

Town of Belmont, MA Traffic Advisory Committee (T.A.C.)

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BELMONT, MA

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Meeting Minutes, March 14, 2013

Members present: Peter Curro, Larry MacDonald (Vice Chair), Don Mercer, Dana Miller (Clerk), Linda Nickens (Chair), and Matt Sullivan.

Ex-Officio Members present: Sargent Ben Mailho; Town Engineer, Glenn Clancy

Also present: See attached sign-in list.

Linda called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

Minutes: The committee unanimously approved the minutes from the October, 2012 meeting. One change was made to the November, 2012 minutes: the spelling of the last name of a meeting participant (Catherine Stalberg) was corrected.

Winter Street:

Area residents explained that Winter Street is heavily travelled, car speed is relatively high, there are no sidewalks, and there is only one crosswalk--which is inconveniently placed. Families that come up Robinwood to cross into the Country Club area need to walk along Winter Street to the Marsh Street crosswalk. Traffic danger at the intersection of Winter and Mill is exacerbated because people put on their right directional turn signals when they turn from Mill onto Winter and these signals remain on even as the cars approach the Marsh street intersection. As a result, cars turning from Marsh onto Winter are led to believe that cars travelling on Winter are planning to turn right onto Marsh when the cars are continuing straight on Winter.

Residents inquired about interventions, including signs warning that children are near; a pedestrian-controlled flashing yellow/red light (like the light near the golf club), additional traffic police, and radar speed signs.

After committee discussion with participation from residents in attendance, Glenn explained that legal interventions are dependent upon documented traffic volume and speed. Sargent Mailhot will conduct a 72-hour radar-box speed study and report back to the Committee on his findings. Sargent Mailhot explained the limited number of law-enforcement officers available to monitor traffic concerns, but offered to schedule an increased police presence in this area.

Glenn suggested that the town could look into the feasibility of installing a second crosswalk on Winter Street, just north of Robinwood. Glenn suggested that the existing crosswalk be re-painted and that signage be used to alert drivers in advance of both crosswalks. Sargent Mailhot pointed out the need for night lighting at the new crosswalk and Glenn agreed that this possibility should be explored.

Town of Belmont, MA Traffic Advisory Committee (T.A.C.)

Glenn also explained that, while Belmont has no budget for building sidewalks, the town will share the cost of sidewalk construction with residents. He explained that some residents may not want sidewalk because of the new town bylaw that requires residents to clear snow from the sidewalks that border their property.

Lexington and Sycamore Streets

Pedestrian safety is a prevalent concern among residents in this neighborhood. Multiple residents reported seeing accidents and near-misses. Children walk along these streets on their way to the Butler Elementary School. A "School Zone Ends" sign is misleading—while it might pertain to a zone for the Saint Luke's School, it is not accurate, given the near-by Butler School; traffic tends to back-up at the corner of Church and Thayer—perhaps as a result of the traffic-light timing at the intersection—and this congestion contributes to the safety hazard. Furthermore, there is no sidewalk for the children walking along Sycamore to the Butler School. Drivers can not easily see the flashing light. The crossing guard is unable to stop some drivers; her crossing cone has been run over, thrown and/or stolen.

Sargent Mailhot provided information on multiple accidents in this neighborhood. He explained the potential for serious injury and mortality related to these types of accidents. Most of the accidents involve drivers leaving Sycamore, where visibility for drivers entering Lexington is poor.

Glenn observed that, by statute, the area in question is outside the school zone, but the town recognizes that many school children and other pedestrians make use of this route to the Butler School. Glenn suggested that Belmont needs to arrange a professional traffic-engineering study to gather information to be used as the basis for developing options for traffic interventions. Sargent Mailhot will conduct a speed study in the area. He has tried to provide increased law-enforcement in the area, despite manpower limitations.

Glenn explained that, as part of the Trapelo Road project, part of the roadway in question will qualify for new signage and signals. Glenn suspects that at least one of the requirements for a four-way stop sign could be met at the intersection. He would like to change the flashing yellow beacon to a red light for all four approaches to the intersection. An engineering study is a necessary first step before such remedies can be considered.

The TAC discussed the merits of installing a four-way stop sign at the intersection, but worried that it might be insufficient to achieve pedestrian and auto safety. Glenn suggested that an analysis of the experience at the recently installed four-way stop sign at School-Fairway intersection could provide information about the potential of a four-way stop to reduce danger at the Lexington-Sycamore intersection. The TAC also discussed installing a pedestrian-controlled crossing light similar to that on Concord Avenue by the High School.

Town of Belmont, MA Traffic Advisory Committee (T.A.C.)

Glenn explained to resident Elizabeth Schmidt that a four-way stop would likely result in car cueing that would block her driveway. Ms. Schmidt would prefer an intervention that did not have this result.

Area residents suggested stop signs at the Beech-Lexington intersection to slow traffic before it comes down the hill. TAC members believe such a stop sign would not address safety concerns at Sycamore.

Old Business:

- Glenn reported that there is now a new crosswalk at Fairview. The ramps will be installed by summer.
- The "Thickly Settled" sign near Victory Garden will be installed in the next week.
- The Trapelo Road project bids are \$2,000,000+ over budget. Evidently, many contractors did not submit bids because they lack the equipment to work around the MBTA wires. The two companies that did submit bids inflated their numbers because of the uncertainty about working around the wires. Evidently, the MBTA is going to replace the wire system in the next few years. The MBTA will take down the wire system for the duration of the Trapelo project and re-install the wires thereafter. The earliest possible completion date for the Trapelo project will be 2-3 years from the spring/summer start date.
- The Belmont Center project is being designed. Glenn is meeting with a working group, planning board, historical district commission, and a consultant to develop a lighting design—there is a budget for this. Glenn was hoping for State grant money to fund a significant portion of the project. Unfortunately, however, the State is currently funding only those projects that are housing related. Meanwhile, Public Works, the Belmont Water Department, and National Grid need to begin their portions of the project according to the original schedule. One funding option could involve implementing the project in phases.

By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm

Respectfully submitted, Dana Miller, Clerk



Traffic Advisory Committee

TOWN OF BELMONT

19 Moore Street
Homer Municipal Building
Belmont, Massachusetts 02478-0900
Telephone: (617) 993-2650 Fax: (617) 993-2651

Linda Nickens, Chair
Laurence Macdonald, Vice Chair
Dana Miller, Clerk

Committee Members
Peter Curro
Donald Mercier
Tommasina Olson
Matt Sullivan

Date: March 5, 2013
To: Members – Traffic Advisory Committee
From: Linda Nickens, Chair
Subject: Agenda for Meeting on **Thursday, March 14, 2013 at 7:00 PM** in **Town Hall Conference Room 2**. If you cannot attend the meeting, please contact Linda via e-mail.

7:00 Call to Order
7:00 – 7:10 Minutes (10/11/12, 11/8/12)
7:10 – 7:30 Winter Street

- Review of Neighborhood Concerns

7:30 – 7:50 Lexington Street at Sycamore Street

- Safety Concerns at Intersection

7:50 – 7:55 New Business

- No Known Items

7:55 – 8:00 Old Business

- Update Ongoing Items
 - New Crosswalk - Fairview Avenue
 - Thickly settled Sign – Mill Street
 - Trapelo Road/Belmont Street Reconstruction
 - Belmont Center

8:00 Adjourn

Cc: Board of Selectmen – Andy Rojas
David Kale, Town Administrator
Glenn R. Clancy, Town Engineer
Sgt Ben Mailhot, Belmont Police Department
Richard McLaughlin, Belmont Police Chief
Peter Castanino, Director, Department of Public Works
Karl Haglund, Planning Board

TAC 3-14-13

present

John Puma JR	120 WINTER SE
Deben Puma	120 Winter St
Cindy Papa	109 Winter St.
Judy Brown	18-A Davis Street
Sherla (Hewell)	36 SYCAMORE street
Elizabeth Schmidt	59 Lexington St.
Jim Caraco	112 Winter st.
Lisa Gibalerio	20 Chandler St.
PATRICIA McGarry	68 Sycamore St.
Ekin Cabanan	22 Vermont Rd.
Jheri Lowery	123 Winter St
Tom Lowery	123 Winter St
MARIE-LAURE SIRI	128 SYCAMORE ST. MARIE-LAURE-SIRI@HOTMAIL.COM
Robert Jensen	92 Sycamore St.
Paula Van Horn	97 SYCAMORE ST.
James P. Toyjan	96 WINTER ST. JAMES_PETER@COMCAST.NET

January 20, 2013

Traffic Advisory Committee
c/o Board of Selectman
Town of Belmont
Town Hall
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
25
2013 JAN 28 AM 1:23

Dear Committee Members:

The undersigned residents of Winter Street respectively request the installation of a raised crosswalk (similar to the one near the Highland Meadow Cemetery) to be located at the intersection of Winter Street and Robinwood Road.

Currently no crosswalk exists at this location, however, the top of Robinwood Road is a bus stop for many young children and it's imperative that motorists are able to see pedestrians sooner rather than later.

If a second crosswalk on Winter Street is not an option, please consider replacing the old faded crosswalk at the intersection of Marsh Street and Winter Street with a raised crosswalk in the interest of public safety.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joan Kerwin
Joan Kerwin, 112 Winter Street
Debra Puma
Debra Puma, 120 Winter Street
Cindy Papa
Cindy Papa, 109 Winter Street
Sherri Lowery
Sherri Lowery, 123 Winter Street
Adrianna C. Toyias
Adrianna C. Toyias, 96 Winter St

James Carceo
James Carceo, 112 Winter Street
John Puma
John Puma, 120 Winter Street
Donald Papa
Donald Papa, 109 Winter Street
Thomas Lowery
Thomas Lowery, 123 Winter Street
James P. Toyias
James P. Toyias, 96 Winter Street

Charles Needelman
Charles Needelman, 104 Winter Street

Heather Swinland
Heather Swinland 136 winter St

Jean Boycorin
137 W. indy St.

Clancy, Glenn

From: Clancy, Glenn
Sent: Tuesday, March 05, 2013 7:51 AM
To: Clancy, Glenn; 'sinasina30@yahoo.com'; 'lcnickens@verizon.net'; 'pfcirro@gmail.com'; 'Dana Miller'; 'mattsull74@yahoo.com'; 'Don Mercier (mercierbj@verizon.net)'; 'Laurence Macdonald'; 'bmailhot@belmontpd.org'
Cc: Rojas, Andres; Kale, David; McLaughlin, Richard; Castanino, Peter; 'Karl Haglund'
Subject: TAC - March 14, 2013 - Meeting
Attachments: Scanned from a Xerox multifunction device001.pdf; TAC October 11 2012.doc; tac nov 8 2012.pdf; TAC Speeding Complaints.doc; TAC Agenda 03-14-13.pdf

Good morning TAC members:

Attached is the agenda for the March 14 Meeting. We will be in Conference Room 2 in the Town Hall. I have also attached minutes from October and November 2012 and a letter received from Winter Street neighborhood residents. I e-mailed one of the residents a copy of the draft TAC guidelines for speeding complaints. (also attached)

Below is the e-mail I received regarding the intersection of Lexington Street and Sycamore Street. Hopefully Ben will have a chance to research accident history before we meet.

Thanks, Glenn

From: Patricia M. McGarry [<mailto:pmcgarry@MIT.EDU>]
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2013 11:43 AM
To: dkale@belmont-ma.gov; bmailhot@belmontpd.org; selectmen@belmont-ma.gov
Cc: 'kcordeir@cnc.com'; Patricia M. McGarry
Subject: Intersection of Lexington and Sycamore

February 28, 2013

Dear Mr. Kale, Sgt. Mailhot and Members of the Board,

I write, once again, regarding the intersection of Lexington and Sycamore Streets. Over the past two to three months alone, my children and I have counted at least 4-5 accidents. Indeed, this morning my daughter heard yet another one as she was eating her breakfast. As I got into my car to bring my children to school, I noticed a terrible scene. The car had literally jumped over the sidewalk and landed in someone's yard. What was particularly horrifying were the two students waiting at the bus stop, just a few feet away. While I don't know if they were there at the time the accident occurred, consider the consequences if they were.

As I have said before, the blinking light and pedestrian sign are simply not enough. I am asking the town to install a traffic light, or at the very least, speed bumps. What kind of tragedy will it take for the town to take this issue seriously?

Sincerely,

Patricia McGarry

Clancy, Glenn

From: Benjamin Mailhot <bmailhot@belmontpd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 11:38 AM
To: 'Sarah Griffith'
Cc: Selectmens Mailbox; Clancy, Glenn; chief@belmontpd.org
Subject: RE: Sidewalk Parking and Pedestrian Safety Issues on School Street

Ms. Griffith,

There is a Traffic Advisory Committee meeting tomorrow night 7:00 PM at the Town Hall and I will discuss this issue at the meeting. TAC Meetings are open to the public so if you wish to attend to present more information you may do so.

Regards,

Sgt. Mailhot

- SIGNAGE
• TALK TO DPW RE PAINTING

Benjamin J. Mailhot
Sergeant - Traffic & Records Division
Belmont Police Department
460 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Emergency Call 911

Phone: 617-993-2538

Email: bmailhot@belmontpd.org

From: Sarah Griffith [<mailto:sarahgriffith@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 11:33 AM
To: bmailhot@belmontpd.org; selectmen@belmont-ma.gov; Clancy, Glenn
Subject: Sidewalk Parking and Pedestrian Safety Issues on School Street

Good morning, Sergeant Mailhot,

I want to follow up and see if there is any progress on the unsafe walking conditions adjacent to the St. Joseph's church. I am sure you and all town departments/budgets have various pressures but I want to be sure this issue stays on everyone's agenda as it continues to be a problem. In the more than two months since we last exchanged emails, I have seen no improvement and no effort from the church, although Wellington continues to send email reminders that families are not to use the church lots and I believe the pre-school held at the church will be monitoring its parking lot at pick-up today. I could attach another 20 or so photos of cars continuing to park across the sidewalk, but I will just attach the two I took walking to and from Wellington at drop-off this morning. I would like to note that although the first is an adult dropping off at Wellington, the second is a churchgoer (who kindly moved her vehicle after I mentioned my children and I could not pass), so it is also often people attending church who park across the sidewalk.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help. I don't want to become a squeaky wheel but I am really concerned about all these kids forced to walk right along the edge of the street - it in the street - at its busiest time. It is really dangerous.

Oh, and I should have specifically stated this in my initial letters, but when a sidewalk is installed or painted, PLEASE include a safe median between the sidewalk and the street. There is a median at the corner of School and Common Streets and there is a median along the Wellington property, so there should also be a median all along a sidewalk adjacent to the St. Joseph's property.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Sarah Griffith

On Fri, Jan 17, 2014 at 10:24 AM, Sarah Griffith <sarahggriffith@gmail.com> wrote:
Thank you, Sergeant Mailhot. I truly appreciate the responsiveness of you, the Chief, Mr. Clancy, and anyone else working to improve this situation.

Sincerely,
Sarah

On Fri, Jan 17, 2014 at 9:42 AM, Benjamin Mailhot <bmailhot@belmontpd.org> wrote:

Ms. Griffith,

On behalf of Chief McLaughlin, I am writing to you to let you know that we have received your packet of information concerning the sidewalk parking and pedestrian safety issues on School Street near the St. Joseph's Church parking lot and the Wellington School. The Belmont Police Department will be working with other town departments on this issue to come up with a solution that will improve pedestrian safety in that area. Any changes to pavement markings, if approved, would have to wait until the spring to ensure that the paint will properly set. In the mean time I will be reaching out to staff at the Wellington School and St. Joseph's Church to make them aware of the issues that you informed us about. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me via email or the phone number below.

Regards,

Sgt. Mailhot

Benjamin J. Mailhot
Sergeant - Traffic & Records Division
Belmont Police Department

460 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Emergency Call 911

Phone: 617-993-2538

Email: bmailhot@belmontpd.org

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Sarah Griffith

SarahGGriffith@gmail.com

--

Sarah Griffith

SarahGGriffith@gmail.com

--

Sarah Griffith

SarahGGriffith@gmail.com



Gmail - lack of sidewalk near Wellington school

lack of sidewalk near Wellington school

Sarah Griffith <sarahgriffith@gmail.com>
To: gclancy@belmont-ma.gov

Wed, Jan 8, 2014 at 1:15 PM

Good afternoon, Mr. Clancy, and happy new year. Attached please find a letter regarding cars parking inappropriately at St. Joseph's Church near Wellington School. I can be reached at the information at the top of the letter to discuss.

Thank you very much,
Sarah Griffith

—
Sarah Griffith
SarahGGriffith@gmail.com

 **Blocked Sidewalk photos with dates.pdf**
12743K

Clancy, Glenn <gclancy@belmont-ma.gov>
To: Sarah Griffith <sarahgriffith@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 8, 2014 at 1:23 PM

Hi Sarah:

Thanks for the information. I will forward this to the police department. We will follow up with the church and try to get them in line. I assume the police can ticket vehicles blocking the sidewalk but I'm sure they prefer to give the church a chance to correct the problem before they start enforcement.

Thanks, Glenn Clancy

From: Sarah Griffith [mailto:sarahgriffith@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 08, 2014 1:16 PM
To: Clancy, Glenn
Subject: lack of sidewalk near Wellington school

[Quoted text hidden]

Sarah Griffith <sarahgriffith@gmail.com>
To: "Clancy, Glenn" <gclancy@belmont-ma.gov>

Wed, Jan 8, 2014 at 3:12 PM

Hi Glenn,
Thanks for your very quick reply. I appreciate the follow-up.

Sarah

[Quoted text hidden]

—

Sarah Griffith
SarahGGriffith@gmail.com

Sarah Griffith <sarahgriffith@gmail.com>
To: selectmen@belmont-ma.gov
Cc: "Clancy, Glenn" <gclancy@belmont-ma.gov>

Wed, Jan 15, 2014 at 10:37 PM

Dear Selectmen,

Attached please find two letters regarding cars repeatedly parking across what should be the sidewalk on School Street. I initially wrote to Glenn Clancy last week, who was very responsive. I am not in any way trying to go over/around Mr. Clancy here. I was thankful for his promptly reply and do feel he was earnest in his desire to address the issue. The reason I am writing to you as well is that some other parents have urged me to also make you, the Selectmen, aware of the situation.

Thank you all for your time,

Sarah Griffith

[Quoted text hidden]

—

Sarah Griffith
SarahGGriffith@gmail.com

2 attachments



2014.01.08 letter to Glenn Clancy.pdf
12743K



2014.01.15 letter to Selectmen.pdf
983K



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Sidewalk Parking and Pedestrian Safety Issues on School Street

Benjamin Mailhot <bmailhot@belmontpd.org>

Fri, Jan 17, 2014 at 9:42 AM

Reply-To: bmailhot@belmontpd.org

To: SarahGGriffith@gmail.com

Cc: chief@belmontpd.org, "Clancy, Glenn" <gclancy@belmont-ma.gov>

Ms. Griffith,

On behalf of Chief McLaughlin, I am writing to you to let you know that we have received your packet of information concerning the sidewalk parking and pedestrian safety issues on School Street near the St. Joseph's Church parking lot and the Wellington School. The Belmont Police Department will be working with other town departments on this issue to come up with a solution that will improve pedestrian safety in that area. Any changes to pavement markings, if approved, would have to wait until the spring to ensure that the paint will properly set. In the mean time I will be reaching out to staff at the Wellington School and St. Joseph's Church to make them aware of the issues that you informed us about. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me via email or the phone number below.

Regards,

Sgt. Mailhot

Benjamin J. Mailhot
Sergeant - Traffic & Records Division
Belmont Police Department
460 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Emergency Call 911

Phone: 617-993-2538

Email: bmailhot@belmontpd.org

Sarah Griffith
57 Common Street
Belmont, MA 02478
SarahGGriffith@gmail.com
617-932-1884 home

January 8, 2014

Mr. Glenn Clancy
Director of Community Development
Town of Belmont
Homer Municipal Building, 2nd Floor
19 Moore Street
Belmont, MA 02478

Re: Unmarked sidewalk along School Street at St. Joseph's Church and dangerous parking there

Dear Mr. Clancy,

I am a resident of Common Street and a parent of three children; my oldest child is in kindergarten at the Roger Wellington School. I walk to and from Wellington four times a day on most days (the mornings that my middle child attends preschool I often use the school's rolling drop-off). During our walks to and from Wellington I most often have three children with me age five and under and, and if we have a play date, I have had as many as five children walking with me. As you will see in the attached photos, we have repeatedly encountered unsafe walking conditions (extensive photos are not to be nit-picky but to show that this is an ongoing problem; our passage to/from school is blocked at least once a week).

My primary concern is the lack of a marked sidewalk along School Street adjacent to St. Joseph's Church's parking area. There is a sidewalk at the corner of School and Common (along the lovely new stone wall) and again in front of the Wellington School, but in between it is just St. Joseph's asphalt parking lot rolling down to the street or the grassy edge of the street. In early fall I noticed that the lot was resealed and restriped, but there is no striping delineating a sidewalk. Cars consistently park outside of the yellow marked parking spaces which leaves no space to walk without going into the street. I can't imagine a private property owner is allowed to encroach the public way. Since this is in the block of an elementary school attended by several hundred children, I request that the town provide white striping as is painted on the sidewalk at curb cuts in front of Wellington School. (In all honesty I think there should be a proper poured sidewalk for that entire stretch, but I realized the town has ongoing budget pressures so I think a quicker and more cost-effective solution is to paint a sidewalk to raise people's awareness.) Further, delineating a sidewalk will require the property owner to clear it in the case of snow, further ensuring the safety of children and families walking to and from school.

As background, the Wellington principal and PTO have sent numerous emails requesting that parents do not park in the St. Joseph's lot. A parent from the nursery school located in St. Joseph's sent an email to the Belmont Parents Group (google email group with approximately 700 families) requesting Wellington parents leave the lot free for the Nursery School parents to use, as when the lot gets overfilled it creates unsafe conditions. When I see someone idling in a car parked outside of the yellow striped spots, I have knocked on the car window and respectfully explained that when cars park outside of the painted spaces my children and I have to walk into the street to get past. Thus, several people have tried to address this issue but have had little impact.

I have also considered taking an alternate route to and from school, but doing so would be less safe. The alternate route would require us crossing the street twice rather than once, at crosswalks in the middle of the block (on Common at the Episcopal Church, where cars rarely stop, and between Underwood pool hill and Wellington). The route we currently take, crossing Common and School at their intersection, allows us to cross the street just once rather than twice, at a traffic light with a walk sign, and the intersection is attended by a crossing guard. Thus I do not think it is my responsibly to change my walking route to a less safe road crossing in an attempt to reach a safer sidewalk. Rather, I think it is the town's responsibility to limit private property encroachment on the sidewalk easement and maintain a safe passage for school children and their families. I will be walking this route for next 9 years and very much hope it will be safe for everyone to travel.

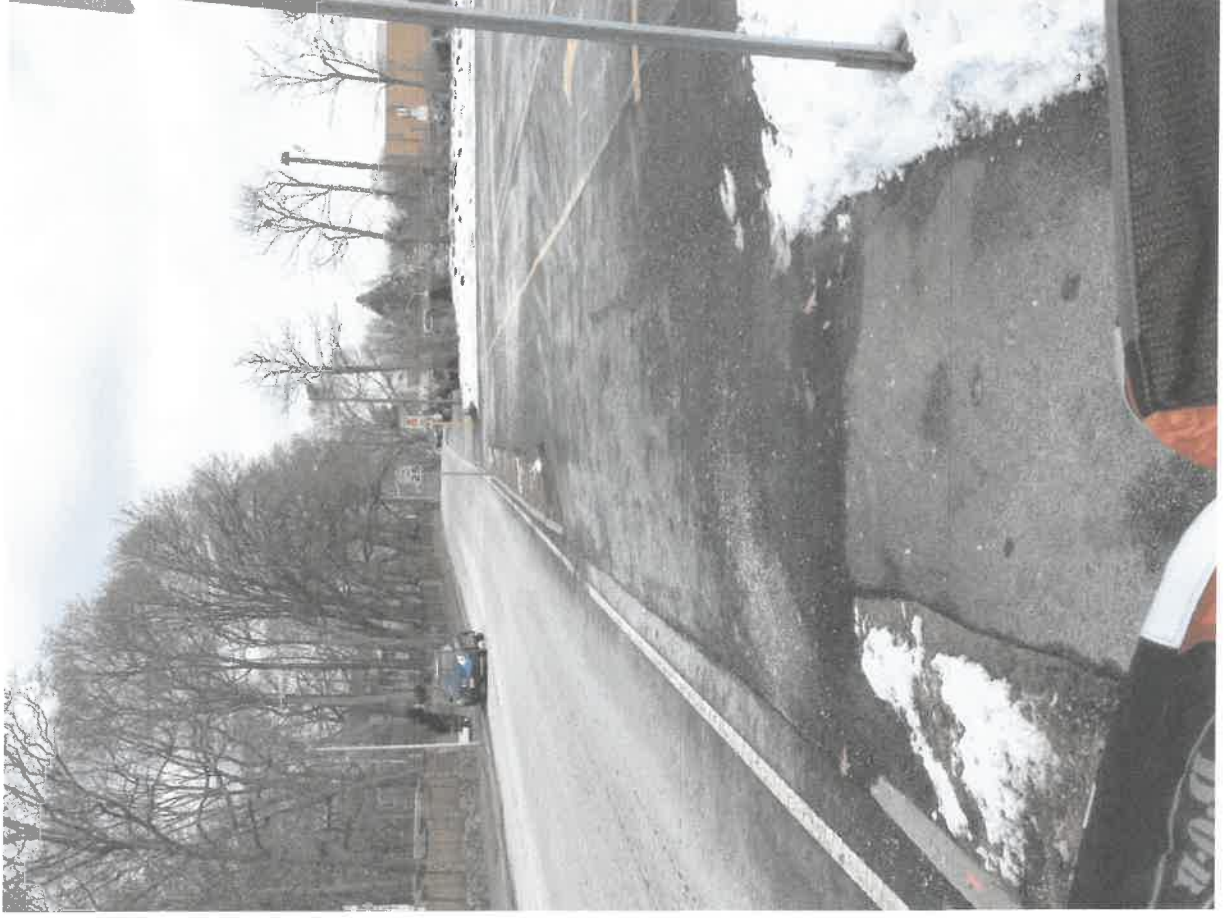
Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of this matter. I imagine you must get many pressures from many angles and I genuinely appreciate you considering this a public safety issue with a relatively inexpensive fix.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Sarah Griffith

Parking lot where sidewalk should be, as-is when empty
(photo taken Dec 11, 2013)



Requested Striping

(these are two curb cuts on same side of School Street in front of Wellington School)



October 3, 2013 – pickup



October 9, 2013 – pickup



October 22, 2013 – pickup



November 19, 2013 - pickup



November 20, 2013 -- early release pickup



First parking lot closer to Common Street entirely blocked by a line of cars



Second parking lot closer to Wellington also blocked by cars.

November 20, 2013 – early release pickup (continued)

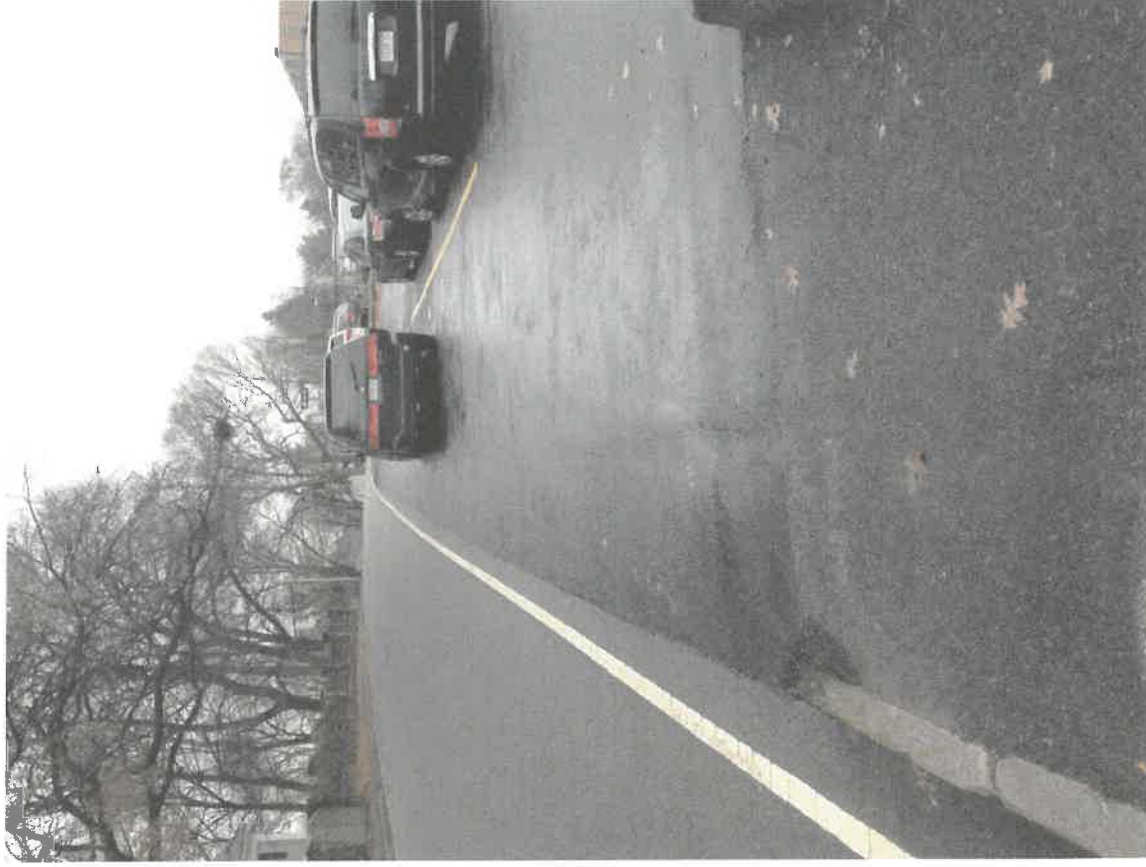


Cars diagonally parked along chain link fence; the first two cars are parked outside of the yellow striped spaces.



Parking lot closest to Common Street

November 22, 2013 - pickup



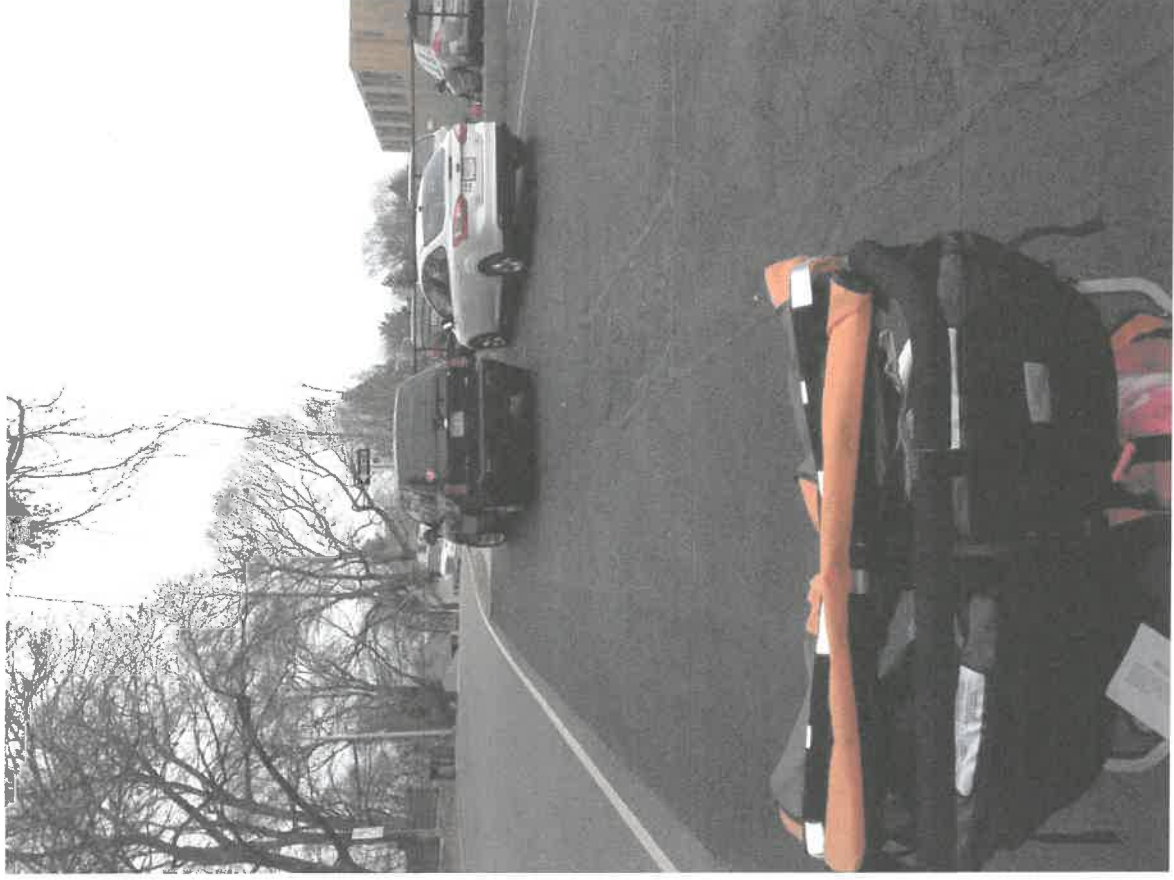
November 25, 2013 - pickup



December 4, 2013 – Wednesday pickup (1:40 pm – School Street two lanes of vehicular traffic)

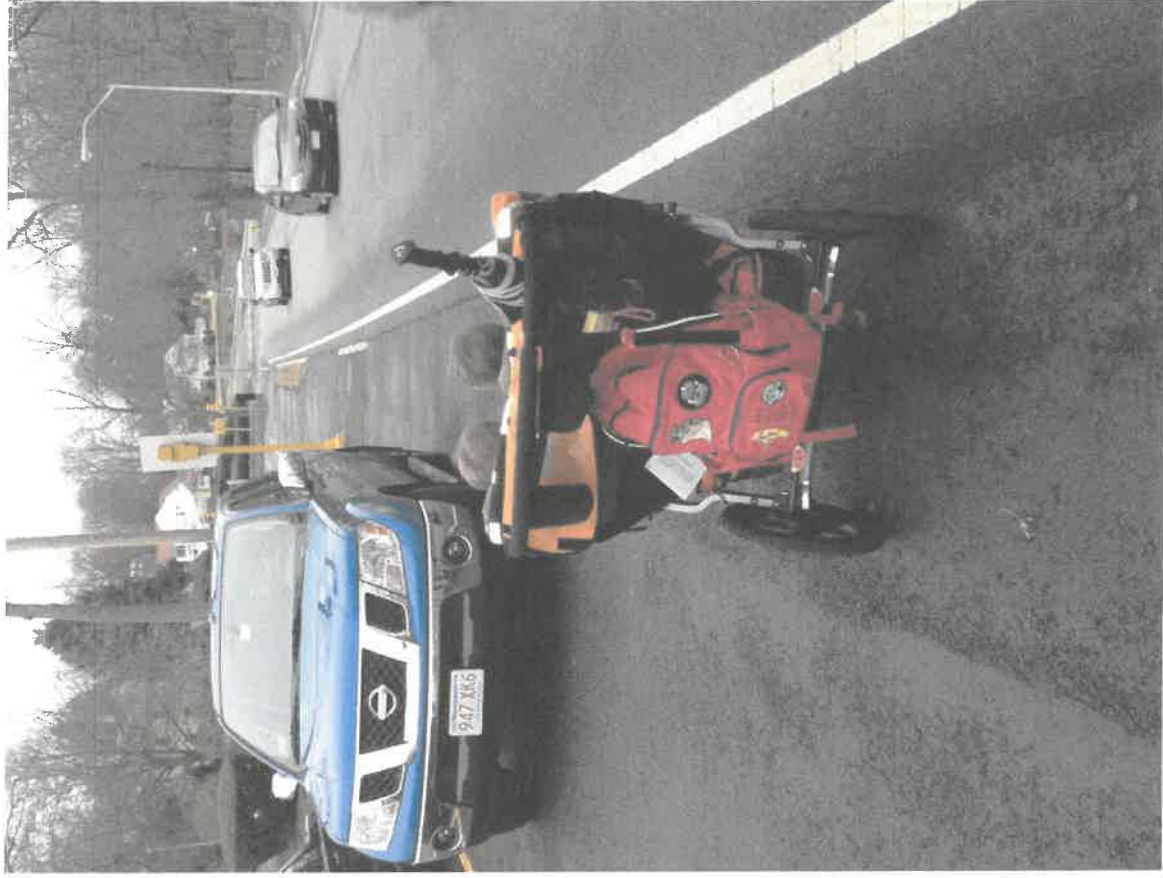


December 4, 2013 – Wednesday pickup (continued)

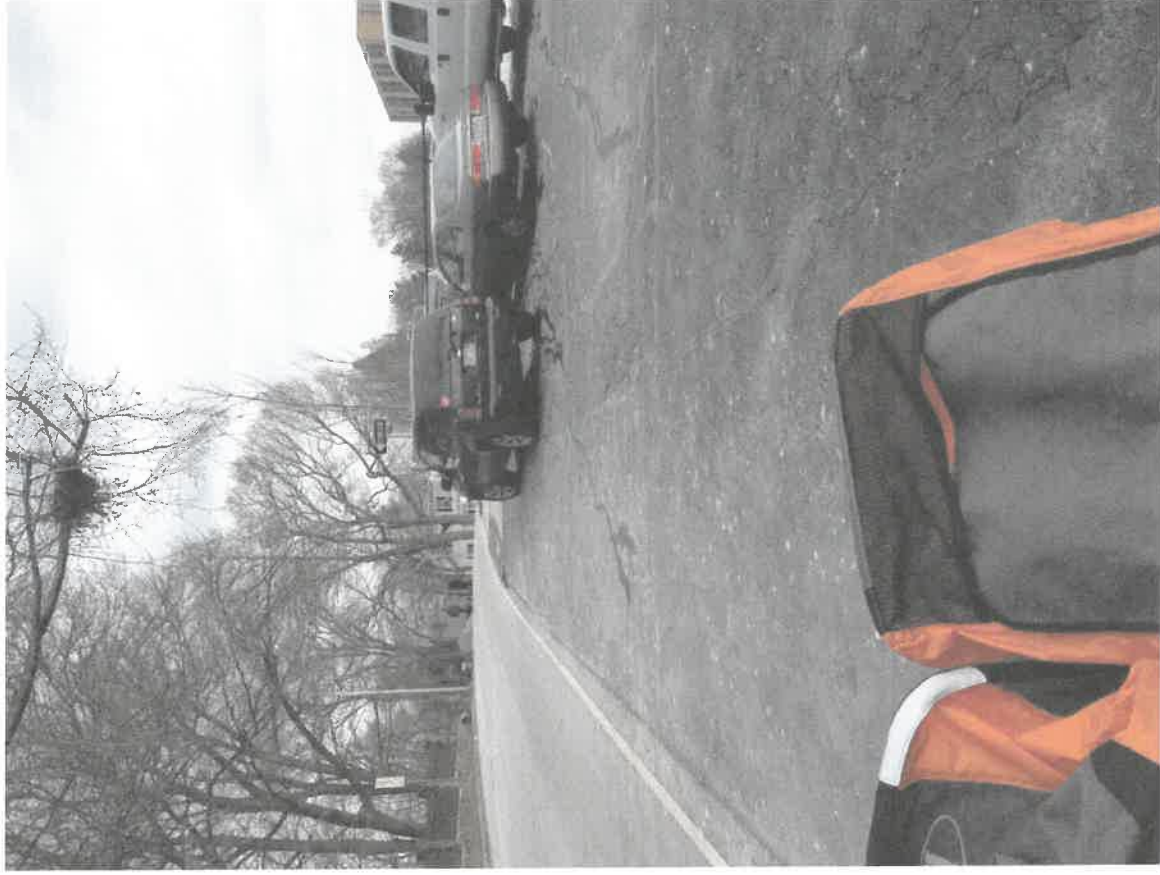


First two cars are parked outside of yellow painted spaces.

December 6, 2013 - pickup



December 11, 2013 – Wednesday pickup (1:40 pm = School Street two lanes of traffic)



December 11, 2013 – (continued)



First two vehicles are parked outside of yellow striping.

December 18, 2013 -- drop-off



December 18, 2013 – (continued)



Truck is parked outside of yellow spaces.

December 19, 2013 – pickup (walking to pickup)



December 19, 2013 – pickup (returning from pickup)



January 7, 2014 – pickup (walking to pickup)



January 7, 2014 – pickup (walking from pickup)



Late December / early January -- my husband took this one of an evening event at the church



Sarah Griffith
57 Common Street
Belmont, MA 02478
SarahGGriffith@gmail.com
617-932-1884 home

January 15, 2014

Board of Selectmen
Town of Belmont
Belmont Town Hall
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Re: Unmarked sidewalk along School Street at St. Joseph's Church and dangerous parking there

Dear Selectmen,

I write to bring your attention to an ongoing problem of cars parking across what should be the sidewalk along St. Joseph's Church on School Street. Very frequently cars park in the St. Joseph's lots, particularly at Wellington drop-off and pick-up times despite repeated emails not to do so (sent by the Wellington principal and parents affiliated with the preschool held within St. Joseph's building), but parking across the sidewalk also occurs during what seem to be church functions (such as this morning). My primary concern is that cars park outside of the painted parking spaces and encroach what should be the sidewalk but is not demarcated as such, forcing me to walk in the street with my three children and any friends we may have with us. I have a child who turned one last week; I either "wear" her or she rides in a stroller. My middle child is four and my oldest in kindergarten; they often need their hands held. So I am often with one stroller and a child in hand, or a double stroller and child in hand. There needs to be safe passage for me and similar families with young children.

I sent a letter (also attached) to Mr. Glenn Clancy last week, and his response was prompt, professional, and respectful. Please do not take this subsequent letter to reflect negatively on that exchange -- rather, I was very impressed by how quickly he got back to me. I realize our email exchange was only 7 days ago and things may not get fixed that quickly, so I am not trying to run this further up the ladder without giving him adequate time to resolve it; rather I aim to broaden awareness among town officials in hopes of collaboration and finding a satisfactory solution.

The blocked sidewalk persisted at pick-up on Friday, at pick-up yesterday and at drop-off this morning so I thought I would make you aware of the situation and implore you to please delineate a sidewalk along School Street from the corner of Common Street to the Wellington School. As I stated in my letter of last week, I honestly believe the town should provide a proper curb and sidewalk, but I know there are myriad pressures on the town's budget so I propose a simpler solution of painting white striping or "no parking" lettering along both of the parking lots belonging to St. Joseph's Church. This may even fall under the responsibility of the church because it had its lots resurfaced and re-striped in the fall and neglected to mark out safe passage for pedestrians.

Yesterday I knocked on two car windows (without taking a photo) and explained to the drivers that they were not parked in legal spaces and were blocking the sidewalk. One mother said, "Thanks for letting me know" while the other exasperated mother told me, "But I have two kids to pick up so I had to park here! The other lots were full!" Well, I walk with my three children, and today we had a play date so I had four in my care; the selfishness of a few drivers parking illegally obstructs pedestrian passage for the many families who use that route.

As it happened, walking home after those two encounters I noticed a Belmont police officer parked in the All Saint's parking lot so I approached and asked him his thoughts on the issue. We could see the site from where we were talking and I showed him the photos I had just taken. He agreed that this is a safety issue and suggested I contact you, the Selectmen, in addition to Mr. Clancy. He stated that although anything within six feet of a curb is town property and could be ticketed by law, the area in question has no markings or signage (and no actual curb!) so it would be difficult for the police to ticket there.

Several people have made efforts to address the parking generally.

- The Wellington principal has sent numerous emails to the Wellington community stating that Wellington parents are not allowed to use the St. Joseph's lots.
- A parent from the pre-school held within St. Josephs has send two emails on the Belmont Parents email group (I believe 700+ members) asking that Wellington parents do not use the St. Joseph's lots but leave them free for parents who actually have children to pick up from the St. Joseph's building.
- I have knocked on a handful of car windows and very politely stated, "Excuse me, but when cars park outside of the yellow lines it encroaches the sidewalk and my children and I are unable to pass without walking in the street."

To date, these endeavors have had no effect, and even people who seem to be at the church legitimately and park in the lot closest to Common Street still park outside of the striping as happened this morning (see the last photos below). This is a continual safety issue – my two letters contain photos from SEVENTEEN different dates the sidewalk was blocked, and there are plenty of other days I didn't have my phone on me or didn't stop to take photos. Further, the issue is exacerbated in rainy or snowy conditions when visibility is decreased, snow piles take up some of the available space, and more families tend to drive.

I feel strongly that amid all these efforts it is the town's responsibility to provide safe pedestrian access to school, particularly an elementary school attended by several hundred children. Cars don't realize it is a sidewalk because there is no marking. The sidewalk easement is town property and it is the town's responsibility to ensure it is marked as such and free from obstructions. My suggestion is painting it to increase drivers' awareness but other solutions may work as well, as long as the sidewalk is clearly delineated.

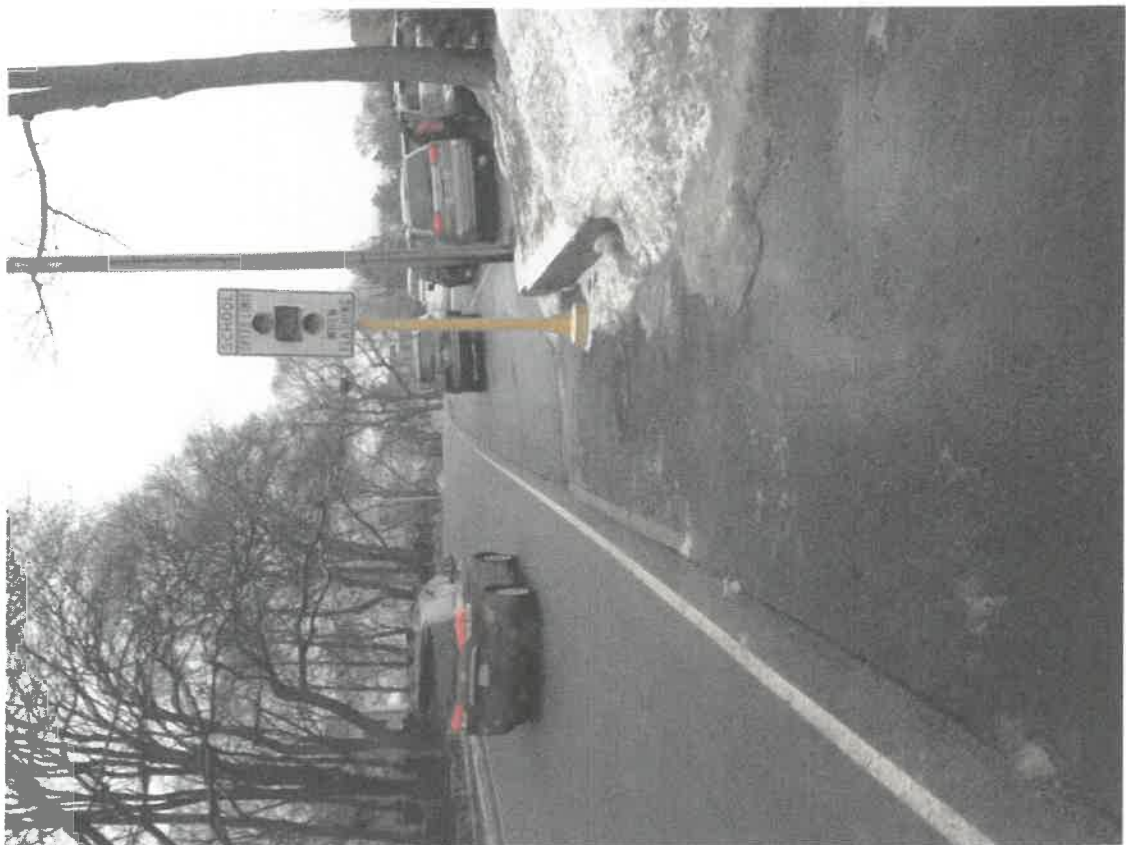
Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

Sarah Griffith

cc: Glenn Clancy by email

Friday, January 10th – pick-up



Tuesday, January 14, 2014 – pick-up



Wednesday, January 15, 2014 -- walking to drop-off



Sidebar issue: there is a similar scene every trash day -- the sidewalk is pinched with trash and recycling as you can see by the woman walking into the street to pass.

Wednesday, January 15, 2014 – returning from drop-off



Wednesday, January 15, 2014 – returning from drop-off (continued)



Almost as soon as I had passed the silver Volvo parked here I saw the white Land Rover pull in and park behind the Volvo.

Sarah Griffith
57 Common Street
Belmont, MA 02478
SarahGGriffith@gmail.com
617-932-1884 home

March 13, 2014

Traffic Advisory Committee

Re: Unmarked sidewalk along School Street at St. Joseph's Church and dangerous parking there

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this evening. Attached please find additional photos of cars continuing to obstruct safe pedestrian passage along St. Joseph's Church on the School Street side. I want to be sure the issue remains on people's agenda as it continues to be a safety concern. Even if a long-term solution may take time, I urge some action to make the situation safer as soon as possible. Thank you very much for the time and consideration you are putting into this issue and please let me know if I can help in any way.

Sincerely,



Sarah Griffith

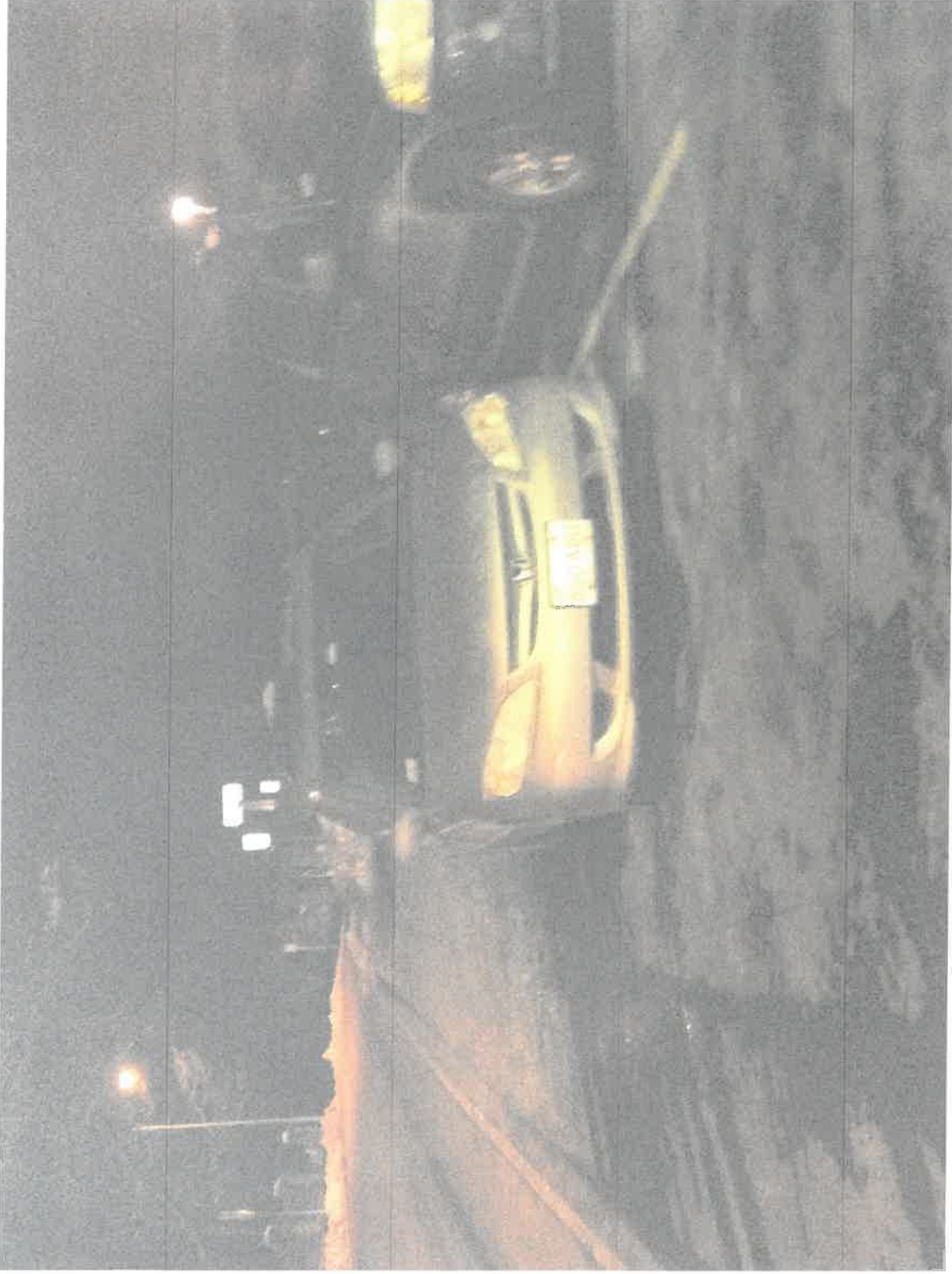
January 24, 2014 – pick-up 2:58 & 2:59pm



February 4, 2014 – late (After School Enrichment) pick-up 3:52pm



February 7, 2014 – driving by – 6:38 pm



February 8, 2014 – driving by – 5:15 pm



February 10, 2014 – driving by – 7:36 pm



(continued) February 10, 2014 – driving by – 7:36 pm



February 12, 2014 – driving by – 12:30 pm



February 12, 2014 – Wednesday pick-up – 1:40 pm



Please notice two pedestrians very close to the road to get past the cars parked outside of the spaces.

February 13, 2014 – drop-off – 8:35 am



February 13, 2014 –Thursday early release for snow pick-up – 11:35 am



February 14, 2014 – pick-up – 2:50 pm



February 16, 2014 – driving by – Sunday 10:37 am



Cars blocking sidewalk AND two cars parked on School Street virtually underneath "No Parking" sign.

(continued) February 16, 2014 – driving by – Sunday 10:37 am



(continued) February 16, 2014 – driving by – Sunday 10:37 am



March 2, 2014 – driving by – Sunday 12:26 pm



(continued) March 2, 2014 – driving by – Sunday 12:26 pm



Car parked on School Street near "No Parking" sign.

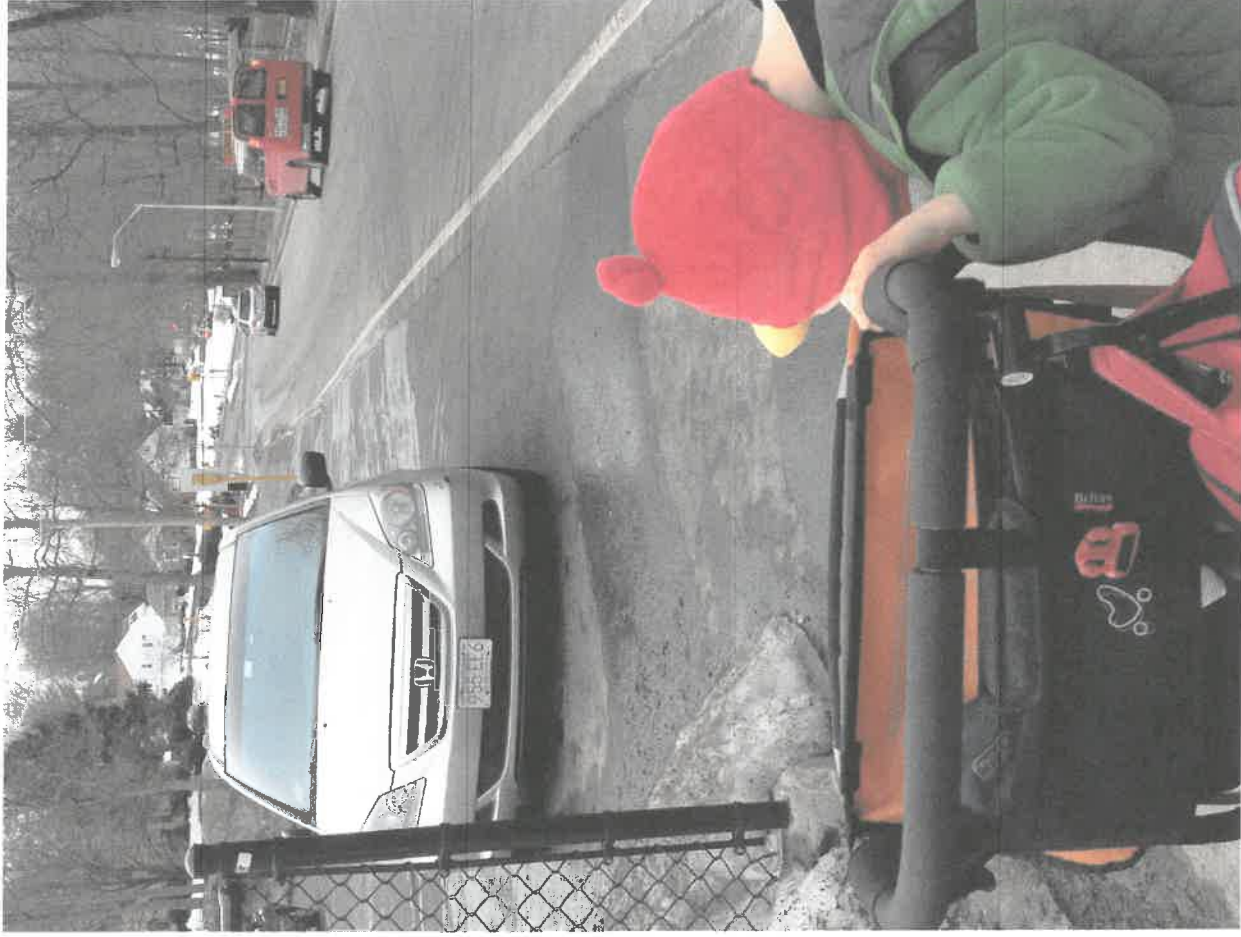
March 5, 2014 – after drop-off – 8:44 am



March 5, 2014 – pick-up – 1:50 pm



March 10 2014 — returning from pick-up — 3:11 pm



March 12, 2014 -- walking to drop-off -- 8:36 am



March 12, 2014 – returning from drop-off – 8:47 am

