** sign installed.
- **Stonecrest Road – *Curve ahead*** sign installed.
- **Charles River Street at Belle Lane – *Thickly Settled*** signs installed.
- **Great Plain Avenue at Warren Street** – Mr. Wilson investigated the site and recommended that a cross walk should be installed at the location because the adjacent cross walks were 700' and 900' away and the route was a school plowing route. Leslie Kerr was supportive.

Kimberly McCollum wanted to know if a RRFP, a flashing crosswalk sign, would be installed at the crosswalk. Mr. Bauer responded it was not included in the recommendation. Mr. Ryder said that further designs were being considered with the crosswalk such as the installation of *Crosswalk Ahead* signs, *Pedestrian Yield* sign painted into the road surface, as well as a continental crosswalk. Mr. Hoyland explained that a continental crosswalk is a 2' wide by 10' long diagonal lines with a 2' space

painted across the street and is used in major streets in Needham and similar to crosswalks along Great Plain Avenue.

Vote: Mr. Bauer moved to install a crosswalk at Great Plain Avenue at Warren Street. Ms. Stein seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. HIGHLAND AVENUE AND HUNNEWELL STREET INTERSECTION- SPEED & SIGN

PETITIONER: Emily Sullivan, 77 Fruit Street

Ms. Sullivan works at the corner of Hunnewell Street and Highland Avenue. She reported that during rush hour cars ignore pedestrians in the crosswalk and it was hazardous for employees to cross. She wondered whether there was a visibility problem for drivers to see the crosswalk. She also reported that the intersection is difficult for automobiles to navigate as well. There had been a recent accident at the intersection. She suggested a four-way stop, a traffic light, and/or a pedestrian activated flashing light for the intersection.

Mr. Hoyland concurs with the petitioner. A design/engineering consultant is currently looking at Highland Avenue from Webster Street to Great Plain Avenue, a 1.6 mile long corridor. This intersection has been recommended for improvements which include the tightening up the geometry of the intersection and the installation of a full set of lights with crosswalks. The process is long and it will take approximately seven years for reconstruction. In the interim, the Town could investigate interim steps to improve the intersection. Members concurred that the intersection was difficult and supported any smart streets solutions that could be implemented. Mr. McCullen suggested pulling the stop line as a possible measure.

Lt. McGrath noticed that the petitioner also requested that there be enforcement of the crosswalk. Lt McGrath said that crosswalk enforcement was very difficult to do. He thought assisting with gridlock at the intersection could help the pedestrian and traffic congestion at the intersection.

Mr. Hoyland said that RRF at the intersection would require investigating the corner to see if it met the Traffic Warrant thresholds.

Jeanne Goldberg, was an employee at the corner and a resident of Needham, she concurred that the intersection was dangerous and was more so during the dark evening hours. She supported a flashing light for pedestrian similar to those installed at the High School.

Mr. McCullen asked that staff investigate intermediate and long-term solutions and to report back in a quarter.

6. BRADFORD STREET BETWEEN GREAT PLAIN AVENUE AND HARRIS AVENUE - SPEED

PETITIONER: Brooke Kane, 28 Bradford Street

Ms. Kane reported that vehicle speeds on Bradford Street were excessive. A child riding on a scooter was hit by a car in the summer. The high volume of cars was also a concern especially during Pollard School pick-up and drop-off hours. She requested that yellow signs be installed like those in the neighborhood.

Mr. McCullen and Mr. Bauer cautioned that signs don't have much of an effect on speed and may not solve the problem.

Mr. McCullen inquired if flashing radar speed signs could be installed as those have proven to be effective. Lt. McGrath agreed they would be effective, but traffic studies conducted at Bradford and Otis Streets did not indicate high speeds.

Mr. McCullen asked which was more effective a 25 MPH or a *Children Playing* sign. Lt. McGrath did not have the data on sign effectiveness relative to each other. Lt. McGrath noted that there was on-street parking on Bradford which provides a natural street calming effect.

Mr. McCullen asked that Ms. Kane conduct a petition of the majority of the residents of the street supporting the sign installation which would include support from the homeowner where the sign will be installed. Mr. Ryder suggested that Ms. Kane obtain a map of the neighborhood from Mr. Wilson and she identify where the sign will be installed so that the homeowner clearly knows where the sign will be located and is in support.

7. DEDHAM AVENUE BETWEEN PLEASANT AND WEBSTER STREET – NO PARKING
IMPACTED CITIZEN: SUSAN MIRAGEAS, 183 Dedham Avenue

Mr. McCullen reported that this item was voted on at the September Meeting and Ms. Mirageas is an impacted neighbor.

Ms. Mirageas a resident at this address for 29 years said that she was only informed of the No Parking Signs installation in front of her house by a call from a neighbor. When she came home from work she found two signs *No Parking* on the edges of her frontage. This was done without her knowledge.

Like her neighbors on Dedham Avenue, she has visitors park in front of her home. She reported that she has a particularly difficult situation as she shares a driveway with the petitioner.

The shared driveway has a circle at the end to allow turning which is to remain open for the two property owners to use. The petitioner parks in the circle which blocks her from exiting her garage. Ms. Mirageas noted that the petitioner has an on line business which attracts up to 15 visiting cars a day. Ms. Mirageas shared photos including on the day and the day after the petitioner presented to the TMAC showing the petitioner parked in front of her home which he has done for years. Ms. Mirageas reported that Dedham Avenue is a busy street and you have to be cautious when joining the street. Ms. Mirageas has secured an attorney about the matter. She felt that the TMAC had entered into a personal dispute and the parking ban in front of her house was not driven solely by safety concerns but by retaliation by the petitioner for her seeking legal recourse.

Mr. McCullen said that the TMAC has a general policy to require a petition from stakeholders prior to making decision about installing signs. He noted that the TMAC waived this due to the public safety concerns raised by the petitioner.

Lt. McGrath noted that an accident occurred after the decision but it was not caused by the driveway. Lt.

McGrath met with the Ms. Mirageas and wished he had been apprised of the situation prior to making the decision. He did not know if there was a recourse to reversing the decision. Concerns still remained as the photos show cars parking on the berm which is a violation of the Town Ordinance.

Mr. McCullen wondered whether the 40 mph speed limit on Dedham Avenue called for a parking ban for the whole street by the Select Board. Ms. Mirageas added that the speed limit into Town on Dedham was 30 mph.

Mr. Bauer felt taken advantage by the petitioner. Ms. Mirageas was particularly aggrieved because the parking ban on Dedham Avenue was limited exclusively to the entire frontage of her property without any notification or discussion. In addition, the parking ban was particularly difficult because her mother and brother-in-law are handicapped and the challenges of her shared driveway.

Lt. McGrath asked why the parking ban wasn't extended to Pleasant Street when making the Decision. Ms. Stein also felt taken advantage by the petitioner. Ms. Mirageas suggested a parking ban 20 feet from the driveway which will address the safety concerns pulling out of the driveway and allow parking in front of her house when necessary. When she bought the property she did so knowing about the on-street parking in front of her house to balance the challenges of the shared driveway.

She is now aware that parking on the berm is illegal. She did not know parking on the berm was illegal as she and others throughout Needham have been doing it for years. She asked if the decision could be reversed and suggested that a no parking sign be placed on the telephone pole 20' from the driveway.

Mr. McCullen assured her that a decision could be reversed. However, signs cannot be placed on telephone poles only on free standing poles. Mr. McCullen asked if a sign could say: *No parking 20' from driveway*. Lt. McGrath said no because you can park within five feet of a driveway.

Lt. McGrath noted his decision was based on the safety issues presented. He felt it would be a conflict if he reversed his decision. He suggested that the item be brought to the Select Board. Mr. Bauer agreed.

Mr. McCullen directed that the item be forward to Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager, to determine next steps.

8. HIGHLAND TERRACE, HIGHVIEW STREET AND RIVERSIDE STREET – NARROW STREETS

PETITIONER: Janice Epstein, 75 Highland Terrace

Ms. Epstein reported that the Town paved the streets and installed berms a year ago which resulted in the streets being narrower. As a result of the narrowing of the streets trucks have difficulty maneuvering the street, cars park on the berm and parked cars are side swiped. Some mitigating measures have been implemented such as a no parking ban on one side of the street around the park and residents are avoiding parking on the street for fear of being side swiped.

Ms. Epstein asked if the berm could be asphalted to provide parking. She also noted that there are unidentified speed bumps. She inquired if the speed bumps could be painted and warning *Speed Bumps Ahead* signs could be installed.

Mr. Hoyland noted that the streets were originally narrow. The Town repaves over the existing street when repaving streets. Cape Cod asphalt berms were added when the street was repaved to stabilize the shoulder. The Cape Cod berms are 10" wide which allow them to be driven over. He noted that street is slightly shy of 22", the standard width of a street. He asserted that the Town did not narrow the street when they were repaved. When Mr. Hoyland measured the street from Cape Cod berm to Cape Cod berm it was the same as the previous width.

Mr. McCullen asked Ms. Epstein what her ask was. Ms. Epstein responded that she wanted the grass berm to be asphalted, the streets to be widened and the speed bumps be painted.

Mr. Hoyland said that there were opportunities for improvements with the Mass DOT reconstruction on Highland Avenue. Possible mitigation could be the removal of the speed bumps, do indented parking and create a horseshoe for off-street parking. Ms. Epstein would like to see improvements on Highland Terrace.

Mr. Hoyland did not support asphaltting the grass area because of the water infiltration it provided. He noted that the grass has stabilized, and residents can drive over the Cape Cod berm and park over the grass by the edge of the guardrail. Mr. Bauer suggested installing *Park to Guardrail* signs.

Ms. Epstein reported that visitors to the new townhouses on Riverside Street are parking on the street, and there is a residents parking permit that allows overnight on-street parking. It's managed by the Police Department. Lt. McGrath noted that the residential parking permit program is reissuing the permits for the year. Mr. Hoyland asked that the issuance of the resident parking permits be put on hold until the TMAC can review the issues and provide possible solutions for this area. Lt. McGrath noted that it can't put the program on hold, but it can stop enforcement in the area.

The street maneuverability is a concern for fire trucks and emergency vehicles. Mr. Hoyland suggested there be a limit where parking can occur by installing *No Parking Here to There* signs; and indent parking around the park. He said parking over the Cape Cod berm along the guardrails was allowed.

Ms. Epstein said she didn't know parking was allowed over the Cape Cod berm on the grass. She thought it was illegal to park on the berm. She was assured it was permissible.

Mr. McNeilly would like to see the grass allowed to grow and parking not be allowed over it. He foresaw during the rainy season car tracks would be unsightly.

Mr. McCullen and Lt. McGrath suggested parking be limited to one side only to allow for emergency vehicle access. Ms. Epstein responded that the neighbors need to know what is proposed.

Mr. McCullen said the neighborhood would need to submit a petition about being on board with the parking restriction and bring it to the TMAC for consideration and adoption.

Mr. Ryder suggested that if the neighborhood can't agree which side the no parking should be, the no parking side could alternate each year.

Mr. Bauer asked to measure the street to determine if emergency vehicles can access the street. Mr. Hoyland said that cars can park on both sides currently. He concurred that parking on one side be investigated.

Ms. Epstein said she was not promoting these suggestions to the neighborhood.

Lt. McGrath thought that limiting parking on one side would alleviate the turning radius for delivery trucks and fire trucks and that *No Parking* signs be installed.

Ms. Epstein reminded the TMAC that the streets are both Private Way and Town owned and that the parties need to be in discussion.

Mr. Ryder explained that changing a Private Way into a Public-Way would need a majority (more than 50%) of the residents on the street to submit a petition to the Select Board for a Public Way. The street in question appears to have three homes. If two home-owners sign on it could be referred for consideration.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McCullen introduced Barry McNeilly, who was recently appointed by the Select Board to serve on the TMAC. Mr. McNeilly said he was a retired Brookline Police Detective where he spent 25% on his time on traffic and vehicular issues. Mr. McNeilly has a BS in Civil Engineering and a Master's in criminal justice from Northeastern University.

Mr. Bauer announced that he was resigning from the TMAC. He has a new major role at work and cannot give his full attention to the TMAC.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.