

Town of Belmont, MA

Traffic Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting December 9, 2010

Members present: Linda Nickens, Laurence Macdonald, Dana Miller, Peter Curro, Tommasina Olson, Ron Sacca.

Ex-Officio members present: Glenn Clancy, PE, Sgt. Kevin Shea, BPD.

Also present: BSC Group representatives: Peter J. Briere, PE; Charles A. Kalauskas, PE; Marybeth T. Murphy, RLA, LEED AP. Many residents and business representatives were in attendance. The BSC Group had a sign in sheet which will become a part of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Linda Nickens, Chair.

Belmont Center Public Forum 3:

Linda Nickens introduced the BSC Group.

Peter Briere, of the BSC Group reviewed the purpose of project, outline, process and schedule. (See October 2010 minutes) He also presented a review of previous meetings. Calendar of remaining meetings as follows:

January 13 – Final Public input

Late January/February – BOS Presentation.

Leonard Street: Moore Street to Alexander Avenue

Suggestions: 6 Ft. Neckdowns to shorten crosswalks, Reverse Angle Parking, Widen sidewalks.

Alex Burke asked about the relocation of the Bus Stop at Moore Street and HP Accessibility. Kevin Foley would like to Leonard St. made one-way. PB responded that 2 way pairings were looked at but not feasible. PB recommended we leave Leonard St. as a 2 way. Street. Gerard Natoli opposes bicycle lanes on Leonard Street.

Kevin Foley suggested we look into reverse diagonal parking. PB stated that more traffic accidents occur with angle parking than with parallel parking. Gerard Natoli asked about a parking deck. Glenn Clancy replied about cost of garage/deck having been studied before.

Therefore the parking deck/garage is beyond our scope. GN stated that 50% of lights are out under the bridge. GC stated that the town does not own the bridge. Matt Sullivan, resident and TMM opposed to angle parking. Ray Miyrds asked are we encouraging people to bike to the center to shop or to pass through and will provision be made for parking of bicycles. PB sais that the state mandates bike lanes for state funded projects. Also, 16 ft. is required from center line to sidewalks. A brief discussion about the route of bike trail, bike parking and location of bike racks followed. Jay Szklut said "Don't throw out new ideas", reverse angle parking issued on the west coast. There are tradeoffs, we need to focus and come up with a parking management plan. Sara Oaklander suggests we maintain parking, don't focus on cars, and don't get carried away. Ian, a resident would like wide sidewalks, and a bike lane. PB said that the BFD requires a 3 lane width for its apparatus to pass through the Center safely. A resident would like the benches facing each other to encourage community and friendship. Tommasina Olson (TAC) calls for socialization, but not to forget that many people cannot walk to Belmont Center. There should be a balance and communal mixing. Good parking policy can bring business to the community. Don Mercier, resident, TMM, suggested that 1 more parking space be created by Frankie's Catch of the Day and opposes bumpouts. GC stated that you lose 1 parking space for crosswalk, pedestrian must be able to see motorists (visual both ways). Crosswalks should be shortest possible distance. PB said that there should be no parking within 20' of a crosswalk. Jeff Wheeler, CD, spoke about benches and streetscape. PB stated that Leonard Street varies in width from 65' to 76' from Moore St. to Alexander Ave. Angle parking would cut into 1 ½ feet of sidewalk width. Marybeth Murphy, BSC, spoke about sidewalks, benches, streetscape and the difference between 10' and 14' sidewalks. Jeff W. asked about type of trees. Gerard Natoli said that he spoken with 42 of the 45 street level merchants and all agree that the crosswalks need better lighting at night. Ron Sacca (TAC) said that the safety of streets is paramount, lighting of crosswalks needed, and that we don't need an extreme makeover. He questioned about the funding of the project. Preserve Belmont Center, clean up. He inquired about the \$95,000.00 cost of the BSC study for Belmont Center. Peter Curro (TAC) asked about raised crosswalks in Belmont Center. GC said that the issue of raised crosswalks is still on the table. Another resident asked about the cost of project per taxpayer.

Concord Avenue: Leonard Street to Pleasant Street

PB, BSC, presented an overview of this stretch on Concord Ave. Town owned land by railroad platform, proposed widening of Concord Avenue to provide additional parking, modified access to pedestrian tunnel, widen sidewalks for bicycles for a net gain of 8 parking spaces. Improve and create better HP access to railroad platform. No traffic change. A resident of Somerset St. asked about the cost of the work on Concord Ave. Don Mercier asked about creating parking on the town owned land by the railroad. GC feels we need to do this work in phases. Sara Oaklander feels that it is feasible to add parking on the town owned land by the railroad. A

resident questioned how the bicyclists would exit the bike trail and how would it conflict with pedestrians. It was suggested that better lighting and shortening the length of the pedestrian tunnel would be helpful. Kevin Foley suggested improvement in available parking with green space. Do we push traffic out? What is tradeoff? How convenient? It was suggested that maybe Concord Ave. be made one-way from Pleasant St. to Leonard St. and Moore Street be made one-way from Leonard St. to Pleasant St. Ian Todres asked about bicycle travel on Concord Ave. GC replied that bicyclists should obey the rules of the road. Ron Sacca feels that the wall and wrought iron fence should be preserved and present walkway can be tweaked to accommodate HP access. PB stated that the stones would be used for the new wall. He also stated that we would have to deal with the railroad as far as engineering and property line issues. Jay Szklut asked about the effect of 1 way traffic on both Concord Ave. and Moore St. Don Mercier asked about the cost of moving the wall and feels that parking could be created on the railroad platform level.

Leonard Street/Concord Ave./Channing Road

Existing vs. Proposed

Ron Sacca asked about left turns from under bridge to Concord Ave. PB response much safer for pedestrians and motor vehicles. Off Peak hours would have better traffic flow, loss of 8 or 9 parking spaces. A resident inquired about pedestrian and bike crossing Concord Ave. to Channing Road by bridge. Sara Oaklander asked about signals, stop signs and traffic patterns. GC replied that signalization would cause backups, as per an earlier BSC study. Peter Schilling asked about more delays at rush hour. PB, BSC, answered "if we impede people will adjust-leave earlier or later". Will go back to way it is. Jeff Wheeler asked why do we need taxi stands. He hears a lot about traffic through Belmont. A resident asked if we would increase traffic elsewhere. Don Mercier is against traffic signals and opposes removal of parking spaces by the Belmont Savings Bank. GC a new enlarged Town Green would provide additional green space. Kevin Foley suggested a compromise; parallel parking instead of angle parking by Belmont Savings Bank. Look for a balance, parking is important. Alex Burke suggested 1 hr parking in the Town Hall Lot and that TH employees park in the Claflin Street Lot. Ian Todres favors green space by BSB and questions the crossings on the south side of the bridge. Ron Sacca feels that right now "it works, why mess with it, feels we will create more back ups, let it be".

Roundabout doesn't have the capacity to handle volume during peak hours. Might be o.k. during off-peak hours, lose 7 parking spaces, good for bikes and pedestrians. A brief discussion on Moore St. impacts and conflicts if made one-way followed. GC said we should try to make Leonard St. less chaotic and eliminate conflicts.

Alexander Ave. & Claflin St./Channing Rd. & Claflin St./Channing Rd. & Cross St.

Alexander Ave. and Claflin St. would get additional crosswalk markings. Proposals would narrow down the width of intersection at Channing Rd and Claflin St. Channing Rd and Cross St. would stay at its present configuration. JF asked about a raised crosswalk on Channing Road to help slow down vehicles. He feels that Belmont Center is a prime location for raised crosswalks. GC replied that he and TAC feel that raised crosswalks are for pedestrian safety and not for speed control.

Concord Ave. & Common St/Common St. & Royal Road

Kevin Foley said that the BCPS Committee had previously looked at the possibility of additional parking on Royal Road. Ian Todres said that a second stairway to the railroad platform on the east side of the bridge would be helpful. (behind Paradise Flowers) There is already a paved platform there. Sara Oaklander concerned about access to the Unitarian Church if the Concord Ave. media is extended. GC said that creation of a new stairway to the railroad platform would raise HP accessibility issues.

Kevin Foley said that we should provide some commuter parking. Jeff W said that the MBTA is making commuter rail stations HP accessible and considering closing stations that don't have commuter rail parking. Don M feels that the commuter parking should be for town residents. Dana Miller (TAC) and Jeff Wheeler both discussed parking in church lots. KF mentioned the recent removal of trash barrels in Belmont Center. Linda Nickens (TAC) and GC feel we need to look at the immediate improvements. GC said that the pavement around Belmont Center needs to be fixed – around plan. Kevin Foley said that businesses embrace parking and green space. Sara Oaklander – Be creative – Look for parking. Bike and Pedestrian safety on Leonard St. Alexander Ave. to Concord Ave. Kevin Foley asked about timeline. GC reported that TAC would likely report to the BOS in late January or February/March 2011. A brief discussion on funding and cost estimating followed. GC would look at funding Leonard St. (Alexander Ave. to Concord Ave.) as phase 1. A debt exclusion would be one way of funding. Don Mercier suggested a betterment tax for business owners.

End of Public Forum.

Minutes: November 4, 2010

Tommasina Olson moved and Dana Miller seconded that the November 4, 2010 minutes be approved. It was unanimously VOTED: To approve the November 4, 2010 minutes.

Old Business: Brettwood Road, Sgt Shea will recommend BPD enforcement.

Moved to adjourn: Tommasina Olson moved and Dana Miller seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurence P. Macdonald, Clerk