

DATE: November 24, 2021
TIME: 12:11 PM

**MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 26, 2021
HIGH SCHOOL TRAFFIC WORKING GROUP
5:00PM**

Roy Epstein <i>Select Board</i>	Glenn Clancy <i>Community Development Director</i>	Sergeant Ben Mailhot <i>Police Department</i>
Anne Paulsen, Vice-Chair <i>Resident</i>	Thayer Donham <i>Planning Board</i>	Jay Marcotte <i>DPW Director</i>
Jessie Bennett, Chair <i>Resident</i>	William Lovallo <i>BMHSBC Chair</i>	Dana Miller <i>Transportation Advisory Committee</i>
Catherine Bowen <i>School Committee</i>	Larry Link <i>Resident</i>	Mary Wybieralla <i>Resident</i>
	Patrice Garvin <i>Town Administrator</i>	

Attending: Anne Paulsen, Resident; Mary Wybieralla, Resident; Larry Link, Sgt. Paul Garabedian, Belmont Police Department; Bill Lovallo, Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee; Roy Epstein, Belmont Select Board; Glenn Clancy, Community Development; Jay Marcotte, Department of Public Works Director; Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator.

Vice-Chair Anne Paulsen called the meeting to order at 5:05PM

Approval of Minutes

Bill moved to approve the minutes from April 13, 2021. Larry seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously, with one abstention, Roy Epstein.

Report on discussion with the Select Board on July 12, 2021

Anne opened the conversation by reviewing the discussion of the original charge of the High School Traffic Working Group (HSTWG) and that in the charge the expiration dates noted were for the commitment of the committee members and not for the committee itself, specifically noting that the charge notes work “post construction.”

The committee was extended to December of 2021 by the Select Board at the July 12, 2021 meeting.

Review of past motions/ action items

Anne discussed how she had touched base with Larry and Mary since the HSTWG’s last meeting to review some of the committee’s past action items and realized that some of these would need to be prioritized before the start of school at the end of August.

Anne then asked if Glenn Clancy could give an update on lower Goden Street separate from the intersection. Glenn stated that the pavement management contract that was approved by the Select Board on July 19, 2021 includes vertical curbing on lower Goden Street. This issue was brought up in the early discussions of the HSTWG and this should help to alleviate the U-turns that are common there. Glenn also noted this will not affect any of the trees in the area. Larry asked if there is any plan to address the sidewalks in the area. Glenn said that this is strictly a curbing project and that under pavement management he is only able to do work on sidewalks under a complete street reconstruction. Roy then asked if there is a current conditions survey for Goden Street's sidewalks or if one would need to be completed? Glenn said that all of the sidewalks are listed in the survey that DPW created and that he uses to help plan the pavement management contracts; without looking at it he could not say how old that data is. Glenn talked about Larry's point of the school walking routes and recalled a motion from the HSTWG that they had recommended to the Board of Selectmen to identify and support primary walking routes to the High School and consider this information in the development of transportation plans. Glenn said that he would try to locate the Safe Routes to Schools assessments for the Wellington and the Burbank. Anne and Mary discussed that this would be good to fold into a final recommendation from the HSTWG on walking routes to school. Patrice brought up that it seemed the conversation was going towards working with the School Department and wanted to remind the group that they are a body that reports to the Select Board. Glenn and Anne then discussed Kate's position as the liaison from the School Committee and how she could bring the recommendations of the HSTWG to the School Committee herself to get feedback. They decided to table this discussion to the next meeting of the HSTWG that Kate is able to attend.

Anne Paulsen asked if there were still walking maps available to be picked up at the Office of Community Development. Glenn answered that yes they do still have a box of the Walk Boston maps available at the office. He mentioned that he believes that the bike routes maps would be outdated at this time because they were developed about 15 years ago and there are new facilities that have been put in place since that time.

Anne brought the conversation back to Goden Street and asked if there is any plan to try to limit parking on Goden? Glenn answered that what he is working on currently does not cover that and that he is focused right now on the vertical curbing. He is not aware of efforts to restrict parking due to the new signalized intersection. Anne Paulsen saw the Anne Marie Mahoney, a Goden Street resident, was on the call and asked Anne Marie what the thoughts of the neighborhood are. Anne Marie said that the neighborhood would prefer to not have parking restricted, but that the neighborhood is worried that they will become defacto parking for the new Middle and High School. She said that it is a lot of the neighborhood's feeling that the plan for the new school was created with reduced parking and no real plan to address the additional parking needs.

The topic of the new traffic signal going in on Concord Ave came up and Glenn noted that in the Town of Belmont there is no department that formally owns the responsibility for signals and signalized intersections. At this time Belmont Light is gracious enough to do the upkeep on these signals, but in other communities there is a portion of a department that is devoted to this. At this time the Town Administrator is in talks with Belmont Light to assume full responsibility for all signals, but no agreement has been reached.

Glenn then asked if he could bring back some of the ideas that BSC group had presented to them in the past regarding the Goden, Orchard, School Street neighborhood. He noted that some concerns had been raised for some of the proposed work in the Orchard Street area, but that there were other less ideas that if separated out from the overall plan could be good projects on their own. Anne agreed and noted that she understands that there are costs involved with implementing these ideas.

Mary then brought up neighborhood concerns in the Goden/School/Orchard Street area. There are many concerns regarding speed. Mary said that we need to prioritize mitigations that are fair, mitigate speed, and help to calm the traffic. Anne then asked Sgt. Garabedian to weigh in. Garabedian shared that a few months ago the PD put out the speed radar machine and then he also had been on traffic duty in that area recently. He had not seen any speed issues, but noted that he obviously is not in the area as much as the neighbors are. Garabedian said that he would need to put out the traffic counter in the area to get a better understanding of the speed issue. Patrice then brought up that the TAC had created a policy for traffic calming that was adopted by the Select Board that contains a process for the neighborhood to go through to see if traffic calming members are warranted. Patrice suggested that this committee look at that policy since it was adopted by the Select Board, and to have continuity across committees.

Larry then asked about restriping crosswalks in the neighborhood and Concord Avenue, and was wondering if there is any knowledge of what streets are set to be addressed for gas work by National Grid. He said that this would be helpful when deciding the safe routes to school. Jay said that they would need to see the proposed map of routes first and then work through National Grid's schedule to be able to say when work is expected to be completed.

Anne then reviewed what she had on her list as unresolved issues raised by the HSTWG

- Vertical curbing on Goden Street
- Parking of High School students on Concord Ave with prevention of parking by students on side streets

- Create plan to improve sidewalks in the Goden/Orchard/School neighborhood and deal with the roots. Glenn had mentioned that DPW has a list of sidewalk condition ratings, Jay agreed to scan and share the list with the committee members
- Discuss walking routes with the School Administration
- No parking restrictions on Goden Street at this time
- Verify that all crosswalks in the school neighborhoods have been repainted before school starts
- Glenn will provide info on School Street to the committee
- Create a holistic recommendation for the entire neighborhood (Goden/Orchard/School) which would include the restricted right hand turns coming off of Concord Ave.
- What observation is needed in the fall to see the traffic issues first hand? Does this need to be completed by a small group of volunteers? Roy mentioned that he expected that there would be many neighbors who would be sending feedback as well as Police details in the area. Larry mentioned that his idea is just to be proactive to let residents know that the Town is taking a proactive approach to this new traffic and signal. Glenn said that it would make sense for the committee to create a uniform “checklist” to make sure that each person of this group is looking for the same thing.
- Light at Cottage Street is still dangerous, especially for children crossing. Glenn reminded the group that this was a replacement for a system that had broken and Belmont Light had done this replacement. Bill mentioned that as the Building Committee looks west of Harris Field that this crossing will most likely come up again and that the controller box that they are installing at the intersection Concord and Goden will have enough space to control that signal as well. It is not a solution that will help for this year, but it is an open option for the future

The HSTWG decided for the next meeting date to be August 16, 2021 at 5PM

Larry moved to adjourn at 6:23PM, Mary seconded

*Minutes are as approved by Vice-Chair Anne Paulsen