

**Traffic Working Group - Middle and High School
Minutes
April 15, 2022**

Attending were: Roy Epstein, Chair, Select Board Representative, Jeffrey Held, Resident, Larry Link, Resident, Ron Nayak, Resident, Martin November, Vice Chair, Resident, Jeffrey Roth, Transportation Advisory Committee, (TAC), Representative, Alex Thurston, Resident, Mary Wybieralla, Secretary.

The meeting was called to order by Roy Epstein at 8:06am.

I. Discussion and vote on recommendations to Select Board for extension of trial

Roy Epstein raised the following points:

1. The current trial extension runs out on April 29th. This timing allows the Select Board to vote at its meeting on April 25 to extend the trial until the end of school. There is an increased incidence of students arriving after 10 am who park on Oak, Orchard, and Goden, leading particularly to issues on lower Oak. There is still unused capacity on Concord. The TWG-MHS could consider lengthening the no-parking hours.
2. Some residents do not like the chicane.
3. The number of student parkers has increased from approximately 120 cars at the beginning of the school year to approximately 160. There is still capacity on the school side of Concord.

Alex Thurston asked about the number of cars on Goden and Oak Street when this was an issue at the beginning of the school year.

Larry Link said there were probably at least 5 on Goden, 10 on Oak and high 20s on Orchard and Stone. There were bottlenecks at the bottom of these streets.

Roy Epstein spoke about enforcement. A lot of student cars are parking in the designated drop off zones and also elsewhere on the south side of Concord.

Ron Nayak said he spoke to a resident who expressed concern about students parking on the south side.

Roy Epstein said if we had full enforcement on the south side, it could fill the school side.

Jeffrey Held suggested more enforcement, make signage clear, consider changing the time past 10 am, and urge residents be more vigilant reporting issues.

Roy Epstein said to extend the restricted period to noon, the Committee needs to act on the proposal today. The school year is almost over.

Jeffrey Held asked wouldn't we want to poll all the residents?

Roy Epstein said one way to do it would be to approve the extension, send postcards to residents before the April 25 Select Board Meeting. Residents could speak at the meeting.

Alex Thurston said he has an issue with extending the restriction time. Unless we send post cards town wide to inform the students who park on the streets. Timing is not sufficient to inform everyone.

Roy Epstein agreed it might be problematic. We need better enforcement now until school year ends.

Larry Link suggested we could also try pamphleting cars to students who tend to park in these spots to get us through the school year.

Roy Epstein said there are spaces in front of the pool on Concord. No one is parking there.

Martin November stated we should keep the trial as is for the rest of the school year and rethink for the Fall. Other things to consider include the bus and biking. also we have to face the issue whether we should have space for every student.

Roy Epstein said it sounds like a general view to keep the program as it is to the end of the school year.

Larry Link said he asked about unused parking spots on campus.

Martin November said he had reservations making these available to students. These few spots could cause more chaos.

Jeffrey Roth said he thinks we need to start focusing on other initiatives. Providing unlimited parking is not sustainable. We need to look at walking/biking issues.

Roy Epstein recommended the Committee stay with the program as defined, increase enforcement, and extend the trial to the end of the school year.

Roy Epstein also discussed signage. The drop off area on the south side of Concord is designated until 8:30am. Should it designate pick up at a certain time? Or just designate it no parking during school hours?"

Mary Wybieralla's asked how many cars could be accommodated in this area.

Larry Link responded 8 cars. Cars are sliding in there.

Roy Epstein said it is not posted as a pick up area, so students are parked there when pick up happens.

Martin November suggested it be posted all day. Students are coming and going throughout the day. Keep it no parking until an hour after school. We should do this on both sides of Concord.

Roy Epstein said it's easier to do this on the school side. Residents might object. It would eliminate parking in front of a couple of houses.

Martin November said obviously you have to ask residents. We should encourage using the school location for drop off and pick up.

Roy Epstein said current westbound drop off is marked as no parking-drop off/pick up 7:30am-3:30pm.

Larry Link said he was ok with that. We need to walk the Eastbound side to determine where we want drop offs to occur. We should check with Sgt, Garabedian to make a decision.

Roy Epstein said we should give it to the police to look at and sign off on it.

Roy Epstein mentioned that the number of bikes is down significantly, there are now about 80 bikes but in December there were about 125 bikes.

Larry Link said the bikes have not returned to the numbers observed at the first half of the school year. Could be weather driven. Suggests pamphleting and working with the Principal.

Roy Epstein asked Martin November and Larry Link for a report.

Martin November said they did meet to share some discussion with the Fire Chief. They scheduled a meeting with Isaac Taylor, High School Principal, the Monday after spring break.

1. Met with Fire Chief DeStefano trying to get a sense of restrictions and traffic patterns and emergency vehicle access. Essentially there are no restrictions. Speed calming-raised tables can create issues with road grade if it is too high. As a committee, if we talk about one-way

restrictions, make sure there is reasonable access for their vehicles. Gridlock is a problem. He discussed Goden as an example. Asked Chief DeStefano if there were ongoing issues. Discussed parking on Oak and

Orchard. Ballard are a problem because their preference is to be as close to the curb as possible. Flexible Ballard are preferable.

2. Talked with the school about issue of how do we encourage walking/biking.

3. Larry Link is working on buses with Dave Coleman, TAC.

Martin concluded that they are trying to work together and engage the school as well. There must be channels of communication both ways.

Jeffrey Roth responded there have been discussions with TAC concerning Fire access/protected bike lanes. Protected bike lanes would be one way to increase biking. They provide a safer option. This is a key way to look at the issue holistically. It is not safe now. We have a lot of potential to increase biking.

Roy Epstein said it would be helpful to poll students on this. There are many reasons for biking or not biking to school. There are 1300-1400 students. We are down to 100 students biking.

Jeffrey Roth said a student group polled students looking at this question. I can look at this.

Larry Link said this is an excellent approach. We should incorporate this poll. We know the bikes will come back with good weather. If you do a protected bike lane, parents will encourage biking.

Alex Thurston said there is an issue with parking on both sides of these streets. The streets are too narrow. There should only be parking on one side. This is safer.

Roy Epstein said the reality is this was not an issue until the current configuration of the school.

Alex Thurston we should lay the groundwork for the Middle School opening. I am concerned Trowbridge Street isn't wide enough.

Roy Epstein responded the opening of the Middle School will be a whole new learning experience.

Martin November said fire vehicles have been able to navigate these streets. They have to get through, blocking emergency access is not a great idea.

Martin November moved to extend the current system of parking until June 22, 2022.

Mary Wybieralla seconded.

The motion passed with 5 members in favor (Epstein, Link, November, Roth, Wybieralla), 1 member against (Thurston), 2 members abstaining (Held, Nayak).

Jeffrey Held left the meeting.

II. Approval of March 11, 2022 Minutes

Martin November moved to approve the March 11, 2022 Minutes. Larry Link seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. Public Comment

Chi-Ting Huang, Goden Street: It seems the parking has been fine. We need to continue to push students to where they can park. Consider the charge for parking is not balanced. Students are parking all day on lower Myrtle making driveway access difficult. The chicane was added to accommodate pool parking- It has become all day parking. The EB drop-off location is

nonsensical. To drive past the High School doesn't work. People are pulling into the bike lane or my driveway to drop-off.

Roy Epstein responded that he would ask Sgt. Garabedian to look at Myrtle St. We now have examples of other parking options-the chicane on Myrtle and restrictions on other streets. The idea behind the EB drop-off was to drop off before Orchard - students could use the Orchard light to cross.

Chi-Ting Huang responded it is incredibly congested.

Martin November responded there are options. It is natural to jump out of cars without using options further up Concord Ave.

Corrine McCue Olmstead, Stone Road: It would be helpful to have some kind of enforcement to help with parking issues. There are times at Orchard when the whole area is flooded on both sides of the street-blocking crosswalks, fire hydrant, cars sticking out on to Concord Ave. Police could nudge parents to park responsibly. Possibly alternate side of street parking before and after school could help. Before the school was built, residents have been parking on these streets for decades. They knew how to park without blocking the travel lane.

Roy Epstein asked Larry Link what we know about the use of the school driveway.

Larry Link responded it has been working great. Cars are entering the loop. We need to work with the school to communicate and delineate safe parking spots. Student drivers are not experienced. These issues need to be communicated.

Deb Talanian, Goden Street: Oak Street is beginning to sound like Goden. At pick-up, parents are parking in travel lane. The red light at Goden/Concord runs so long they seem to think they don't have to pull over.

Carolyn Bishop, Orchard Street: I have noticed recently a number of cars pulling into the School driveway. It works beautifully. Students arrive at all hours after 10:00 and park on restricted streets. By 2:00 - pick-up, there are tons of cars blocking driveways. Parents drop-off and pick-up at the circle. There are numerous idling cars.

Martin November said we need to stop encouraging the use of Orchard Circle as primary pick-up spot.

Corinne McCue Olmstead asked if it was possible to consider having the morning Crossing Guard there during pick-up? He could make a quick walk there and remind parents where to park safely.

Roy Epstein responded the dilemma is people will pick-up and need someplace to queue.

Dave Coleman, TAC: the behaviors are tied to flexibility of the Junior and Senior schedules.

Mary Wybieralla mentioned ongoing signal timing issues at Goden/Concord creating gridlock at the School/Goden intersection, blocking crosswalks used heavily by students from Middle, High and Wellington schools.

Roy Epstein responded that he will alert the engineer to look at it.

Jeffrey Roth moved to adjourn, seconded by Martin November. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:31am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Wybieralla