

Town of Needham
Transportation Safety Committee

Minutes: September 11, 2024

Location: Forbes/McLeod Community Room, Public Safety Building, 88 Chestnut Street

Livestreamed on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88341769950>

ADOPTED OCTOBER 9, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Guus Driessen, Tyler Gabrielski, Justin McCullen, Donna Mullin, Rebecca Tarantino
MEMBERS ABSENT: Lt. John McGrath, Barry McNeilly
MEMBERS REMOTE: Tom Ryder
STAFF REMOTE: Robert Wilson
GUEST: Nick Morris-Kliment of Christ Church; Katie Bucking, Melanie Chladny, Amy Schulman, Seth Schulman, Julie O'Connell, Matt Hodus

1. INTRODUCTION, ROLL CALL, CALL TO ORDER

At 7:03 p.m., J. McCullen called the meeting to order, took roll call, and disclosed the video recording.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 10, 2024

T. GABRIELSKI MOVED AND G. DRIESSEN SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 10, 2024.

ROLL-CALL VOTE: G. DRIESSEN, AYE; T. GABRIELSKI, AYE; J. MCCULLEN, AYE; D. MULLIN, AYE;

T. RYDER, AYE. **MOTION CARRIES: 5-0**

AT 7:08 PM, R. TARANTINO JOINED THE MEETING.

3. OLD BUSINESS/ STATUS UPDATE REPORT - R. WILSON

- Stop sign installed and an island painted on South St. across from High Rock St.
- Advance signage and new stop sign installed at Nehoiden St. at Central Ave.
- Brookside Rd. signage replaced with 20 mph tabs for the road curve
- West St./Hillside Rd. stop sign regulations have been approved and awaiting advertisement

ACTION: T. RYDER WILL LOCATE THE STOP SIGN REGULATIONS AWAITING APPROVAL.

**WELLESLEY AVE. AND HUNNEWELL ST. INTERSECTION - MEETING WITH WELLESLEY
STOP SIGN REGULATIONS AND REQUESTS**

- TSC members spoke with the Town of Wellesley Engineering.
 - A homeowner's property line abuts the intersection on entry from Ardmore St.
 - The side with the Stop sign has ledge and vegetation presenting sidewalk challenges.
- The 1997 proposal was discussed resolving driver right of way challenges including elevation.
- The Bottleneck Reduction Grant would not be funded as this is a safety and not a volume issue.
- Wellesley deferred to Needham to develop a proposal. Volume does not support a traffic signal.
- Members discussed "taking" Town owned abutting parcels to create a larger footprint for options such as a slip lane, right of way and/or retaining walls. The matter may need State Legislature approval.
- Members discussed driver confusion with placement of existing line painting and pedestrians crossing the path at Ardmore as well as presence of a Stop line without the regulation Stop sign.

Next Steps:

- Conduct a Feasibility Study before design begins to suggest configurations including the option of taking land. The road geometry needs modification. There is funding for the Feasibility Study.
- Put together a scope and bring before the TSC in October.

PEACEDALE RD. NEIGHBORHOOD

- Stop signs are proposed to be installed at Norwich Rd./Intervale Rd.; Intervale Rd./Peacedale Rd., and Peacedale Rd./Greendale Ave. Regulations are with T. Ryder for signature at the 9/24 meeting of the Select Board.

4. PETITIONER, ALI HEARD - ROSEMARY ST. PARKING AND TRAFFIC CONTROL

Nick Morris-Kliment of Christ Church presented concerns.

- Rosemary St. at Highland Ave.
 - Students park on Rosemary St. for longer than the posted September-June 2 hour time limit.
 - Students park in driveways, in private spaces.
 - Students drive the wrong way on Rosemary St.
 - Students park in the Church leased lot across from the Library impeding patron parking.
 - Building tenants rely on lot access to carry things from Rosemary St, making this difficult.
 - The Town added signs on Rosemary indicating 2 hour parking limit between September-June.
- Traffic enforcement is not consistent. He suggested to post "Violators Will Be Towed".
- Members discussed traffic enforcement of the 2 hour parking limit.
- Members discussed Church and resident communication in the High School news, The Hill.

Suggested remedies include:

- Police staffing the lot at 2:35 pm and ticketing on the first offense.
- Private lot - Church can post signage "Church Business Parking Only, Violators Will Be Towed".
- Private lot - Church can establish a relationship with a towing company.
- Members discussed present One Way and No Left Turn signage placement.
- Hold off painting the pavement apron to see if these remedies are effective.

ACTION: SOLICIT ENFORCEMENT ADVICE FROM LT. J. MCGRATH WHO WAS NOT PRESENT.

J. McCullen moved and R. Tarantino seconded to move the sign at the base of the Christ Church parking lot in the shadow of the utility pole to make it more visible; separate the left turn only sign onto its own utility pole. Add a No Right Turn icon sign without wording underneath the one-way only sign. Add a duplicate No Left Turn or Right Turn only sign on the right side of the street. Add another one way only icon sign without wording, placement to be determined by DPW Engineering. **ROLL-CALL VOTE: G. Driessen, AYE; T. Gabrielski, AYE; J. McCullen, AYE; D. Mullin, AYE; T. Ryder, AYE; R. Tarantino, AYE. **MOTION CARRIES: 6-0****

5. PETITIONER, KATIE BUCKING - SPEED/VISIBILITY ON GREAT PLAIN AVE. BY NORTH HILL AVE.

- Speed limit changes from 35 mph to 25 mph before the intersection; drivers do not slow down.
- Up-to-date Pedestrian Crossing signal and Crosswalk signage are present.
- Cars speed into the curve impeding the bicycle lane.

The Petitioner suggested remedies: raised sidewalk, Blind Driveway sign, School Bus Crossing sign

- Members noted the 25 mph is an advisory speed limit.
- Members discussed limits of Police enforcement with the State Crosswalk Law.
 - The curved crosswalk at the intersection is a "legacy" crosswalk.
 - TSC policy is to add crosswalks when the intersection is safe which this intersection is not.
- Members discussed the feasibility of moving the crosswalk on GPA to the other side of North Hill.

The Complete Streets plan was relocating the crosswalk west of the intersection to increase sight.

ACTION: Conduct a new Pedestrian Study; explore a Blind Driveway sign heading eastbound; consider moving the 25 mph sign; consider adding orange dots around perimeter of sign.

6. PETITIONER, AMY SCHULMAN - CROSSWALK ACROSS CENTRAL AVE. AT STARR RIDGE

There is no crosswalk on the Starr Ridge side of Central St. Residents ask that the Town add a crosswalk and a speed bump near the high school. The closest crosswalk to cross Starr Ridge is one mile away. Pedestrians who wish to cross at the intersection have to wait to make eye contact with drivers traveling at 40 mph to acknowledge a pedestrian's intent to cross. She and her daughters witnessed a rear-end collision when they made eye contact with a driver on one side of the road but not the other side. Residents travel from all corners of Town to cross at this popular juncture to access nearby facilities.

- Members agreed this area could be a long-term project noting the regulatory 40 mph speed signs.
- TSC policy is to add crosswalks when the intersection is safe.
 - Adding a crosswalk in a 40 mph zone would create a false sense of security.
 - Crosswalks are not to be used for traffic control to slow cars down.
- Members discussed construction changes or allowances to reduce speed to facilitate a crossing including signate and repainting crosswalk lines away from the curve in the road.
- Remedies might include: a Pedestrian Walking sign such as the one previously placed on Chestnut St.
- Members noted the Town has 135 miles of sidewalk to maintain and a limited budget. Unless more funds are budgeted at Town Meeting, adding sidewalks would need to be justified. There is a 40 year backlog of sidewalk maintenance. The Rail Trail could increase accessibility.

Next Steps:

- Evaluate whether crossing Central Ave. at Starr Ridge is safe or requires a crosswalk extension.

J. McCullen Moved and R. Tarantino Seconded to add two Pedestrian Crossing Signs on both sides of Central Ave. at Starr Ridge.

Roll-Call Vote: G. Driessen, Aye; T. Gabrielski, Aye; J. McCullen, Aye; D. Mullin, Aye; T. Ryder, Aye; R. Tarantino, Aye. **Motion Carries: 6-0**

At 8:30 pm, R. Tarantino exited the meeting.

7. BROOKLINE ST. AND HUNNEWELL ST. - SPEED STUDY FOLLOW-UP

- Speed Studies were conducted for two petitions for speeding traveling westbound on Brookline Ave. near Mitchell School. Statistics include: 881 vehicles daily, 110 vehicles at the hourly peak, average of 35 mph speed 85% of the time in the statutory 30 mph zone.
- Petitioner, M. Chladny stated that there were two accidents at Holmes and Brookline, her dog was hit by a car, and a high schooler was hit by a car on another occasion. This occurred after the Speed Study during which one of the eastbound monitors was not operating. Data was collected in feedback mode and will be compared with the westbound side when evaluating remedies.
- The street speed limit is incorrect on GoogleMaps. T. Gabrielski has submitted this to Google.
- Remedies include: Investigate to change the fog line/edge lines to 9.5 feet width.

ACTION: RADAR SIGNS WILL BE REINSTALLED ON BOTH APPROACHES TO RE-EVALUATE DRIVER SPEEDS.

J. McCullen Moved and G. Driessen Seconded to explore road width in the area where the speed study verified speeding to see if fog line installation to reduce the road width where the speed study verified speeding along with writing the word "SLOW" where the road curves downhill at the discretion of DPW Engineering and the Highway Department.

Roll-Call Vote: G. Driessen, Aye; T. Gabrielski, Aye; J. McCullen, Aye; D. Mullin, Aye; T. Ryder, Aye; R. Tarantino, Aye. **Motion Carries: 6-0**

At 8:43 pm, D. Mullin exited the meeting.

8. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION (CONTINUED) - TOWNWIDE 25 MPH IN THICKLY SETTLED AREAS

9. MATTERS NOT ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR WITHIN 48 HOURS OF THE MEETING

HARRIS AVE. AT RT. 135 AT WARREN ST.

Due to placement of the utility pole and signage, drivers cannot see pedestrians until stepping into the crosswalk. **ACTION: Conduct a Site Survey and Site Line Evaluation.**

10. ADJOURNMENT

AT 8:54 PM, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AS THE MEMBER QUORUM WAS NOT MET TO CONTINUE.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary

INFORMATIONAL: The Meeting Packet is available at <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>



TOWN OF NEEDHAM
TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
COMMITTEE

September 11, 2024 –Public Safety Building, Forbes/McLeod Community Room

88 Chestnut Street, Needham, Massachusetts

PLEASE SIGN IN

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