

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of February 13, 2019 meeting
7pm at the Public Services Administration Building
Needham, MA

IN ATTENDANCE

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

Guests: Devra Bailin, Marc Grande, John Kennedy, Mark Taborsky, Marc Rubin, Kosta Davos, Mo Qatanani, Derek Styles

CALL TO ORDER

I. APPROVE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 9, 2019

The minutes of the January 9, 2019 were approved.

II. OTHER BUSINESS/STATUS REPORT

Bob Wilson wasn't in attendance, but Tony let everyone know that the status report is now on the website.

III. SIGNAGE ON GARDEN STREET CROSSWALK AT GREAT PLAIN AVENUE

Devra Bailin from the Council of Economic Advisors appeared to discuss the Council's concern. Because of people's frustration with length of the red signal, sometimes cars traveling toward town center from the post office are pulling out of traffic to cut across to turn on Garden Street. There is a concern about the safety of pedestrians using the Garden Street crosswalk. There is additional concern about those crossing Great Plain because whereas the traffic moving toward the intersection may have a red light, the traffic coming from the intersection doesn't have a red light. Lt. Kraemer said they can increase enforcement. Devra asked about temporary signage for some period of time that tells people that just because light is red going toward intersection, doesn't mean it is red going the other way. Tony said in the spring the RR cross box will be moved further away from tracks; it will be more clear where the stop line is.

IV. INTERSECTION OF LAWTON ROAD AND GREEN STREET

Mark Grande appeared. He said if going NW on Lawton Road, there is a bending right turn on Green St and very difficult to see around that corner. You can probably see 15-20 feet to the left, so if taking a right have to edge out into the road; if taking a left even harder. He asked about installation of a convex mirror so people can see around the corner. Especially with snow, it becomes even more difficult.

Tony said that the town doesn't put up mirrors because people look at the mirror instead of what is in front of them. Can put a yellow diamond shaped sign showing turn ahead.

Lt. Kraemer suggested adding a low numbered speed sign.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to update the existing sign (has an arrow with a slow children sign) with a new reflective sign and to replace the slow children sign with a low speed tab.

V. CROSSWALK WHERE PROSPECT STREET INTERSECTIONS WITH GREAT PLAIN AVENUE

John Kennedy appeared to suggest a crosswalk on Great Plain at the junction with Prospect Street. He said he thought he read and heard that the Town was looking to add crosswalks, although we advised him that this was not accurate and that instead the Town is looking at the safety of existing crosswalks. Would a crosswalk be safe there? Tony explained that crosswalks do not make a road safe to cross, but instead the idea is to consider installing crosswalks where it is already determined to be safe to cross. It was explained to Mr. Kennedy that although pedestrians can cross many streets at many locations, doing so where it is safe to cross is recommended. Tony said traffic coming toward town center in that stretch tends to go faster right there because the light at Great Plain and Central can be experienced as a frustrating, long light and once they go, they go fast. Town has hired a consultant to look at the timing of those traffic signals to ease traffic flow. It was also explained to Mr. Kennedy that if there are too many crosswalks, drivers become desensitized to them. Alternative locations on the stretch of road were discussed but rejected, for safety reasons. TMAC is not able to support this request at this time.

VI. SIGNAGE ON WOODWORTH ROAD

Mark Taborsky appeared to discuss the difficulty with visibility when pulling out onto South Street from Woodworth Road, a private way. This is more difficult during the day; at night, you can see headlights. Marc suggested signage to indicate you can't see cars coming out of Woodworth. Tony said the developer tried to lower a wall that in part blocks the driver's line of sight and wondered if this was still possible. Tony said the problem is this section of South Street is very narrow with an insufficient shoulder between wall and pavement. The best solution would be to try to increase the width of the shoulder, so when a car pulls out, the bumper isn't in travel lane, but driver can see. That isn't a short-term possibility. Would have to box cut road, add pavement, and then take way from Woodworth Road side – is costly. In meantime, Marc can talk to neighbors to lower the wall. Tony suggests taking a foot off the wall. Tony said they've removed all the foliage they can already. Marc asked is there a short term signage solution? Tony said yellow diamond that has an intersection "T". Lt. Kraemer said there was an example of one at around 750 South Street that is indicating a left bend.

Tony made a motion that was unanimously approved for the Town to install 2 icon style intersection ahead signs on the South St on the approaches to Woodworth Road. If a sign exists, it will be updated. The town will also add a 25 mph speed tab.

VII. INTERSECTION, SIGNAGE ON RICHDAL ROAD AND LEXINGTON AVENUE

Kosta Davos appeared, to discuss his concern about the safety of this intersection. As drivers on Richdale approach Lexington there is a yield sign which he believes should be replaced with a stop sign, making it a 4 way stop. He believes the increased volume of traffic, including delivery trucks, the increased volume of children playing, and the failure of drivers to yield makes this intersection unsafe. Tony said at the time they conducted a study there years ago, the intersection did not meet requirement for a stop sign but that since it was done over 5 years ago, it should be redone.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to conduct another traffic study (speed and traffic count) to see if it warrants a stop sign.

VIII. INTERSECTION OF KENDRICK AND 4TH AVENUE

No one in attendance.

IX. INTERSECTION, SIGNAGE OF OAK STREET AND MAPLE STREET; AND STREET LIGHTS ON MAPLE STREET

Mo Qatanani appeared to advocate for making the intersection of Maple and Oak a 4 way stop, or improving signage to make it clear that it is a 2 way stop. He believes cars get confused as they approach the intersection traveling on Oak, in part because Oak and Linden is a 4 way stop. Tony said that this has come up before and TMAC decided to put a tab that says 2-way on Oak and 4-way on Maple. Those have been installed. Also, the Highway Dept is going to repave Oak Street, so that may clean things up a bit and simplify what you can see which will help.

There was additional discussion about the area of Maple Street and Maple Place, which tends to be dark and might benefit from improved lighting. The Town is putting in new LED lights. Instead of lighting an area, will light a spot. Tony said maybe that might solve the problem.

X. TRAFFIC SIGNAL, INTERSECTION OF CHESTNUT STREET AND OAK STREET

Derek Styles appears to discuss the possibility of a left turn green arrow to be added to the light to indicate when northbound traffic on Chestnut Street can turn left on Oak. Tony said this came up before and TMAC decided to install a sign that have the lane markings that have left lane is left; right lane is straight. One sign was missing and Tony said that will be added. Additional improvements are made difficult currently by the lack of adequate width of the road. There is a plan to reconstruct Chestnut Street, but very far off in the future and it included this intersection. It needs to be widened in order to make the left lane at this intersection a left turn only lane. There is a possibility that future construction there will allow that change to be made.

Notes taken by Kara Holmquist