

Town of Belmont

Traffic Advisory Committee

January 8, 2009

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Mary Jo Frisoli, Linda Nickens, Laurence Macdonald, Peter Curro, Tommasina Olson, Glenn Clancy and Sergeant Kevin Shea.

Absent: Andrea Masciari, Ronald Sacca and Philip Richmond.

Residents Present: ^{BETSY} Betty Lipson, Guy Zuccarello, Jr., Amy Zuccarello, Judy Schwab, Chuck Schwab, Sarah Wald, Paul Coradescim, David Fillingham, Ruben Castanova and A. Kariapour.

MJF called meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Approval of minutes put off till February

Agenda Items:

Intersection Discussion: Payson Road, Cushing Avenue and Elm Street.

Betty Lipson, a resident of 89 Townsend Road spoke about neighborhood concerns about pedestrian safety at this intersection. Guy Zuccarello, Jr. a resident of 240 Payson Road also spoke of his concerns about this intersection as well. A brief discussion followed. Glenn Clancy recommended that Stop signs be placed at the intersection of Cushing Avenue and Payson Road and at Elm Street and Payson Road. He feels the signs can be installed in a timely manner.

Peter Curro moved: That Stop signs are installed at the intersection of Cushing Avenue and Payson Road and also at the intersection of Elm Street and Payson Road.

The motion was seconded by Linda Nickens.

The motion was PASSED unanimously.

Intersection Updates: School Street and Goden Street.

Glenn Clancy stated that School Street is due for reconstruction in 2009. The Water Department has been laying new pipe lines along School Street and side streets so that traffic counts would not be a real reflection of movement because of detours and road closings during this time. They are waiting on a traffic review report. CD and Public Works will see what safety measures can be made prior to the

2/12 expand on concerns

reconstruction. 4 Way Stop signs would not be practical at this intersection because of the offset intersection.

Intersection Updates: Cross Street and Channing Road

Glenn Clancy stated that due to the failure of the roads override to pass funding for the Cross Street and Channing Road intersection was drastically reduced. For \$3700 he was able to paint the road stripes and island in the intersection and also install a Stop sign on Channing Road by Cross Street. There is a visibility issue with the Stop sign, too far to the right. This will be fixed by moving the sign left, installing an asphalt berm and loam for seeding. A temporary fix was made by installing a temporary Stop sign and barrel in the middle of Channing Road and painting the letters STOP at the stop line. However, this has had to be removed due to snow plowing operations. Paul Coradescim, a resident of 1 Cross Street, made some comments and observations. Glenn Clancy did state that pylons would be placed on the painted island to guide vehicles around.

Trapelo Road/Belmont Street Update:

Mass Highway held a 25% Design Phase Update at Belmont Town Hall in July. Biggest concern expressed was the loss of parking on the Watertown side of Belmont Street between School Street and Grove Street. Meetings have been held with both Watertown and Waltham officials. Belmont and Mass Highway are trying to get Waltham to contribute to the design expense for the relocation of the Beaver Brook culvert on Trapelo Road. An option would be to stop the work at the Belmont/Waltham line leaving Beaver Brook as is. BSC needs to work out cost amount for Waltham, which would then need the approval of the Mayor and the City Council.

The developer of the Cushing Square Project (The potential buyer of the Cushing Square municipal parking lot) wants to install reverse angle parking from Williston Road to where Starbucks is now. Mass Highway seems open to the possibility. There will be a TIP public meeting in April.

Old Business:

Burbank School Improvements include new signage, the school bus drop off has been moved further back on Sharpe Road.

Hurd Road/Oakley Road – Selwyn Road/Oakley Road Status: Petition withdrawn at the June TAC meeting.

Signal Sign Ahead – Concord Avenue: New sign has been installed using LED lights.

Other:

Email from Andrea Masciari concerning parking at Drew Road and Beech Street. Glenn Clancy reported that Beech Street is to be reconstructed in 2009. Any changes in parking regulations will be reviewed before reconstruction. GC did say that 10 spaces designated for the new Senior Center will be cut in by taking some land from the Town Field.

New Business:

Harvard Lawn – A Petition to Increase Safety by Slowing Down Traffic, signed by 150 residents and owners, submitted by David Fillingham. A copy of the cover letter and actual Petition should be included as part of the minutes.

At the opening of the discussion Glenn Clancy summarized the procedure and process of the consideration of this petition. David Fillingham then opened the discussion with his comments about traffic using the neighborhood as a way to avoid the Belmont Street and Grove Street traffic lights during both rush hours. Observations were made about failure to stop at Stop signs, failure to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, speeding, etc. The Schwab family spoke about the density of housing in the Harvard Lawn area, mainly 2 and 3 family residence as well as a large number of children. There is a concern about the safety of children and adults walking to school or school bus stop. Grove Street and Fairview Avenue is an example of concern. David Fillingham and the petitioners would like to see a 4 Way Stop sign at Unity Avenue and Marlboro Street with a crosswalk in 4 directions. There are 2 Stop signs and 2 crosswalks at this location now. They would like Stop signs and full crosswalks at several other locations as outlined in the petition. There is also a suggestion about installing temporary speed bumps. Several other residents expressed their concerns and thoughts as well.

Glenn Clancy then informed the residents and petitioners that federal guidelines state that you cannot use Stop signs as a way to control speed. He also said that he and Sgt. Shea have a lot of work and studies to do in order to mitigate this concern.

Mary Jo Frisoli then spoke about past attempts to mitigate traffic problems in the Harvard Lawn area. Traffic counts show low volume except during rush hour. An attempt to control traffic by Do Not Enter and One Way restrictions failed, largely due to the opposition of residents. They, too, had to obey the restrictions. After a 6 month trial the program was suspended.

Glenn Clancy thought that maybe we should look at keeping traffic out by making some streets or section of streets one way, making it difficult to pass through.

A resident of Fairview Avenue asked about raised intersections and speed bumps. GC responded that raised crosswalks/intersections are usually at school crossings. Speed bumps are a liability and safety issue for DPW and fire equipment.

Glenn Clancy said the major challenges are money and the reduction in scope of pavement management.

Mary Jo Frisoli said that previous speed counts in the neighborhood did not support a reduction in the speed limit.

Glenn Clancy said that the TAC will look at this with due diligence and that the Selectmen might look differently with 150 supporters of the petition. The TAC advises the BOS of its recommendations and the BOS make the final decision.

Mary Jo Frisoli stated that opponents would have to be heard as well and that there is a passion on both sides of the issue.

Glenn Clancy stated that we will look at what is proposed and what we can do.

Mary Jo Frisoli mentioned that raised intersections/crosswalks are at the Butler, Burbank and Winn Brook Schools.

Glenn Clancy said that Traffic Calming measures are used where they make sense. Guidelines have to be adhered to concerning placement of signs.

Tommasina Olson stated that regarding speeding you need to clock a vehicle for a ¼ mile. This is a very thickly settled neighborhood.

Mary Jo Frisoli said that this is a problem for the neighborhood and that previous attempts to mitigate have failed. The TAC will revisit this in February and hope to schedule a public hearing in March.

Glenn Clancy and Sgt. Shea will look at the problem and justify action.

Mary Jo Frisoli again reminded those present of the Federal, State Guidelines and Controls that have to be complied with.

Glenn Clancy then said that possibly turn restrictions could be instituted at Unity and Grove, Fairview and Grove, and Marlboro and Belmont Streets.

Mary Jo Frisoli suspended further discussion till February. The goal is to develop a plan of action in February and hold a public hearing in March.

Next meeting date will be February 12, 2009.

Mary Jo Frisoli moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurence P. Macdonald,

Acting Secretary

From: Kim Hurley [mailto:khurley@belmontpd.org]
Sent: Wednesday, November 05, 2008 11:53 PM
To: kshea@belmontpd.org
Subject: Fw: Urgent: hazardous intersection and young children crossing

Another traffic issue.

----- Original Message -----

From: Betsy Lipson
To: khurley@belmontpd.org ; mpugliese@belmontpd.org
Cc: s.wald@harvard.edu ; sds@starkwriting.com ; selectmen@town.belmont.ma.us ; chief@belmontpd.org
Sent: Sunday, November 02, 2008 10:19 PM
Subject: Urgent: hazardous intersection and young children crossing

Dear Sergeant Hurley and Officer Pugliese,

I live in Precinct 7 on Townsend Road, near the Cambridge Reservoir. I want to bring your attention to a particularly hazardous intersection I'm sure you're familiar with as officers responsible for this area. My neighbors and I would like the town to intervene quickly to make this intersection safer for pedestrians.

Where Payson, Cushing and Elm come together is a very wide, sloping intersection with no stop signs and infrequent to moderate fast-moving traffic. I included a Google link to it, but if you know the intersection, you'll recognize the Google map doesn't reflect the roads' curving and sloping characteristics. For a quiet neighborhood, crossing Payson Road here is surprisingly dangerous. Cars coming down the hill from the reservoir seem to pick up speed as the road's slope drops near Cushing Avenue, curves, and drops again down Elm. Drivers coming up Elm Street can easily see to their left for oncoming cars on Payson and, since it's usually clear, they accelerate around the corner up the hill. Even though there aren't a lot of cars, each one poses a sudden threat to a pedestrian.

<http://maps.google.com/maps?ie=UTF8&q=Townsend+Road+Belmont+MA&ll=42.381634,-71.166188&spn=0.001791,0.004807&z=18>

Here's what has changed recently to make this an intersection that needs intervention now:

1. Townsend Road has residents with young school-age children. It has been at least 15 years since this street had residents with children who walked to a Belmont school. Now there are seven elementary age children and more on the way to school in the next two years. On the Payson side, there are three young children at this intersection who cross Payson frequently to play with friends on Townsend.

Even when adults walk with children across Payson on the way to school, the cars' speed combined with our inability to see the cars around Payson's curves and as they turn right from Cushing onto Payson, puts us at risk. Frequently I have been caught in the middle of Payson Road with my kids, panic-struck as I suddenly saw a car speeding towards us. I'm not alone in this – other neighbors have experienced the same panic and this is why we've come together to ask for help.

While walking to Burbank across Payson from Townsend, Cushing Ave is in a blind spot. While walking from Burbank across Payson to Townsend Road, Elm Street is in a blind spot.

2. A seeing impaired father of young children now lives at this intersection. He regularly crosses Payson to walk his children to play at friends' houses on Townsend and to walk them to pre-school.

I think the easiest mitigating solution is a stop sign at Cushing and Payson and a stop sign at Elm and Payson at the northern intersection. If we can slow traffic enough, we would also like a cross walk over Payson near the upper part of Townsend Road.

I apologize for not attending the precinct meeting you held in October. Several neighbors intended to attend to discuss this. Since the start of the school year, this intersection has caused a lot of worry and angst among parents and we look forward to hearing how you think the town can respond to this quickly.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Betsy Lipson
89 Townsend Road

Cc:
Sara Wald and Steven Stark, Payson Road
Board of Selectmen
Richard McLaughlin

Betsy Lipson
betsylipson@verizon.net
cell 781.820.0673



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMO

MEMO TO: Board of Selectmen
Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator

FROM: Glenn R. Clancy, P.E.

SUBJECT: Traffic Advisory Committee Recommendation -
Elm Street and Cushing Avenue Stop Control

DATE: January 16, 2009

On Thursday, January 8, 2009 the Traffic Advisory Committee met with a group of residents from the Payson Road/Townsend Road neighborhood. These residents informed the TAC of their concerns about a potentially unsafe condition. Vehicles traveling west on Elm Street and east on Cushing Avenue do not have a Stop control and because of the way Elm Street and Cushing Avenue meet Payson Road, the vehicles are rolling through the intersection onto Payson Road. Many times the vehicles are gaining speed as they enter Payson Road. For the residents in this neighborhood crossing Payson Road is difficult and at times dangerous.

After hearing testimony from several residents the TAC voted unanimously to recommend the placement of Stop signs on Elm Street at Payson Road (northerly approach only) and on Cushing Avenue at Payson Road.

The Traffic Advisory Committee respectfully recommends approval by the Board of Selectmen for the placement of these two Stop signs. As with any request for new signage, labor and materials will be furnished by the Department of Public Works and they will also bear responsibility for future maintenance of the signage.

Cc: Sgt. Kevin Shea, Belmont Police, Traffic Division
Peter J. Castanino, Director, Department of Public Works