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BELMONT, MA**

DATE: January 28, 2022  
TIME: 11:38 AM

## **Belmont Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting**

Minutes for Monday, 25 October, 2021

**Present:** David Coleman (Chair), Chip Gaysunas (Vice Chair), Jeffrey Roth (Secretary), Charles Hamad, Ken Lind, Chip Gaysunas, Charles Hamad, Daniel Eldridge, Larry Link

**Absent:** Jeremy Romanul

**Also present:**

**Town Staff:** Jay Marcotte (Belmont Department of Public Works (DPW) Director), Chief David DeStefano (Belmont Fire Department (BFD))

**Town Public Residents:** Jeff Held (31 Concord Ave.)

*Final* minutes. Drafted on date: 2022-01-20. Finalized on date: 2022-01-20.

### **Announcements**

1. Tonight's public meeting occurred online using zoom video conference.

*In keeping with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law" — The Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting of 1 April, 2021, was held by Remote Access through Zoom.*

The meeting was called to order at 7:05p.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Committee reviewed and approved the meeting minutes from the TAC meetings for 6/17/2021, 7/15/2021 and 9/16/2021.

#### ***6/17/2021***

The draft minutes from the 17th June, 2021 meeting were reviewed, and approved with minor edits and corrections. A vote by roll call was made to approve these minutes as amended, and was voted on unanimously.

#### ***7/15/2021***

The draft minutes from the 15th July, 2021 meeting were reviewed, and approved with minor edits and corrections. A vote by roll call was made to approve these minutes as amended, and was voted on unanimously.

**9/16/2021**

The draft minutes from the 16th September, 2021 meeting were reviewed, approved with minor edits and corrections. Larry Link provided several edits to this set of minutes. A vote by roll call was made to approve these minutes as amended, and was voted on unanimously.

### **Walnut/Trapelo parking update from Glenn**

This item was tabled for discussion because Glenn Clancy was not available for tonight's meeting.

### **Preparation Steps for the Concord Ave. Striping Plan Forum**

#### ***Overview of BMHSTWG Meetings***

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman provided an overview of the Belmont Middle-High School Traffic working Group (BMHSTWG) discussions that have been ongoing recently. He said one of the topics that group has focused on is working around the current arrangements of drop-offs and student parking not being planned for the campus.

*Larry Link (TAC)* — Larry Link provided an overview of the BMHSTWG Student Parking Forum held last Thursday Oct. 21st. This forum solicited a repeat of many of the same complaints voiced previously. There was also discussion about revising the student car-parking permit structure. Mr. Link reiterated the problems of students driving to school, which includes congestion on streets, blocking access to driveways, air quality, and subsidizing single-occupancy vehicles of kids driving to school. At the same time, he said we do not seem to be providing enough encouragements to use buses for kids to get to school. He said that his takeaway is how do we attack the real problem, which is too much traffic. He said there seems to be a tendency of pushing this problem around to move cars onto the campus, which would just create problems elsewhere. Mr. Link also said there was some discussion about putting a ~\$5M parking garage on the campus, which did not get much traction.

Larry Link also discussed messaging to the students, and suggested thinking about ways to encourage students to obey the car-parking laws. He also said it would make sense to look at bus programs that would help increase ridership. He said that the School Department might be able to help collaborate on such programs.

*Chip Gaysunas (TAC Vice-Chair)* — Chip Gaysunas asked if the School Department or school administration attends the BMHSTWG meetings.

*Larry Link (TAC)* — Larry Link responded that Roy Epstein reworked the charge for the BMHSTWG to not have any representation by the School Committee or School Department, and that there was sensitivity about time from other staff attending the BMHSTWG meetings.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman said that the BHS administration seemed willing to attend some of these meetings. He said that he asked them for information about car-parking. Mr. Coleman also suggested that the School Department could help educate the student community and get the word out about these issues. He said he would pursue more information from the School, such as who they issued permits to and street names for permit holders. He said that 162 people applied for the car-parking permits, and 100 permits were awarded to students. However, as of two weeks ago, only 87 of these permits

had been actually picked up. The School Department charged no fee for these car-parking permits.

*Ken Lind (TAC)* — Ken Lind said that the BMHSTWG Student Parking Forum focused primarily on those residents living near the High School. He observed that it may have been a missed opportunity to get input from the entire school community on parking and traffic issues.

### **Nelson-Nygaard Middle-High School Plans and Protected Bicycle Lanes Proposal**

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman gave an overview of the projects related to the Belmont Middle-High School, and their associated plans. He suggested we be aware of these projects, for example numbers of car-parking spaces and transportation-related plans. Mr. Coleman said that he would send out a summary of all the points and concerns raised before at the April and May TAC meetings, mainly by abutters voicing concerns. He said that there were three major areas of concerns listed below:

1. Providing sufficient emergency-vehicle access, and a clear path for those vehicles. This spurred discussions with the Belmont Fire Department (BFD) and Nelson-Nygaard. Based on information from the BFD Chief, the safety factors appear well assessed. The westbound direction is generally not used for fire-truck access in emergencies. Mr. Coleman said that the BFD listed all the intersections around the vicinity of Concord Ave. where vehicles need to turn.
2. Some addresses with group homes are pressed for parking, and sometimes have more cars than parking spaces. They also sometimes require frequent emergency-vehicle calls.
3. There is a current need for Nelson-Nygaard and TAC to evaluate the effectiveness and safety about the proposed protected-bicycle lanes striping plan, in relation to the current arrangement and other potential approaches.

*Charles Hamad (TAC)* — Charles Hamad asked if there is enough space for visibility at roadway intersections with the protected bicycle lane (PBL) plan.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman said there are standard practices used to provide sufficient visibility for PBLs. A 20-foot setback rule is often used for PBLs. He said that intersections are always stressors for any design that accommodates vulnerable users, whether for this design or for other potential approaches.

Mr. Coleman also mentioned the MassDOT Complete Streets Program, which is a funding opportunity that can enable incremental safety improvements to roads around Town. This was used for the Lexington St./Sycamore St. intersection. He said that Judy Crocker from the MassDOT Complete Streets organization is a great resource, and she is going to make a presentation to the School Committee soon. She also studies bus usage. Mr. Coleman said that we should start to think about what we are working on in the larger context to solve long-standing traffic problems.

*Ken Lind (TAC)* — Ken Lind asked about the Belmont Community Path (BCP) and its associated Alexander Ave. underpass, which would provide an important link to and from the Belmont Middle-High School facilities.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman mentioned that on Thurs. 4th Nov. a public meeting on the BCP will take place, and encouraged people to attend that meeting to provide more information on the BCP.

*Larry Link (TAC)* — Larry Link added that you can sign up for automatic email notices for any of the Town's committees. He said that he would send around a link on how to do so.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman said that for the PBL effort, we should put together a holistic view. He suggested reaching out to the School Department, PTAs, PTOs, and the School Committee, to see if they could send representatives to the TAC public forum.

*Larry Link (TAC)* — Larry Link said that the *Nextdoor* online tool is another way to alert people about meetings and events.

*Chip Gaysunas (TAC Vice-Chair)* — Chip Gaysunas said there is the assumption that the necessary due diligence is being done, but wanted to confirm that this process is completed. He suggested discussing this with Glenn Clancy beforehand to get his perspectives and guidance. Mr. Gaysunas said he understands the costs and benefits of this PBL plan or of alternative plans. He said that we should be prepared to fully address the costs and benefits of the proposed plans and any alternatives.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman said that we have the diagrams for the plan, but that we did not get much on the research done to feed the designs. He said that engineering analysis was done. Mr. Coleman also said that we can view this effort in a more nuanced or segmented approach to implementation, for example, the west-bound versus the east-bound sides, or the eastern and western zones of Concord Ave. He said that he is asking Nelson-Nygaard to evaluate the efficacy of such an approach.

*Charles Hamad (TAC)* — Charles Hamad asked about crash data from motor vehicles, including those involving cyclists and walkers. He asked if we can we get this data to evaluate it.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman responded that he has a large set of recent crash data, and that he can send it around.

*Chip Gaysunas (TAC Vice-Chair)* — Chip Gaysunas said that we seem to have the support from the Town administration on this effort for Concord Ave.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman said that for the next meeting we should plan on the preparation tasks for the forum, including evaluating the relevant data. He estimated that within a few weeks there could be a package to distribute. He also said each of us could promote this overall project within the Town by letting people know about this effort.

*Ken Lind (TAC)* — Ken Lind said that having Glenn Clancy on the future planning meetings would be very helpful.

*David Coleman (TAC Chair)* — David Coleman said that we tentatively target Thursday Nov. 18th for a follow-up TAC meeting to plan for the Public Forum. Mr. Coleman said that he will check with the Town staff and Nelson-Nygaard about that date.

*Dan Eldridge (TAC)* — Dan Eldridge volunteered to look at crash data as well.

*Charles Hamad (TAC)* — Charles Hamad followed up on Dan Eldridge's comment to say that he would also volunteer to look at that data.

**Adjournment**

At the conclusion of the discussions, Jeffrey Roth made a motion to adjourn meeting. Larry Link seconded the motion. All voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:52p.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jeffrey Roth.