

Town of Belmont, MA

Traffic Advisory Committee (T.A.C.)

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TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA.

SEP 6 2 14 PM '12

Minutes of Meeting June 14, 2012

Members present: Larry MacDonald (Vice Chair), Dana Miller (Clerk), Linda Nickens (Chair), Tomasina Olsen, and Matt Sullivan

Ex-Officio Members present: Glenn Clancy, PE; Sgt. Benjamin Mailhot, BPD

Also present: Newton Kupelian, 200 Trapelo Road.

Linda called the meeting to order at 7:06.

Next Meeting: Scheduled for July 12, 2012

May, 2012 Minutes: Larry moved to approve the minutes and Matt seconded that motion. The TAC unanimously approved of the minutes as submitted.

Parking in front of Moozy's restaurant (353 Trapelo Road): The current parking plan was developed in consultation with the neighbors. One neighbor, in particular, had a very difficult time moving safely out of his driveway into traffic. The current plan allows this neighbor to move in and out of his driveway. The owner of Moozy's has requested that the plan be altered to accommodate 2-3 additional parallel parking spaces. The TAC agreed that it would be inadvisable to alter the plan that the neighborhood had worked with the town to develop and that creating additional parking spaces would endanger the driver moving in and out of his driveway.

Truck Noise on Trapelo Road: Mr. Kupelian has long been bothered by the noise and pollution that emanates from trucks travelling near his home on Trapelo Road. He has discussed his concerns previously with Glenn. Mr. Kupelian believes that the noise is a result of trucks "Jake Braking" to slow down. Mr. Kupelian asked if the town could bar trucks from travelling on Trapelo road. Glenn and the TAC members explained that this would not be possible for multiple reasons. Trapelo road improvements are being funded, in part, with State and Federal funding of more than \$18 million. Because Trapelo Road is a recognized conduit for commercial traffic, neither the State nor the Federal Government would approve a move to bar trucks from travelling on Trapelo Road. If the town were to make this change without State and Federal approval, the town would thereby forfeit the \$18+ million in funding. Glenn pointed out that if the town were to bar commercial/truck traffic from Trapelo Road, that traffic would then be forced on to other routes in Belmont and into other towns—this is a zero-sum game. Glenn mentioned that Will Brownsberger is sponsoring a truck study. The TAC will approve signage to discourage "Jake Breaking" on Trapelo Road.

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Wellington School Traffic/Goden Street: Sergeant Mailhot presented the results of his study of the traffic on Goden Street. There is only one, old speed limit sign, for 25mph, on Goden and this faces the traffic turning onto Goden Street from Concord Avenue. This sign is incorrect, as the current limit on Goden, according to State law, should be 30mph. In order to post a lower speed limit, several State requirements must be met. Sergeant Mailhot will bring in the relevant State law--chapter 90, sections 17 and 18--to share with the TAC. Coming from School Street onto Goden, no sign is posted. During the observation times, no long line of traffic was observed on Goden Street. Only 2.6% of the cars exceeded the speed limit. Officer Mailhot said that while the 25mph sign can remain, it is unenforceable. Tommy offered to look further into the matter as part of a larger effort to make the walk-to-school paths safer for students.

The next TAC meeting will further address Wellington School traffic concerns. Glenn will mail out notices to the neighborhood and will invite the superintendent of schools, Laurie Graham, and Amy Wagner to attend the meeting.

Lexington and Sycamore Streets: This intersection is very busy and is a school crossing. The crossing guard is having difficulty managing the traffic at this intersection. Drivers have knocked over the in-street crossing sign and have driven right past the crossing guard as she indicates that the cars should stop. The neighbors are concerned about the safety of both the crossing guard and the pedestrians. The neighbors have requested that two signs be installed on both approaches to the crosswalk: one at 200 feet in advance of the crosswalk, indicating that the crosswalk is ahead, and one at the crosswalk. The TAC approved the motion (moved by Dana, seconded by Tommy, and unanimously approved) for the installation of the four signs.

New Business: Matt reported that two Hillcrest Street residents have requested that curbing and bump-outs be installed on the street. Glenn explained that sidewalks and curbing account for 40% of the cost of road resurfacing. The town no longer has a budget for curbing, sidewalks, or bump-outs because if the town spent money on these improvements it would have insufficient funds to maintain our roads.

At 8:22pm, Larry motioned and Matt seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Dana Miller, Clerk

Clancy, Glenn

From: Dan Scharfman [daniel.scharfman@verizon.net]
Sent: Saturday, May 19, 2012 8:24 AM
To: Clancy, Glenn; lcnickens@verizon.net
Subject: Wellington traffic pattern meeting

Dear Linda and Glenn,

I want to thank the Traffic Advisory Committee for following up on the Wellington traffic management plan at this week's meeting. I had to leave early to attend another event, but sensed that it would be a difficult and contentious event. Again, thank you.

I am writing to share my observations as a private citizen and Town Meeting Member, not as a member of the School Committee.

From my point of view at 79 School Street (directly across the street from the top end of Myrtle, and directly abutting the Wellington property), the traffic management plan has been entirely successful. Traffic on School Street is noticeably slower. Cars no longer rocket around the top end of Myrtle as they cut through to Concord Ave. The intersection at Goden Street is much, much easier for pedestrians to navigate – I frequently cross that intersection on foot and find that drivers have stopped much more regularly and in ways that do not block crosswalks since the 4-way stop went in.

Employees and visitors to the school often park on School Street. From my point of view they add life and vigor to the neighborhood while further slowing traffic. I have not had difficulty exiting or entering my driveway, even at busy times of day. The one-way zones caused me mild inconvenience when they first went in, but I quickly adjusted. At this point I find that having to go around the block to comply with one-way restrictions costs me a few second here or there at a few times of day; it's no longer even a bother.

My understanding from the part of the meeting that I heard is that other residents have not had as positive an experience, but from my experience and point of view the new traffic and parking patterns have been a success, making the once-busy raceway of School Street a safer, more civil, easier place to be. I hope you can find small adjustments that will make things easier for them without losing the substantial safety and quality-of-life benefits the new traffic pattern has provided for my family and – I believe – all pedestrians.

- Dan Scharfman
- 79 School Street

Dan Scharfman
79 School Street
Belmont, MA 02478
617-480-6085
daniel.scharfman@verizon.net

Clancy, Glenn

From: Allen, Richard [RAllen@belmont.k12.ma.us]
Sent: Friday, May 11, 2012 12:49 PM
To: Clancy, Glenn
Cc: 'allen.nancy@gmail.com'
Subject: Traffic hearing - Wellington Area

Glenn,

My wife and I have lived on Myrtle Street since 1977. I understand that there will be a hearing on traffic issues in the Wellington School area and I have a couple of comments to share.

1. The 4-way stop at the corner of Goden and School Streets is a huge improvement over the 2-way scheme that stopped Goden traffic. School traffic aside, the visibility at the corner approaching School on Goden from the north (Concord Ave.) has become less and less good as a result of the growth of landscape plants and the addition of the fence at the property on the northeast corner. Most of the time I am returning home from the east, I am coming up Goden because there is no break in the median at Myrtle, therefore I make that right turn, sometimes several times a day. I feel much safer and do not at all mind stopping on my way down School. Please keep this 4-way stop.
2. Because I work at Belmont High and walk there from my house, I observe the backup of traffic on Concord going east as people stop for the Orchard pedestrian light or pull over to drop off students. Many drivers try to avoid that backup by traveling in the right hand lane (now a bike lane), sometimes for several blocks, in order to make a right at Goden. I think this practice is more pronounced with the one way restriction on Myrtle street in the morning. Whether or not Myrtle remains one way, the practice of passing on the right is very dangerous for both drivers and pedestrians. Signs asking drivers to stay out of the bike lane are daily ignored in the heat of rush hour traffic. Granted, this backup lasts at most 40 minutes or so from 7:20-8:00, but some means of getting cooperation from drivers during those hours may avert a tragedy.
3. Lastly, since the school has reopened a new potential problem has arisen. Parents and caregivers, park on the east bound side of School between Cottage and Myrtle, sometimes down as far as Goden. This practice, again limited to a small window of time at the end of the school day, makes for a very narrow roadway, given that it is a two-way street. I was not aware of this before the new school was built. I suspect that the drivers are parking there to avoid a more congested pickup area elsewhere and wonder if anyone else experiences this or finds it a problem. My concern is for pedestrians, especially children, who might cross School Street from between parked cars over a very narrow, 2-way road, even though they ought to be crossing at the guarded area.

Thanks for having the hearing and for your patience in trying to sort out all the many interests of safety, convenience and past practice.

Dick and Nancy Allen
29 Myrtle Street
Belmont, MA

(617) 484-7428

Clancy, Glenn

From: Linda Nickens [lcnickens@verizon.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2012 8:45 AM
To: Clancy, Glenn
Subject: Fwd: traffic meeting

Thought you'd want to see this.

L

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Gail Gorman <chen.denmark@gmail.com>
Date: May 18, 2012 8:56:02 AM EDT
To: lcnickens@verizon.net
Subject: traffic meeting

Dear Ms. Nickens,

I attended the traffic committee meeting last night and want to thank you for all the time that was given to concerned citizens.

I did feel the meeting turned to the personal rather than sticking to the practical and task at hand. I left the meeting with a big question: What do the people who are unhappy with the traffic situation in Belmont want? No cars on their streets? That is not a right for them to demand. They seem to have lost sight that we are a community that needs to work together to find the best solution for all. Even if that means that there are cars traveling on their streets. I feel strongly that we don't need any more traffic studies. Our town is paralyzed by studies in order to pacify dissatisfied residents and therefore nothing ever gets done. We do not need to reinvent the wheel. It's been done and in my opinion, needs no tweaking. My suggestion would be to start enforcing parking restrictions. The town is desperate for new revenue, so perhaps towing a few cars that are illegally parked would be a more creative way to meet that need. I understand that a few adjustments need to be made, but to change the game now will make the town, and perhaps your committee, look like it can't make sound decisions based on real data. Belmont will once again be taking two steps forward and one step back.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my opinion. By the way, I live at the corner of the 4-way stop and have adjusted to it just fine.

Regards,

Gail Gorman
96 School Street



**BELMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT
TRAFFIC DIVISION
460 CONCORD AVENUE
BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS 02478**



Date: June 8, 2012
To: Traffic Advisory Committee
From: Sgt. Mailhot
Re: Speed Study on Goden Street

Members of TAC,

Attached are two graphs that show the results of a speed study that I conducted on Goden Street between Concord Avenue and School Street per your request at the last TAC Meeting on 5/17/2012. I conducted the study during the week of 05/21/2012. The results from the speed spy device show that it operated between Monday 05/21/2012 9:00 AM through Thursday 05/24/2012 4:00 PM.

The speed limit on this segment of Goden Street is posted only in one direction, Southbound off of Concord Avenue. There is no posted speed limit on the Northbound lane from School Street. The one 25 MPH speed limit sign appears to be on a relatively old sign post and is hard to see as it is in such close proximity to the intersection with Concord Avenue. Based on this, I believe that that sign is not in compliance with the MUTCD and I have chosen to conduct this study as if the speed limit is not posted and is 30 MPH as it is considered a "Thickly Settled" area. **The 85th percentile speed, which would be used to establish a posted speed limit, from the results of this study was 31 MPH.** This tells me that the "Thickly Settled" area 30 MPH speed limit is appropriate for this roadway. For this reason I think that the lone speed limit sign showing 25 MPH should be removed as the 85th percentile speed does not support placing additional 25 MPH signage on the other end of the roadway.

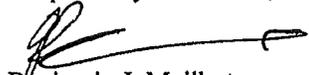
The graphs also show that the vast majority, approximately 81.4% (2,798 of 3,438), of the MVs traveling on this segment Goden Street during this time were within the 30 MPH speed limit. There was an expected grouping that was approximately 16% of the volume of traffic (551 of 3,438) that was in the 31-35 MPH bracket. My thoughts, based on my police training and experience, is that this can be explained by a number of different factors such as speedometer inaccuracy of the MVs to the downhill slope of the roadway to possible RADAR equipment sensitivity.

Speeds in excess of 35 MPH included the following: 78 MVs in the 36-40 MPH bracket, 9 MVs in the 41-45 MPH bracket, 1 MV in the 46-50 MPH bracket, and 1 MV in the 51+ bracket. **All combined there were 89 out of 3,438 MVs that were speeding in excess of 35 MPH or approximately 2.6%.**

Based on this information I do not think that this segment Goden Street has a particularly large speeding problem that would support more restrictions on the roadway. I also believe that the speeding on this segment Goden Street is comparable to other streets of similar size and volume. There is however one period of time on the graph that has a significant spike of speeding MVs which is the 8:00 AM hour. I will request that the Patrol Division assign an officer to this location during this time periodically in the coming weeks for additional traffic enforcement.

I hope this information will assist you in your decisions regarding traffic control on Goden Street between Concord Avenue and School Street and the surrounding area.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benjamin J. Mailhot', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Benjamin J. Mailhot
Sergeant – Traffic Division
Belmont Police Department

Date: 6/7/2012 09:23:53 am

Start Date: 5/21/2012 09:00 am

End Date: 5/24/2012 04:00 pm

Time Interval: 60 minutes

Speed Interval: 5 mph

Posted Speed Limit: 30 mph

Average Speed: 27 mph

Highest Speed: 52 mph

50th Percentile: 27 mph

85th Percentile: 31 mph

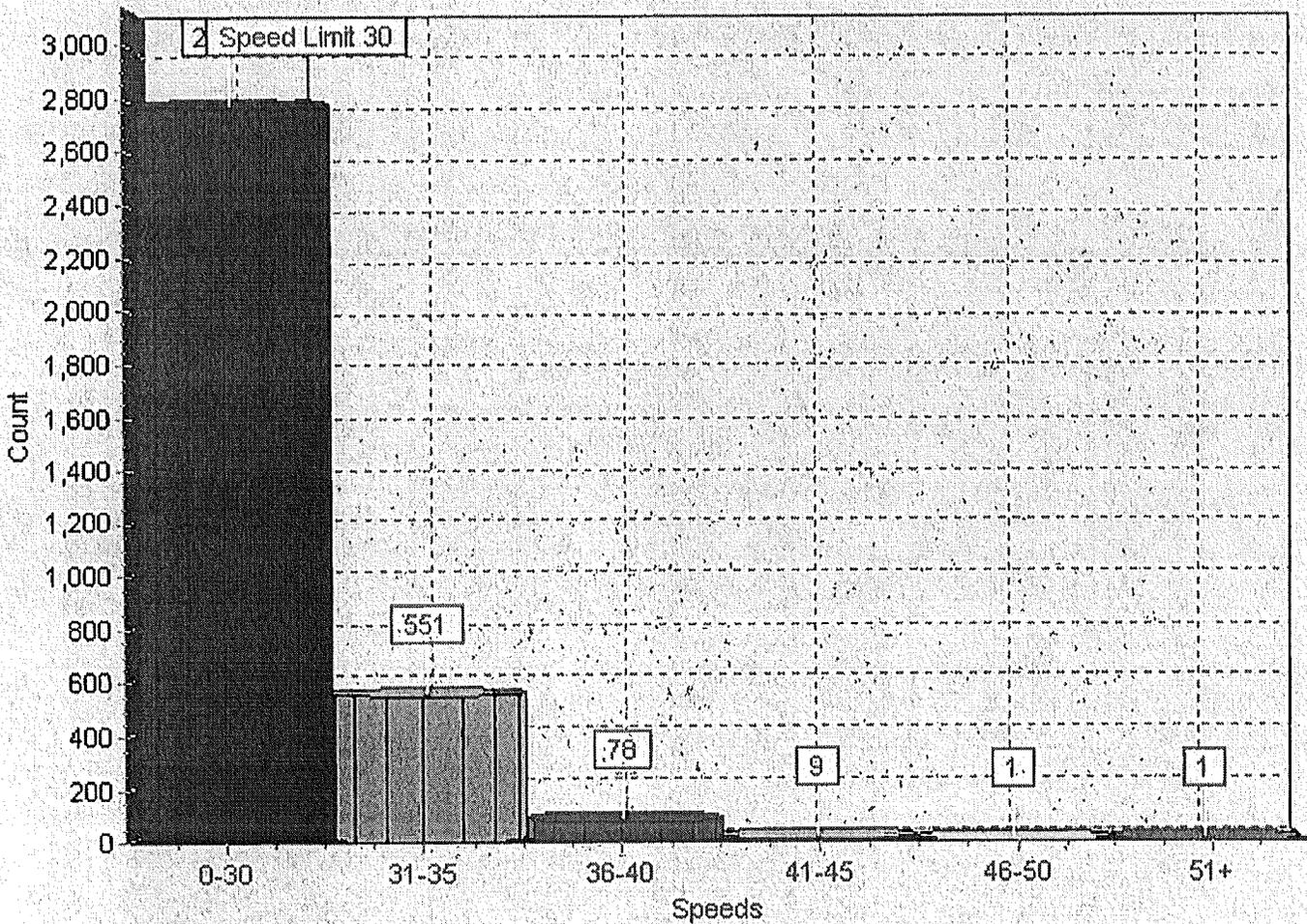
Number Above Speed Limit: 640

Total Number of Vehicles: 3438

Comments:

Count vs. Speed

5/21/2012 09:00 am - 5/24/2012 04:00 pm



640 / 3438

Date: 6/7/2012 09:24:25 am

Start Date: 5/21/2012 09:00 am

End Date: 5/24/2012 04:00 pm

Time Interval: 60 minutes

Speed Interval: 5 mph

Posted Speed Limit: 30 mph

Average Speed: 27 mph

Highest Speed: 52 mph

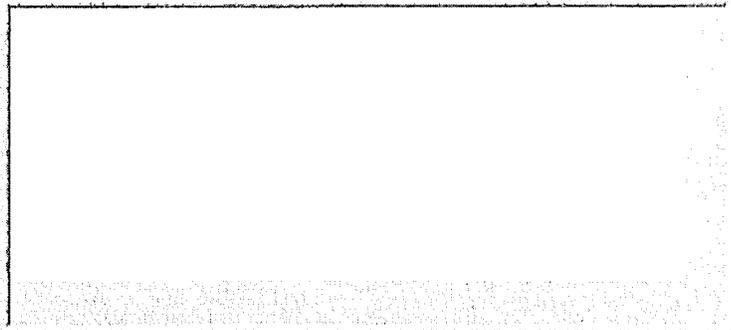
50th Percentile: 27 mph

85th Percentile: 31 mph

Number Above Speed Limit: 640

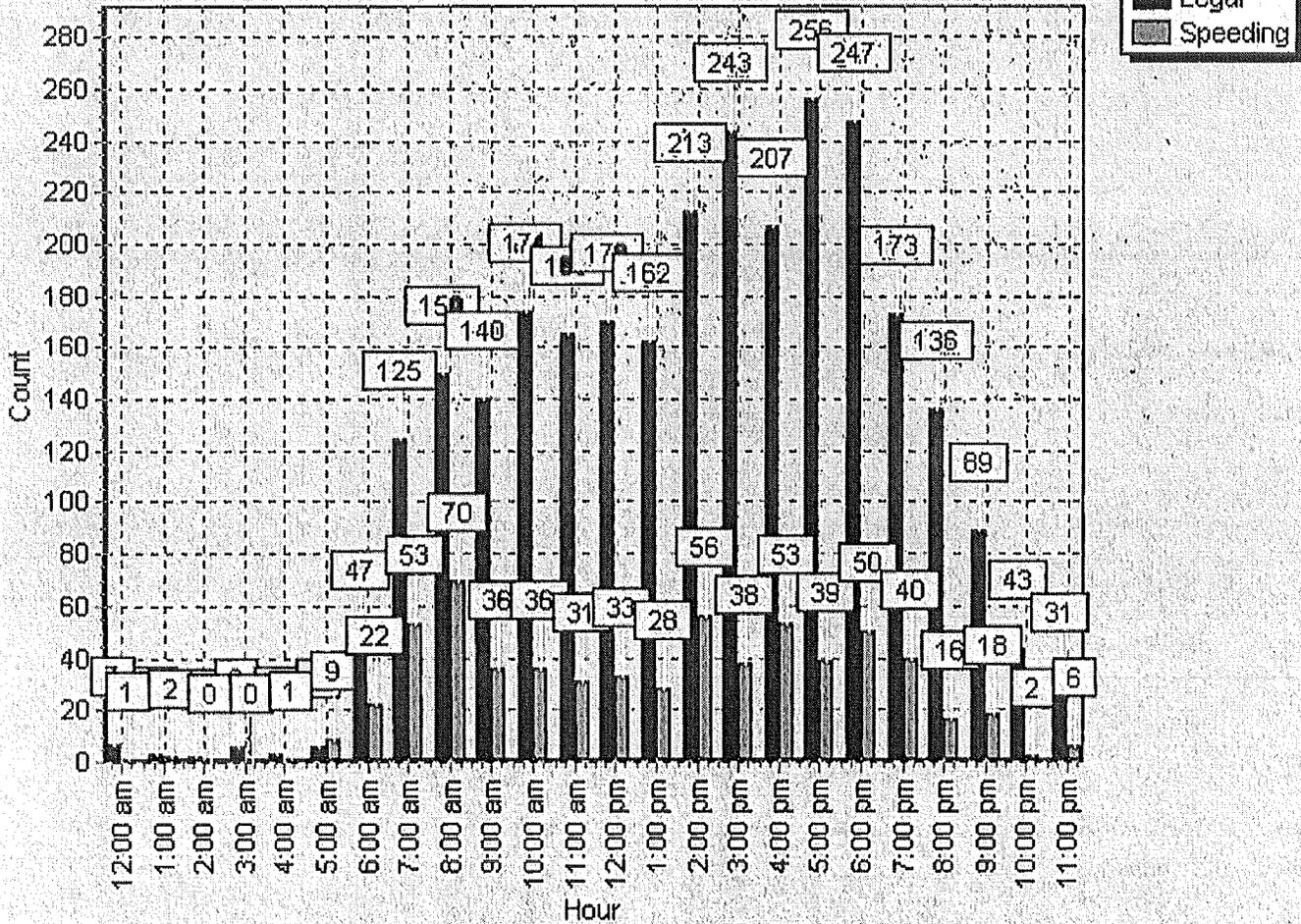
Total Number of Vehicles: 3438

Comments:



Count vs. Hour

5/21/2012 09:00 am - 5/24/2012 04:00 pm





TOWN OF BELMONT

460 CONCORD AVENUE
P.O. BOX 130
BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS 02478-0002

POLICE DEPARTMENT



TELEPHONE
(617) 484-1215

RICHARD J. MCLAUGHLIN
CHIEF OF POLICE

June 7, 2012

Traffic Advisory Committee
Town Hall
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, Massachusetts 02478

2012 JUN - 7 PM 3:44
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

Dear Members of the Traffic Advisory Committee,

I am writing to you to inform you of a potentially dangerous school crossing location at Lexington Street and Sycamore Street. There is an unregulated crosswalk at that location which is located on Lexington Street which services students and parents of the Butler School. The police department has a crossing guard stationed at this location as well. The problem is that the crosswalk has no high visibility crosswalk signage to warn drivers of the crosswalk.

According to the crossing guard, Ms. Erin Callahan, she has had several problems with motor vehicles not seeing her, and she does wear a high visibility jacket or vest. She has also called me on several occasions about MVs that fail to yield to the pedestrians in the crosswalk. At one point she was almost struck by a MV while she was in the crosswalk when the mirror of a MV brushed against her jacket. The operator of the MV was issued a citation for failure to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk and has since appealed the citation, lost the appeal, and paid the fine.

I have gone to this location myself and have witnessed Ms. Callahan in the performance of her duties and it appears that she is doing the best she can at this location. We have put a temporary in-street yield to pedestrians sign in the roadway; however this sign is often struck by MVs trying to turn out of Sycamore Street onto Lexington Street and has been proven to be ineffective at this location due to it's constantly being knocked over.

We are concerned about the safety of the children crossing the street and the safety of our crossing guard at that location. The police department is formally requesting that the Traffic Advisory Committee consider the placement of high visibility crosswalk warning signs on Lexington Street to warn drivers of the location of the crosswalk at the intersection of Lexington Street and Sycamore Street. We would like to see this signage be installed prior to the end of August so that it is ready for the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Benjamin J. Mailhot
Sergeant - Traffic Division
Belmont Police Department