

Town of Belmont, MA

Traffic Advisory Committee (T.A.C.)

2015 JUN -9 AM 11:20

Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2015

Members Present: Peter Curo, Joe Griffin, Larry MacDonald (Vice Chair), Don Mercier, Dana Miller (Clerk), Linda Nickens (Chair), Tomi Olsen, Matt Sullivan.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Sargent Benjamin Mailhot (Belmont Police Department), Andres Rojas (Belmont Board of Selectmen)

Also Present: Camille Baghdady, 18 Dante Avenue; Nadim Baghdady, 16 Dante Avenue; John Caputo, 37 Middlecot Street; Claire Crawford, 134 Dalton Road; Ellen O'Brien Cushman, 38 Scott Road; Arline Davis, 18 Blake Street; Florinda Freda, 5 Lewis Road; John Guarnierri, 21 Lewis Road; William Russell Mann, 308 Brighton Street; Mary Nestor, 27 Lewis Road; James G. Pazzanese, 177 Lexington Street; Barbara Skelley, 100 Lexington Street; Jennifer Thomas, 55 Bright Road; Paula Van Horn, 97 Sycamore Street; Joe White, 14 Maple Terrace; Harriet Wong, 70 Livermore Road.

Linda called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Minutes: The minutes of December 11, 2014 meeting were approved.

Lewis Street: Residents are concerned about parking and about the volume and speed of traffic on their street. While one resident would prefer that the road be restricted to one-way traffic from Fairview to Belmont Street, another resident would be inconvenienced by such a traffic restriction and would not support this change.

The police department receives periodic complaints about parking on the street. Ben observed that commuters park on the street all day and occasionally block driveways. Both Ben and a resident observed that the snow has exacerbated problems on the street. Ben is not aware of speeding problems on the street. In response to a resident suggestion that the police department ticket traffic and parking violators on this street as a means of generating town revenue, Ben explained that enforcement is used to change behavior and is unethical when used to generate income. Selectman Rojas indicated that the town is anticipating an increase in traffic and parking on the street because the former Shore Drug is now Jimmy's Food Mart.

The committee passed a resolution that, after the snow is removed from the street, Ben will conduct a traffic study and report back to the Committee. Further action will be deferred until the results of the traffic study are available.

Middlecot Street: Mr. Caputo reported that, when traffic backs up on Brighton Street, drivers detour onto Middlecot Street. While there is a sign that restricts turns onto Middlecot Street between 8 and 9am, Mr. Caputo suggested that extending this restriction from 7 to 9am would be more effective in limiting rush hour incursions into the neighborhood. Joe suggested that we consider restricting right turns from Brighton onto Chilton, Cowdran, and Hurley Streets. The Committee agreed that Glenn will hold a hearing for residents to discuss the possibility of restricting turns from Brighton Street onto these four streets during the morning rush hour.

Maple Street: After hearing that Joe White, Tom Clinton, Camille and Nadim Baghdaddy, Diana Peterson, and Katherine Rodriguez all oppose the proposal to make Maple Street one-way, the Committee passed a resolution that the town would not make Maple a one-way street. Ben observed that the morning drop off is the main problem in the neighborhood and suggested that the town consider ways to address parking problems on the street as a means of addressing the traffic safety concerns for students and their families. Linda suggested that the Committee address parking as a separate issue at a later date. Ms. Rodriguez may contact Glenn to further discuss her parking concerns. In response to Mr. White's suggestion, the TAC will look into the possibility of the town using internationally accepted traffic-control symbols on new signage.

Sycamore and Lexington Streets: Linda read Glenn's proposal:

1. Install a raised intersection at Lexington and Sycamore Streets.
(Pending Capital Budget Approval for \$48,000)
2. Make the electronic "Speed Limit" sign on White Street more visible.
3. Determine the viability of creating a four-way stop approach at the intersection of Lexington and Beech Streets.
(BPD traffic and accident counts for Beech Street and Burnham Street)
4. Relocate the crosswalk on Lexington Street at Beech and Burnham Streets.
5. Remove the "End School Zone" sign on Lexington Street.
6. Add "Crosswalk" signs to the crosswalk on Lexington Street near St. Luke's (the Waldorf School).
7. Evaluate existing "School Zone Ahead" sign on Sycamore Street.
(Possibly relocate)
(Possibly replace with "School Zone" sign)

Barbara Skelly and James Pazzanese asked that this proposal be sent to them via e-mail to: skelleb@aol.com and pazzanjl@gmail.com.

Jennifer Thomas observed that the raised crosswalk on Brighton Street is not as effective as the raised crosswalk on Cross Street. She suggested that the new crosswalk be modeled on the Cross Street crosswalk.

In response to an inquiry, Sargent Mailhot explained that a four-way stop at the intersection of Lexington and Sycamore Streets would exacerbate traffic back-ups.

Gale Road/Sharpe Road – Burbank School: Harriet Wong, Jennifer Thomas, and Clare Crawford presented a proposal from the Burbank Principal and PTA to increase student safety and rolling drop-off efficiency for the Burbank school by:

1. Adding an additional timed (8–9am and 1:30 –3pm on school days) “Do Not Enter” sign at the corner of Gale and Watson Streets;
2. Defining a student drop-off zone in the existing indented curb area next to the school lawn, for morning arrival time only;
3. If possible, altering the curb line to allow space for one more car in the indented area;
4. Installing signs that designate the drop-off zone a “No Parking” area during morning arrival time, 8–9am on school days;
5. Installing signs that restrict Sharpe Street traffic to only LEFT turns onto School Street during arrival time (8–9am on school days);
6. Installing an additional wall or fence sign (that reads “No Parking any time. Use student drop-off,” with arrow pointing left) on each side of the bend in Sharpe Road and alongside the wall and stairs to the school.

The Traffic Advisory Committee passed a resolution to make the changes as proposed in the email communication from the PTA to Glenn. Sargent Mailhot suggested that the town could implement these changes over the summer.

Brighton Street Mr. Mann spoke about the heavy traffic and long lines of backed up traffic on Brighton Street during the morning commute. Ellen Cushman also spoke about the traffic problems at this intersection. In response to Mr. Mann’s request that the town restrict left turns from Pleasant Street onto Brighton Street during the morning commute, Linda explained that if the town were to divert traffic from Brighton Street, it would be required to provide alternative routes for that traffic—and so would only be increasing the traffic on these other town streets. Peter asked if it might be possible to install additional truck-ban signs, like the one we have at Pleasant Street, to help with enforcement. While there used to be a sign, it seems to have been taken down when the road was repaved.

Blake Street: During the tennis season (from May to November), from 8am through 9pm, guests of the Belmont Tennis Club park on both sides of the

street. As membership has been increasing and approximately half of the members are not town residents, parking problems on Blake Street are increasingly causing safety hazards. Club guests trespass on residents' property and, on at least one occasion, parked cars have prevented emergency vehicles from reaching a resident in need of emergency care. In this instance, the resident had to be carried out of her house and down the street to the waiting emergency vehicle.

One resident, with property on the corner, has a tree on the roadside and Mr. Kale's office has recommended that parking be restricted within 35 feet of the tree. After signs were installed indicating a 35-foot barrier, the resident's property was vandalized.

Sargent Mailhot suggests that parking on the street be restricted to only one side so that emergency vehicles can access the street. The TAC agreed that a public hearing would be required before any such change could be made. The TAC will study the problem, consult with the town engineer, consider alternative remedies to the problem, and then be in touch with the neighbors.

Old Business: Sargent Mailhot was unable to conduct his planned traffic studies on Slade Street & Upland/Horace or on Lexington Street because of the amount of snow in the streets. Sargent Mailhot reported that the temporary four-way stop sign on Slade and Upland/Horace has elicited many positive comments. When the snow is cleared and the parking restriction is lifted on the street, Sargent Mailhot will conduct a traffic study.

Matt asked for information about the planned meeting with the Wellington School principal to discuss enforcing the approved school design in which the small parking lot on Orchard Street would not be used for student drop off or parking. The TAC agreed to consult with Glenn on this topic and discussed the possibility of involving the School Committee in efforts to achieve Wellington School compliance with the parking and drop-off plan. The TAC will also review plans and minutes.

Don Mercier is concerned about the intersection of Mill Street and Concord Avenue. The Committee discussed the plan that it had previously developed to remedy traffic safety problems at the intersection and agreed to revisit this plan in discussions with Glenn. The Committee also agreed that, had a neighborhood resident not objected, the Committee would have passed a resolution to make these safety improvements at this intersection.

Other Business: Tomi: Bay State Road was repaved and it has sunk. Tomi suspects that the road substrate is inadequate.

Matt observed that there is inconsistent signage for the crosswalks in Belmont Center. At one crosswalk, a sign reads "Yield to Pedestrians," while at the other two crosswalks there is no such sign. The pedestrian cross from Irresistibles to Assai is particularly dangerous and should be signed. Ben suggested that these signs be installed as part of the Belmont Center project, at the end, when the other new features are installed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Miller, Clerk

Traffic Advisory Committee
Office of the Board of Selectmen
455 Concord Avenue, Belmont, Mass., 02478

Sirs:

Last spring prior to the opening of the Belmont Tennis Club season, traffic signs were posted at the intersection of Kilburn & Blake Streets, due to safety concerns caused by the dense parking of large vehicles of club members with limited space on narrow streets.

The 20' restriction was not sufficient for safety access needs of
fire and medical emergency vehicles
trash collection trucks
school buses
utility and service vehicles

In addition a large Town shade tree on Blake St., close to the intersection, compounds the limited tight space for passing of large vehicles. The tree is often struck by trucks; and continued tree damage could result in a threat to nearby homes & buildings from valued neighborhood asset.

Some club members are not fully aware of town laws, the safety issues, or the club's own rules regarding the needs of residents for safety and to prevent interference of homeowners' ability to get in and out of driveways and walks.

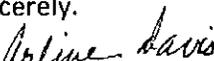
My house at the corner of Kilburn & Blake is at the main entrance to the intersection, so I am most affected by the dense parking. This is where most of the problems occur.

I am requesting that the TAC assess the condition relating to club parking for safety; and see what improvement could alleviate daily difficulties. The club opens sometime in May and closes in November. It's open daily from 8:00 a.m. -9:00 p.m.

Perhaps a trial basis could provide a way to reassess what could provide better security access and lead to better relations between club members and neighbors.

I am grateful for the Town's help I've been given, and hope a review can bring about better awareness and necessary safety measures.

Sincerely,


Arline Davis
18 Blake Street

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COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT