

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of January 9, 2019 meeting
7pm at the Public Services Administration Building
Needham, MA

IN ATTENDANCE

TMAC Members: Stephen DeLisi, Lt. John Kraemer, Anthony DelGaizo, , Rhain Hoyland, Suzanne Stein, Justin McCullen

Technical advisor: Bob Wilson

Invited Guest: Rick Merson, DPW Director

Special Guests: Denise Garlick, State Rep; John Bulian, Select Board

CALL TO ORDER

I. Approve minutes from December 12, 2018 meeting.

Minutes approved.

II. Other Business/Status Report

Given tonight's lengthy agenda, which includes two follow-up items, review of other status reports was not done. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to a more efficient tracking system.

III. Follow-up: Intersection of South Street and Webster Street

Luke Silva returned to TMAC to reiterate him and his neighbors' concerns, and questions, about the speed at this intersection, the lack of adequate lighting, and the potential viability of a crosswalk. As previously directed by TMAC, Mr. Silva also returned with signatures of neighbors at this location, in support of a geometric redesign. In securing the signatures, Mr. Silva said no neighbors were opposed including those previously in opposition to the town's plan for redesign several years ago. A Motion was passed to recommend that the previous plan be returned to the DPW "queue" while more rapid interventions, such as installing a crosswalk, are currently compromised by the expectation that Eversource will be digging up the road here as part of their town-wide project. A Motion to conduct a speed study in the Spring was approved.

IV. Speed, Signage on Forest Street & Brookside Lane

Laura Doyle described her concern about vehicles traveling too fast on Forest Street, despite being a windy road with a lot of families in the area. Although the official speed limit is 30, she believes vehicles are traveling above 40 and is petitioning for more signage to warn drivers of the speed limit. TMAC wondered if volume has increased there as well. A Motion was made and passed to conduct a speed study on Forest, weather permitting, for 1 week in both directions; Engineering will determine the proper placement of the speed tubes.

V. Follow-up: Tudor and Woodbury Intersection

Jeanmarie Roberts returned to TMAC to get an update on plans to address the difficulty and dangers navigating this intersection, given the lack of signage and a clear right of way as vehicles enter this intersection from both Woodbury and Tudor traveling in a southerly direction. The results of a speed study were reported, indicating a fairly low daily volume on both streets as well as average speeds on both streets below 30mph. There is also no crash data at that intersection. Although it is recognized that the intersection is too wide and lacks clear definition as to which vehicles should yield or stop, the volume of cars negotiating this intersection is too low to support installing a stop sign. TMAC discussed the advisability to get vehicles traveling on Woodbury toward the intersection with Tudor to slow down. A Motion was made and passed to install a yield sign on Woodbury at the intersection and to add a sign advising motorists on Woodbury as they approach the intersection.

VI. Speed and Signage on High Rock Street between Chestnut Street & Central Avenue

Kim McLeod believes vehicles traveling in this area routinely use excessive speed, despite being densely lined with homes and being a walking route for children to nearby schools. She reported being tailgated and even passed by other vehicles when she drives on this stretch of roadway at the 30mph limit. She reported that her neighbors estimate the typical speed here is between 35-45 mph. Ms. McLeod believes a speed limit sign, which this stretch currently lacks, would help educate drivers and slow down the traffic. Following discussion, a Motion was made and passed to conduct a traffic study (for speed and volume) on High Rock (near Birchwood, and halfway between Richardson and Emerson), and to install an advisory sign indicating residential area with a 30mph speed tab. Lt. Kramer will also speak with the Transportation Dept regarding asking school buses to be aware of the speed limit.

VII. Speed and Signage on Webster Street and other schools

Webster Street at the high school, where two fatalities occurred last February, continues to be an area of concern to multiple residents, as do other streets in and around Needham schools. Prior to today's meeting, it became known to TMAC that there has been a great deal of discussion, particularly about Webster Street, on social media. In anticipation of this agenda item, the Town Manager asked Rick Merson, head of the DPW, to attend this meeting and to provide a summary update of steps the Town has undertaken, and continues to do so, about these concerns. Mr. Merson began by noting that after the tragic incident last February, which was followed by discussion at the February TMAC and then a town wide special meeting chaired by the Town Manager and Select Board in March, a town-wide safety study was initiated. This included contracting with a company to make pedestrian safety assessments and recommendations around several crosswalks (their preliminary report is on the town website). The town also installed LED signage at the two crosswalks on Webster closest to the high school. Interventions planned as a result of the consultant study include installation of flashing beacons at several crosswalks, in addition to improved street lighting and improvements in signage. Representative Garlick helped secure funding for the town to help address these issues. Additional changes, including designating Webster Street a safety zone (which would have speed implications), are pending formal completion of the safety study. Following Mr. Merson's presentation, Jean Higgins spoke about her concern that the current flashing lights at the crosswalks are not working and that more needs to be done to slow down traffic on Webster; she mentioned three recent accidents. Felicia Mathias also spoke and presented a written list of proposed changes to Webster Street to improve safety. Addressing these suggestions will need to await the completion of the Pedestrian Safety Study, so that

the Town makes a coordinated effort. However, a Motion was made and passed to install advisory, 30 mph speed tabs on Webster near Highland, Great Plain, and Hunnewell.

VIII. Signage, Crosswalk on Glendoon Road

Judith Sidel presented concern about the crossing of Great Plain Ave at Glendoon. Specifically, she believes the crosswalk would be made more safe with the installation of blinking/flashing lights warning vehicles of pedestrians entering the crosswalk. TMAC informed Ms. Sidel that this area was recently discussed by TMAC and that the town is already in the process of addressing this and other crosswalks; also, better overhead lighting is being installed.

Notes taken by Stephen DeLisi