

**Traffic Working Group - Middle and High School
Public Forum - Neighborhood Parking
October 21, 2021**

MINUTES

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DATE: October 29, 2021
TIME: 11:21 AM

The Forum was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Attending were: Roy Epstein, Chair, Select Board Representative, Jeffrey Held, Resident, Larry Link, Resident, Ranganath Nayak, Resident, Martin November, Vice Chair, Resident, Jeffrey Roth, Transportation Advisory Committee, (TAC), Representative, Alex Thurston, Resident, Mary Wybieralla, Secretary, Resident, Jon Marshall, Asst. TA, representing Patrice Garvin

Roy Epstein provided an overview of the Committee and shared a presentation focusing on how BHS students are getting to school this year and where students are parking. He explained that the forum was intended for the Committee to get input from residents on these issues.

Resident Comments:

Amy Tananbaum, 21 Goden Street: She advocates an integrated solution. We need to look at the root of the problem. We are incentivizing students to drive. We need to think about how student parking and driving on neighborhood streets impacts accessibility.

Police and Fire need to be involved in these discussions.

Parking fees should be increased. This may cause fewer students parking.

Make sure cars are not blocking driveways

Permits for residents to park on their streets

One side of street parking during school hours

Safe drop off plans

Enforcement-and ticketing

Gigi Saltonstall, 17 Oak Street: In some ways, doesn't mind cars parking on neighborhood streets. It slows cars down. She cannot get out of her driveway. Worries about Police and Fire access. She observes many students parking on Oak Street and crossing Concord Ave. at the end of Oak, not using crosswalk. It is difficult to restrict parking, who would enforce these restrictions?

Anne Marie Mahoney, Goden Street: There are 2 types of parking problems:

Students parking all day

Parents picking students up at school dismissal

This is bad decision made by the School Dept. They are pushing their function onto residential streets. What is the plan when construction is completed? These streets were not designed for the quantity of traffic. When it snows, there will be real problems.

She suggests: Pick Up, Drop Off, and Student Parking be moved back on the school campus

No student parking on neighborhood streets, no parking restrictions for residents Roy Epstein said issues that have been “flagged “ to be addressed are what are the long term plans for drop off and pick up. There are documents from 2019 indicating the Superintendent committed to the Building Committee that there would be an on campus queuing program. The Committee will ask Superintendent Phelan’s intentions on this.

Corinne Olmstead, Stone Road: Student parking at Orchard Circle and Stone Road is a new problem. With shift of the school entrance, the neighborhood is closer. We can attempt to accommodate some students but there has to be a drop off/pick up plan. The parking area west of Harris Field needs to happen. She agrees with Anne Marie Mahoney that residents and their guests need access to park. Residents cannot be restricted.

Jeffrey Roth clarified that parking permits cost 25.00.

Larry Link said enforcement is required. Tickets and notes are being used. Temporary signs could be used to let students know they shouldn’t park in the neighborhood.

Erika Wolf, 18 Goden Street: Concerned with traffic volume and speed on side streets. Drop off and pick up are problematic. Street is inaccessible with cars parked. Views parked cars as a deterrent to speed, but the accessibility to emergency vehicles a problem.

During pick up, bicyclists are maneuvering around parked cars. This is problematic.

Jennifer Cole Ripman, Cottage Street: School Street is a problem. Cottage Street has issues with the Wellington and the Underwood Pool traffic. There are some signs on Cottage indicating 10ft clearance for driveways. It is impossible to get out of driveways on Cottage. This is a real problem. There must be an integrated solution. Award permits acknowledging car pooling. She is very worried about winter.

David and Jane Otte, 9 Goden Street: Reside at the bottom of Goden Street. It is easy to see that Goden is one of the most high traffic streets in town. It needs speed tables and parking restrictions. Fire truck accessibility is a problem.

Paul Gauron, 35 Orchard Street: The estimate of 20-25 cars parked on Orchard/Orchard Circle is accurate. There are limited sidewalks and the circle is obscured by bushes. People are walking in travel lanes. This situation is exacerbated during drop off and pick up. People are avoiding traffic by coming down Stone Road and traveling around the circle to School Street. This problematic for residents. There needs to be a solution. Limit parking to 2 hours weekdays. To allow a free flow of traffic this is necessary.

Maryam Aboosaber, Concord Avenue: There is no restriction on how close to a driveway someone can park. Can this Committee come up with a solution/regulation, maybe 4ft, 5ft, and recommend it to the town. Can we allow resident parking with permits for residents and guests.

Joe Shannon, 36 Oak Street: Experience some problems with the ability to get out of his driveway. It is difficult to traverse the street with oncoming traffic. Wholly supports limiting parking in the morning which would limit the ability of kids to park.

Students frequently park in front of the hydrant in front of his house. This is a safety issue. Police enforcement is limited. Wishes there was more enforcement of a legitimate safety issue. Senses some reluctance by Police. It is important for this Committee to determine what policy there is going to be. Police reluctant to enforce grey areas. As long as we all agree, police will enforce.

Carolyn Bishop, Orchard Street: Recalls there was car parked in a way that it hung out onto Orchard street impeding traffic. Police were trying to locate the student. They did ticket the car. The parking at the circle and Stone Road is bad. Suggests that permits should be based on "need". Students aren't parked on Concord because they want to be close to the school. Orchard is closer than the designated student parking. Emergency access is a problem as the travel lane is blocked. A 2 hour parking ban in the morning would help a lot.

Michele Hacker, 11 Orchard Street: Drop off of students is a problem. People are thoughtless. Has anything been communicated to students to encourage them to park responsibly. Are students aware of these problems? Roy Epstein responded that the long term parking plan is for student parking west of Harris field. The Site Approval called for 90 spaces. With the 100 spaces on Concord, this should accommodate student parking. The problem needs to be addressed with a mix of discouraging parking on side streets and trying to get people out of their cars.

Marisa Benedetto, Cottage Street: Concerned the push to keep student parking off Orchard/Oak would push student parking to Cottage. People have pulled into her driveway to pick up students. Driveways are frequently blocked, and cars park on the other side of the street, which is no parking. Students don't walk on sidewalk. Concerned this will get worse over the school year.

Jeffrey Roth said whatever restrictions recommended, they have to be on roads near the student designated parking.

Heather Barr, School Street: There needs to be a reset of expectations on who needs to drive to school. Why do we accommodate cars?

Martin November said we need to consider unintended consequences. Pick up and drop offs could get worse if parking is restricted. The numbers could get worse as the weather deteriorates. Drop off on campus should be explored. We need to be careful and trial some of these recommendations: Time restrictions

One side only parking

Both side restrictions

We need resident feedback on options and trials.

Heather Barr also emphasized there needs to be more encouragement to increase ridership on the bus. She questioned if the low bus ridership was pandemic driven.

Kate, Oak Street: Understands the problems on Cottage, but the Oak Street situation is pretty concerning. It is a safety issue. Cars park in front of the hydrant by her house, cars park in all directions/wrong side. Why aren't the Police and the School Committee on this zoom? Why

isn't the drop off on campus? Someone from the School Committee and the Police should be at these meetings. This situation deserves their attention.

Carolyn Bishop, Orchard Street: 90 spaces west of Harris Field is a waste of athletic field. You are giving this space away to cars. Students will not walk to school from those spots. It's too far from school. Wasting land for parking.

Anne Marie Mahoney, Goden Street: Has anyone considered event parking? When the auditorium is used, where are the cars going? Parking will continue to be a problem. Accommodate athletic/event parking.

Roy Epstein stated the expectation was that approximately 300 on-campus spaces for teachers and staff would be available in the evening for events.

Amy Tananbaum, 21 Goden Street: One of the reasons kids aren't using the student designated spots on Concord Ave. is that most are new drivers who aren't confident parallel parking.

There needs to be a plan for winter.

In Spring, there will be more students driving. If they didn't get a lottery permit, we should educate students where we want them to go.

Could the School Dept. significantly lower the cost of riding the bus and charge more for parking permits?

Erika Wolf, 18 Goden Street: Likes the idea of trialng restrictions. Could you post limited parking time in the morning, no parking/standing, covering drop off morning, and afternoon to cover pick up at dismissal. See what happens and if there are any unintended consequences.

Corinne McCue Olmstead, Stone Road: The area on Concord Ave. in front of the school is blocked off with cones, could that be a drop off?

Roy Epstein explained that is a drop off.

Gigi Saltonstall, 17 Oak Street: People are avoiding Concord Ave.

Jeffrey Roth: We should look at the cost of parking permits. What are ways to get people to take alternative ways to go to school. TAC is working on protected bicycle lanes on Concord Ave.

Roads are busy. He encouraged people to stay in tune with TAC's efforts.

Jeffrey Roth moved the Forum be adjourned.

Motion seconded by Mary Wybieralla

Forum adjourned at 9:05pm

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Wybieralla

