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Minutes

Town of Belmont

Board of Selectmen

Beech St. Center, Multipurpose Room

Monday, May 21, 2018

6:00pm

APPROVED  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
DATE: 11/5/2018

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chair Adam Dash. Vice Chair Mark Paolillo and Selectmen Tom Caputo were present. Town Administrator Patrice Garvin was present.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Memorial Day parade will be held on May 28.
- May 30 is the continuation of Town Meeting.
- Town Day has been moved to June 2<sup>nd</sup> due to rain; will be held from 9am-4pm.
- Belmont High School graduation is June 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- A public forum on potential post-closure uses of the former incinerator site will be held on June 18<sup>th</sup> @ 8pm in Town Hall Auditorium. This is an opportunity to propose and discuss uses for the space.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS:

[There were none]

ACTION BY CONSENT:

**Approval of 15 minute Parking Spot Request at 105 Trapelo Rd.**

Glenn Clancy (Director, Community Development) appeared to recommend approval of the 15 minute parking spot. He explained that the request came from Vicki Lee's bakery, to accommodate loading/unloading activities associated with the catering side of the business. The Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) had consulted with nearby businesses and the Cushing Square Business Association and no one had objected; also, TAC had also reviewed and approved the request.

M. Paolillo expressed a concern that similar requests would follow from other business, and urged TAC to have clear criteria establishing how such requests are approved.

Vicki Boyajian (Owner of Vicki Lee's) appeared before the Board and explained that her business was land-locked, and the 15 minute parking space would allow her access to the front of the store which was crucial for operation of her catering business. A. Dash noted that this was a unique situation.

Larry MacDonald (Chair, TAC) endorsed the approval, and said that similar requests had been approved in the past and were not followed by a rush of other businesses seeking accommodation.

M. Paolillo asked about enforcement and G. Clancy replied that the spot would be monitored by staff already patrolling Cushing Square.

*Motion: To approve the 15 minute parking spot at 105 Trapelo Rd. (Vote passed 3-0)*

### **Belmont High School Traffic Plan**

A. Dash read a statement addressing his potential recusal from any discussions concerning the High School Building Project, due to the fact that he lives on Goden St. Town Counsel was currently reviewing the matter, and until a decision was made he would recuse himself. A. Dash left the meeting and M. Paolillo took over as acting Chair.

M. Paolillo proposed to hear from representatives of the Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC; Glenn Clancy and Larry MacDonald) and the Belmont High School Building Committee (BHSBC; Bill Lovallo), followed by public comment.

G. Clancy explained that a presentation by the BHSBC was made to TAC on May 10 concerning traffic issues associated with the new school building project. Due to the thorough and dense nature of the presentation, he asked TAC members to process the information and send him feedback, which he would now put forth.

G. Clancy summarized three themes from the compiled feedback: 1) opposition to restricting access to Goden St. and opposition to implementing measures which would encourage drivers to make u-turns on Concord; 2) Concord/Common intersection, and concern that the new school would exacerbate problems there; 3) need to pursue Alexander Avenue underpass tunnel, which would allow a drop-off location on Channing Rd.

G. Clancy outlined two explicit recommendations made by TAC: 1) implementation of a temporary traffic signal at Goden/Concord, to see if there was a benefit; 2) ask BSC group (Town traffic consultants) to do a peer-review of the proposed entrance/exit to the new school project. L. MacDonald expressed his support for these proposals as Chair of TAC.

T. Caputo expressed support for installation of a temporary signal at Goden/Concord. He asked how soon it could be set-up given that residents would need advanced notice; he also asked how long it would take to get a sense of the impact of the signal. G. Clancy said he would have to defer to the traffic consultant, but he estimated it would take 2-4 weeks to be able evaluate the impact. B. Lovallo stated that the traffic consultant for the BHSBC also supported temporary signalization at Goden/Concord – from their perspective it would increase safety for pedestrians/bikers travelling to and from campus.

M. Paolillo and T. Caputo supported the proposal to have peer-review from BSC on the proposed entrances/exits to the new school. B. Lovallo noted that potential locations were constrained to be between Claypit Pond and the Football field.

There was broad support for the Alexander Ave. underpass tunnel project and discussion about how it would integrate with the Community Path and the new school building project. M. Paolillo and T. Caputo stressed the need to prioritize this project within the Community Path endeavour.

M. Paolillo asked Assistant Police Chief Jamie MacIsaac about the temporary traffic signal, and J. MacIsaac expressed support for the proposal. M. Paolillo also raised the idea of having a police detail near the school, in the mornings during drop-off hours.

M. Paolillo advocated for the Board to lead on traffic issues for Belmont, utilizing TAC as a resource and working together with the BHSBC. G. Clancy was supportive and said that he will continue to flesh out ideas for traffic solutions.

[M. Paolillo opened discussion to the public]

Anne Paulsen: Stated that the neighborhood was happy to see a trial signal at Goden. However, she advocated for a thorough analysis of the impact on traffic under various scenarios: if Goden was turned into a one-way street; if parking was restricted on Goden; implementing drop-off lanes on Concord; incorporating pay parking for high school students as well as increased busing. She was concerned that not enough real analysis had been conducted.

Jessica Bennett: Noted that people in her neighborhood often do not obey the timed one-way traffic signs. She questioned whether the trial would be able to accurately replicate the permanent implementation of the signal, and therefore generate useful data for analysis. She also expressed concern that students would use the temporary signal as a place to cross Concord, and the safety issue this would cause. G. Clancy stated that a temporary cross-walk would be difficult to establish due to accessibility requirements.

Mr. Lewis (lives on Goden St.): Given that the permanent signal would also have a cross-walk, he felt the temporary signal would not provide the necessary information required for a proper evaluation. He also asked why there were still signs for 30mph speed limit on Goden, given that the Town-wide limit had been reduced to 25mph. G. Clancy explained that the area was under a special speed regulation; to change the limit from 30mph would require State approval and an official speed study. The risk was that the speed study could result in a higher speed limit.

Fred Paulsen: Argued that further data analysis should assume higher rates of walking/biking than current levels, given the efforts made by the Town (including the Board) to encourage walking and biking and given the overall trend towards less cars on the road. G. Clancy stated that current analysis does account for increased walking/car-pooling. He also noted that such a trend may be long-term, but there is still a need to account for car traffic in the short-term. B. Lovallo confirmed that current estimates used by the BHSBC do account for increased walking and car-pooling, but not to the appreciable level suggested by Fred. F. Paulson replied that if the Board adopts changes to parking fees and bus usage policies, this could have a noticeable impact on the number of cars versus pedestrians; and, that currently it is too convenient for cars to access the site.

John Phelan (Superintendent of Belmont Schools) appeared and reviewed estimates for potential revenue that could be generated by increasing parking fees for high school students; and, estimates for potentially offering different level of subsidies for busing. He also discussed other potential avenues for alleviating traffic concerns, such as offering a late bus after school that would accommodate after-school activities, and changing start times across K-12. T. Caputo suggested to look at historical data of price changes for busing to see how sensitive ridership was to such changes.

Dana Miller (TAC): Advocated for traffic analysis that would investigate the potential impact of increased bus usage. A Paulsen agreed and stated that school bus transportation should be a shared responsibility with the Town and School Board, given the impact on Town-wide traffic.

Don Mercier: Stated that if traffic gets sufficiently bogged down it would prompt parents to adjust their behaviour and encourage their kids to walk.

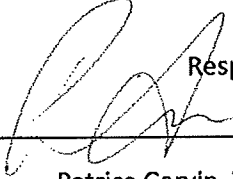
Steve Sloan (lives on Goden St.): Argued that Goden is not suitable for the current level of traffic, let alone increased traffic that would result from the new school.

Deborah Talanian (lives on lower Goden): Pushed for further analysis to be done to investigate whether Oak was a viable option for the entrance/exit.

George Weber: Had observed many near misses at the intersection of School and Goden. He advocated for measures to keep commuter traffic on main streets (Concord, Common, etc) and reduce cut-through traffic.

M. Paolillo concluded the meeting by urging the Board to take a leadership position on addressing Town-wide traffic issues, working together with TAC and the BHSBC; T. Caputo agreed with this sentiment. M. Paolillo underscored the need for the community to fully embrace the new school building project. He expressed support for both the temporary signal at School/Goden and the peer-review of the new school entrance plan by BSC.

*Motion: To adjourn. (Vote passed 2-0)*

  
Respectfully Submitted,  
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Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator