

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 14, 2018 Meeting, 7pm
Public Services Administration Building
Needham, MA

IN ATTENDANCE

TMAC Members: Donna Mullin, Kara Holmquist, Stephen DeLisi, Lt. John Kraemer, Tony Del Gaizo, Seth Bauer, Justin McClellan. Suzanne Stein, Rhain Hoyland

Technical Advisor: Bob Wilson was not present

Guests: See attached list

CALL TO ORDER

Stephen gave an introduction to the guests about how the TMAC works. Town employees introduced themselves.

Due to the tragic event of the past weekend involving the deaths of two high school students crossing the street behind the High School, two members of the Board of Selectmen attended the meeting and were given the opportunity to address the large contingent of people who came to the meeting, many of whom submitted petitions two days earlier about the site where the accident occurred. John Bulian of the Board said that the tragic event has impacted everyone in the community and announced that at 7pm on March 27 there will be a public hearing on pedestrian safety at Town Hall. One goal will be to move expeditiously with recommendations. He said that we don't know all the facts surrounding the accident and he is not sure when we will all know; it's up to the state police. Making the town safer will require all of us to work together. Selectman Bulian also announced that all the emails that have been sent for today's meeting will be forwarded and incorporated into the record of March 27th.

Mo Handel, another Board member, also spoke and urged people to go to the meeting on March 27.

The meeting was then turned back over to the Chair of the TMAC. Stephen began by asking attendees to observe a moment of silence for Adrienne Garrido and Talia Newfield.

I. INTERSECTIONS, CROSSWALKS, STREELIGHTS ON WEBSTER ST/HOLLAND ST, BROOKLINE ST, HIGHLAND AVE

Brenda Curran spoke and was joined by the Baker, Rosenberg, Ochella, Cohen and Sullivan families, who were witnesses to the accident on Saturday night. Their request is to address the safety of crosswalks both at the accident site and on major roads across Needham. They stated the crosswalks are not visible and safe.

Specifically, they are requesting the town:

- 1) Repaint faded crosswalks with bright visible paint and painted warnings;
- 2) Install push-to-cross flashing lights on major roads in town: Webster and Holland, Webster, Great Plain Ave, Highland Ave, Dedham Ave, Chestnut Ave, Central Ave, Greendale Ave, West St, Hunting Rd and Gould St.

They would like to see a comprehensive plan implemented.

Jennifer Goddard Rosenberg spoke on behalf of Curt Ochella. Curt lives in the house next to the high school and Curt was present at the accident. Curt's testimony said that we know there are measures we can take

to minimize tragedies. We live in a very walkable town. Webster St is a dividing line between neighborhoods and the town center. There is no stop sign on Webster between Great Plain Ave and West St. Curt notices this each day when pulling out onto Webster St. He is urging for a pedestrian activated warning beacon. They improve drive yield rates and are powered by solar energy; they cost 25,000-35,000 to be installed. He has heard from others that there is a general sense that Needham prioritizes cars over pedestrians. He heard that this is the 4th or 5th pedestrian related accident in the 18 months – too many for a town this size.

He requests the town:

- 1) Evaluate the town's participation in the Commonwealth's Complete Street Funding Program through DOT. Technical assistance and funding are available for all travel modes for people of all ages and all abilities. Nearly all of our neighbor towns are already participating.
- 2) Immediately evaluate the addition of pedestrian activated warning beacons near schools. There needs to be an immediate short-term solution and funding of long-term solution.

Anita Ritchie has been before the TMAC to petition against excess speed on Greendale Ave. She said that as the town continues to grow and the Newton-Needham corridor develops, more people will be driving through town. There needs to be a plan to address safety throughout town. The area around Webster St has many feeder streets to the high school. Signs don't exist like they do in other towns. We need to improve streets such as May, Kingsbury, and Admiral Gracey.

Joanne Ochella said that Admiral Gracey needs a crossing guide, especially during construction. We need to prioritize areas that are congested.

Lt John Kraemer explained that there are unfilled crosswalk guard positions that have been posted for several years. One guard left 2 weeks ago and officers are trying to cover. They cover 66 crossings per day for the schools.

Someone commented from the audience that if the position has gone unfilled this long, the salary needs to be improved and it needs to be promoted more.

Another person commented that crossing guards will only help during the times they are there; what is really needed is an automated system – this is a 24 hour problem.

Claire Franks of Brookline St said the lighting is terrible on Webster St and there is not one sign with speed limits. Central Ave at least has flashing signs; there is none on Brookline St or Webster St. Can we reduce the speed throughout town to 25 mph?

Tony said that at town meeting, the town accepted the provisions to allow 25 mph instead of 35 mph and this change will be something the Board of Selectmen decides how to implement. We have some rural areas – such as South St – that are 40 mph. There are some areas - where there is a divided median – that are 50 mph. School zones can be implemented in areas where there is one or more grades below 9; the highest grade you can have is 8; if 8 or less, you can implement a school zones and this is set by the legislature at 20 mph. This is then usually accompanied by flashing light. At the high school, you don't have any grades below 9, so a school zone is impossible in that circumstance, but it is a possible candidate for at least a 25 mph stretch. Tony is certain it will be considered. He noted that if you blanket cover the town at 25 mph, then no one area is more important than another and it can take away the driver's sensitivity to the speed.

State representative Denise Garlick joined the meeting and said we need to talk about solutions, not barriers. Speed limits are just that – the highest you can drive. There are ways as a town to make a decision we want and go through a home rule petition when that we want to try another mechanism. She looked at

information today about a HAWK beacon. They are expensive, but we can make where and when we want to use this. She is hoping to tailor what we want to do and figure out how to work together to make it happen.

Suzanne Stein said she is familiar with the Eliot school project and thinks there needs to be uniformity throughout the schools. This was proven effective in her research.

T. Francis said that Webster St has no discernable shoulder markings, which makes the lane wide and encourages speeding. The design of Webster St (and others) plays a large part in safety.

Another attendee stated that Brookline St has a major problem with speeding. She lives 5 houses up from Greendale Ave. When the new curbs were put in (7-8 years ago), they also put a double yellow line there and people started speeding then when the double line went in. The typical speed is 40 mph. People don't slow down on icy days even - a person died last year.

Jeanne McKnight wanted to talk about Rosemary St, but will stick to high school safety. Between Highland St and Webster St is an entrance to the high school where students park. It should be 25 mph on all of Rosemary. She is also concerned about the lack of plowing on Hillside Ave – where several student walk to school.

Another resident said the double line increased speed.

Lt. Kraemer noted that speed bumps, which was mentioned as a potential remedy, often create a problem with noise caused by empty trucks going over them. Dover put many in and is now removing them.

Seth said that everyone in Town can work to change their own driving habits and that a social norm around speed and safety can be created if we work together.

An attendee expressed more concerns about lights; they currently have yellow/orange glow. LED light are white, so will be more effective.

Cars coming out of the high school and taking turns onto main roads is a concern.

An attendee said she never sees police pulling people over in Needham. Lt. Kraemer said that officers are sometimes in unmarked cars. They are looking to increase staffing by 4 officers. The community has grown. He also explained how the stantions in crosswalks are often hit if the radius doesn't allow cars or trucks to turn.

II. SPEED ON WILSHIRE PARK AND GREAT PLAIN AVENUE

E. Cassidy said the speed on Great Plain near Wilshire Park , where there is a curve in the road, is 30 mph and people are going 50 mph. There should be a light telling drivers what the speed is and if they are obeying the speed limit. In addition, there is a 6 ft high fence and trees; no one thinks there is a crosswalk or can see it until they are upon it. This is worse going toward the center of town. The road has 30-35 kids under the age of 8. It is the longest ladder street; a very dense area. A frequent cut through street.

Lt Kraemer said it might help if another sign could be added on the back of the other side, headed toward Bird's Hill, on some of main roads identifying key locations where there are shifts in the road. A driver's eye catches back of the other signs. It is an issue with the sight distance, maneuvering the curve – people are not looking at the crossing. We can look at signs, but maybe move the crosswalk down one street to get it out of that bend. Rhain will talk to engineering. Maybe move the crossing over 2 blocks so people don't cross into the garden area. Lt Kraemer explained the difference between a speed bump vs. a speed hump, and which can be effective when trying to manage speed 40 mph or greater.

After a full discussion of the issues, a Motion was made and unanimously passed to have the site evaluated, specifically on Great Plain Ave at the corner of Bond St and Wilshire Park.

III. CROSSWALK ON HIGHLAND AVE BY THE STAIRS AT MEMORIAL PARK

A Ritchie spoke about the stairs leading down to the street across from Dunkin Donuts and about putting a crosswalk there. Kids dart out to middle of street.

Lt Kraemer said that SLOW pavement markings were installed, but the area didn't meet the criteria for mid-block crossing. Crosswalks are indication by town where it is safe to cross; the crosswalk doesn't itself make to safe to cross. The area doesn't meet the requirements, either at Rosemary St & Highland Ave or Oakland St & Highland Ave.

IV. INTERSECTION, SIGNAGE AT POWERS ST/MANNING ST

B. Kane has lived a long time here and has seen many accidents. There is a stop sign that is visible and has a warning, on Powers, but not on Manning. Tony has looked at this intersection and asked Lt Kraemer for police data.

After a full discussion of the issues, a Motion was made and unanimously passed to review the accident history for past 5 years at Manning St and Powers St. If the traffic is similar to West St and Hillside Ave, then we will recommend a LED solar powered stop sign.

V. SIGNAGE AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSING NEAR THE NEWMAN SCHOOL CROSSWALK AREA ON CENTRAL AVE

Amy Livingstone is concerned about the crosswalk leading into the Newman School. This is not an intersection. It is worse when cars are coming from Dover; there is a blind curve and no one can see a person in the crosswalk. There are also overgrown trees (on the even side of the street) making the situation worse. The lighting is also dim.

Rhain said the DPW can trim the trees. If it's private property, they need to put people on notice.

Tony said Eliot school won a safe routes to school grant and there were some standard recommendations made. Those types of improvements (LEDs at pedestrian crossing, related signage, radar) are being looked at for implementation in all the school areas. This is on the capital list; another item the Board of Selectmen is looking at.

There can also be geometric improvements made after school closes. Some can be done sooner and then once the Board of Selectmen has the March meeting.

After a full discussion of the issues, a Motion was made and unanimously passed to do flashing LED lights as soon as possible.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS/STATUS REPORT

Lt Kraemer reported that he has received a new speed device that was to be used on Pine St, but he is not sure that this device will be able to measure the traffic as he had hoped.

VII. APPROVE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 13, 2017

The minutes of the December 13, 2017 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Minutes compiled by Kara Holmquist

Meeting Sign In

Name	Address	Phone	Email
1. Maggie Penman	WASH	617-300-2016	maggie-penman@wgbh.org
2. Jacob Lees	4 Crane St. Needham	781-400-5337	Jacob@5337.com
3. Colleen Weeks	20 Great Plain Terrace	781-441-0405	colleenweeks@msa.com
4. Lisa Relich	50 Sargent St.	781-453-6021	lisarellich@gmail.com
5. Peter + Martha Sullivan	52 Longacre Rd	781-400-5857	
6. Kyle Sullivan	52 Longacre Rd	781-400-5857	
7. Will Baker	89 Richards Rd	781-898-4629	Baker10113@gmail.com
8. Spencer Luggan	61 Fuller Brook Ave	781-956-6553	Spencer5201@gmail.com
9. Matt Rosenberg	44 Lindegh Ave	781-366-1085	mj13rosenberg@gmail.com
10. Dan Cohn	32 Lindburgh Ave	781-467-6175	danc@cohome.com
11. Andrew Thurno	77 Mayo Ave.	617-306-1387	afthurno@verizon.net
12. Michelle Smith	6 Fintona Rd.	781-440-9465	smithsm@verizon.com

Meeting Title: _____
 Location: _____

Date: _____
 Sheet # _____ of _____

Meeting Sign In

Name	Address	Phone	Email
1. Evan Gallagher	23 Wilshire Park	617 669 4561	evan.gallagher@gmail.com
2. EMMERD CASSIDY	48 WILSHIRE PARK	781-444-4728	EMMERD.CASSIDY@BRAINROOM.COM
3. Claire Kleeckley	30 Walden Tn.	781-444-9842	claire.kleeckley@reelwell.com
4. JoAnne Ochalla	657 Webster St.	781 449-7456	japinnachalla@yahoo.com
5. Kurt Ochalla	657 Webster St.	781-449-7456	kurt.ochalla@gmail.com
6. Justin Ochalla	657 Webster St.	781-444-7456	justinochalla@gmail.com
7. Anita Rishi	1024 Grenade Ave	44-264-0292	r.anita2010@yahoo.com
8. Deborah Chapin	12 Gait St.	781-444-3003	deborahchapin@me.com
9. Brooke Kane	28 Breckel St	781-449-1033	brookekane@gmail.com
10. Peter Attalla	18 Ludbough Ave	781-453-5748	
11. Allison Attallah	"	"	amca1822@comcast.net
12. Matt Borelli			

Meeting Title: _____
 Location: _____

Date: _____
 Sheet # _____ of _____

Meeting Sign In

	Name	Address	Phone	Email
1.	Brenda Luman	101 Fuller Road Apt	781-453-0304	brenda_luman@icloud.com
2.	Amy Willis	10 Holland Terrace	781-449-4315	willisamy@comcast.net
3.	Jeff Kesselman	3 Newbury Park	781-449-3933	jkesselman@comcast.net
4.	Bianka Eichelberger	268 Brookline St.	617-513-7331	bianka.eichelberger@cox.com
5.	Carol Steuto	28 Audubon Ave	508-380-5784	Carol.Steuto@verizon.net
6.	SIRIA ALLEN	955 Webster St	781-444-3687	sirig1@yahoo.com
7.	Judie Blake	763 Great Plain Ave	781-444-7076	judieblake23@verizon.net
8.	Donna Meyer	70 Whittier Rd	781-850-4744	dmeyer24@verizon.net
9.	Peter Spanac	19 West St	617-697-7762	peterspanac.org
10.	Debra Haver	370 Canterbury Way	781-833-0207	debrahaver@comcast.net
11.	Cecilia Gutilla	64 Dartmouth Ave	781-449-3195	gutillamail@verizon.net
12.	Thomas Tancas	124 Hickgate St	781-456-7958	Tom@massbike.org

Meeting Title: _____
 Location: _____

Date: _____
 Sheet # _____ of _____

Meeting Sign In

Name	Address	Phone	Email
1. Kristen Cohen	32 Lindbergh Ave	781 449 5976	klochen@comcast.net
2. Jennie Shaw	24 Hemstead Pl	781 801-0532	jndshaw@gmail.com
3. Caryn Leskatz	40 Wildwood Dr	781-364-8835	cblekian@gmail.com
4. Jessica Kelly	18 Holland Street	617-857-2635	jessicagray@yahoo.com
5. Lee Tran	_____	781-856-7191	lee.tran@Raveis.com
6. Nancy Bengur	1062 Webster Street	781-499-4601	smallfries3@comcast.net
7. Georgina Arieta-Rueteau	236 Greendale Ave.	781-499-1094	rueteau@me.com
8. Dan Velle	304 Brookline St		Dmvallee@Htons.com
9. Karen Dull	252 Manning		Karen.dull@childrens.harvard.edu
10. Leslie Ofer	37 Booth St		leslie.ofero@neelham.k12.ma.us
11. Amy Livingston	3 Talmor St	617 566 5900	
12. _____	_____	_____	_____

Meeting Title: _____
Location: _____

Date: _____
Sheet # _____ of _____

Hello my name is Brenda Curran and I am joined by

Parents: *The O'Callahan, Rosenberg, Cohen, Sullivan, Baker*
Families

We parents stand here with these compassionate and courageous young men as we were witness to the tragic loss of two of their classmates Saturday night.

While it's impossible to make sense of what happened, it is helpful to seek solutions to prevent future tragedies. And while it may seem too early, safety of our crosswalks is an immediate and fixable problem in our eyes.

Our request is to address the safety of crosswalks both at the accident site and on major roads in Needham, because in dark and wet conditions, our cross walks are not consistently visible and safe.

Specifically, we request:

First, re-paint faded cross walks with bright, visible paint. Add painted warnings in the road.

Second, install push to cross flashing lights at existing cross walks on the major roads in town, and as seen in other towns. This includes cross walks on:

Webster Street and Holland Street

Additional cross walks on Webster Street

Great Plain Avenue

Highland Avenue

Dedham Avenue

Chestnut Street

Central Avenue

Greendale Avenue

West Street

Hunting Road

Gould Street

- all of it ~~type~~ and in front of Hazards

We realize our second request is not small, but it is something the town should address in totality instead of one cross walk at a time. We'd like to see a comprehensive plan created and implemented.

As Talia Newfield's parents said in their public statement, "May her memory be for a blessing". To honor both the memory and blessings of Adrienne and Talia, we respectfully submit this request.

Thank you.

Good evening, my name is Kurt Ochalla. I live at 657 Webster Street, the house immediately next to the high school. This past Saturday night, my wife and I among others, were present at the horrific incident that occurred right in front of our home. While none of us may ever know the true cause of this tragedy, I do know there are measures we can take to minimize the probability of it happening again.

We live in a very walkable town. There are many pedestrians of all ages that cross Webster Street outside of the morning and afternoon school hours since it is the dividing line between many of the Heights neighborhoods and the downtown region. Webster is a well-traveled cut-through street in town and despite the posted speed limits, cars travel at an excessive rate of speed in both directions because there are no stop signs between Great Plain Ave and West Street. I witness it as I am pulling out of my driveway each day and I am in fear when my kids have to cross the street to visit their friends.

There is an option available to this committee that has proven to be very effective at improving public safety. A pedestrian activated warning beacon improves driver yield rates from a low of 15-20% to 80-95% depending on which traffic study you reference. In other words it is 4-5X more likely that a vehicle will stop with this type of device at an uncontrolled crosswalk. I spoke to a traffic engineer today and he indicated that these warning beacons are powered by solar energy so they do not require electricity and they cost between \$25K-\$35K installed.

Today I downloaded Section 3 of the Departmental Budget Submissions for the FY 2018 Proposed Annual Budget - a 360-page document. Out of curiosity, I searched key words such as pedestrian and crosswalk. Pedestrian appeared 3 times – two references to walking trails and one for audible signals. Crosswalks appeared once and it was used in a totally different context. I have heard from others that there is a general sense that Needham prioritizes cars over pedestrians. The budget document appears to confirm this statement - there is

a total lack of focus and emphasis on pedestrian safety. Following the accident, I heard a public official mention that this is the 4th or 5th pedestrian related accident in the past 18 months in Needham. I was shocked - this is way too many for a town of this size. I would like to see this change.

The first request I have is that the Town of Needham evaluate their participation in the Commonwealth's Complete Streets Funding Program through the DOT. They provide technical assistance and construction funding for providing safe and accessible options for all travel modes – walking, biking, transit and vehicles – for people of all ages and abilities. This map that I downloaded from their web site shows that nearly all of our neighbors including Newton, Dedham, Westwood and Natick are participating and I don't understand why Needham wouldn't be included in that list.

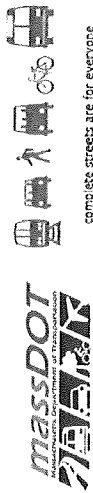
Second, I respectfully request that this committee immediately evaluate the addition of pedestrian activated warning beacons in the uncontrolled crosswalks surrounding our schools, particularly the high school on Webster Street and Highland Ave. There needs to be an immediate short-term solution and the funding of a longer term solution to make Needham a more pedestrian friendly community.

No person should have to experience what we all went through Saturday night.

No parent should have to eulogize their child because of an avoidable pedestrian accident.

I hope we can honor Talia and Adrienne's memory by bringing about this positive change. The Needham 2018 Budget document says "Opportunity" in big bold letters at the top. This is an opportunity for you and the other community leaders to do the right thing. Please Prioritize Pedestrians Over Cars. Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak this evening.

Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program Participation



complete streets are for everyone

