

Minutes
Traffic Management Advisory Committee
Wednesday, January 11, 2023
7:00 P.M.
Forbes/McLeod Community Room
Public Safety Building
88 Chestnut Street
Needham, MA 02492
Livestreamed on Zoom Meeting ID #86312712408
Adopted February 8, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Justin McCullen, Chair; Donna Mullin; Guss Driessen; Lt. John McGrath, Rebecca Tarantino, Rhain Hoyland; Barry McNeilly

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Ciccolo; Tom Ryder, Town Engineer

STAFF PRESENT: Tyler Gabrielski, Financial Analyst; Daphne Collins, Recording Secretary; Bob Wilson, Engineer

PUBLIC PRESENT: (See attached Sign-In Form)

1. INTRODUCTION AND ROLL CALL

Mr. McCullen, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and Roll Call was taken.

2. MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 2022

Mr. McCullen noted that Barry McNeilly was absent in December.

Vote: Mr. McCullen moved to accept the Minutes of December 7, 2022 with edit. Mr. Driessen seconded the motion. Ayes: 6; Abstention: McNeilly. The motion was **approved**.

3. OTHER BUSINESS/STATUS REPORT

Mr. Wilson provided an update on the following projects:

- **Marked Tree Road** –The Curve Ahead with Speed tab was installed. Mr. McCullen suggested that the sign be relocated further up near Oakcrest Road or place the speed radar sign at the higher location. Mr. Hoyland reported that a hard wire speed radar sign has been assigned to Forest Street and that the solar speed radar sign was now available for another location. Ms. Tarantino recused herself on the matter.

Vote: Mr. Driessen moved to relocate the speed radar sign now available from Forest Street to Marked Tree Road to be installed before Oakcrest Road. Mr. McCullen seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

- **Country Way** – Ms. Tarantino reported that she has heard complaints that the *Stop* sign at Country Way was not working. Mr. Hoyland responded that the corner had received changes in response to children safety concerns at the bus stop; and that change is challenging when driver's habits are being altered. He believed the changes were working as intended. The project will continue to be evaluated.
- **School Zone Grant** - Mr. Wilson requested input on the placement of two grant hard wire speed signal signs to be placed at a school zone location. Mr. Gabrielski noted that the Town Engineer recommended a Safety Zone on Webster Street; and a School Zone on the Highland Avenue side of Needham High School based on GTI's recommendation. A school zone is an area with a speed limit associated with school hours of operation; a safety zone is an area with a speed limit with no time restriction. Mr. Gabrielski clarified that the grant is limited to a school zone area.

Lt. McGrath supported using the grant radars at Sunita Williams Elementary School to make the speed in that school zone enforceable. The current speed signs at Sunita are not regulation signs and are unenforceable. There were discussions about recalibrating the signs to bring them into compliance. Lt. McGrath will investigate appropriate options at Sunita School to bring the school zone signage into compliance.

Mr. Hoyland said that once the school zone on Highland Avenue is established the speed limit will be 20mph which will allow for a crosswalk. There are plans for crosswalks with islands when the TIP reconstruction is planned. A pilot crosswalk may be implemented which would eliminate some of the on-street parking spaces but will allow staff to observe the most effective location for a crosswalk for high school students. Affected business would need to be notified of the parking space loss.

4. DEDHAM ROAD– SPEED REGULATION

PETITIONER: Jackie DeWolfe, 242 Dedham Avenue

Ms. DeWolfe stated that she has been presenting to TMAC her concerns about speed on Dedham Avenue in 2018 and 2020. She thought 40 mph in a residential area next to DeFazio Field and near the Pollard Middle School was too fast. She noted that there was an 80% fatality rate for pedestrian involved in accidents where vehicles were going 40 mph. She asserted that the speed for the street can be reevaluated as Dedham Avenue is a Town Street.

Lt. McGrath asked how to reeducate drivers to go less than 40mph when they are accustomed to 40 mph.

Ms. Tarantino and Mr. McCullen agreed that 40 mph was excessive.

Ms. DeWolfe reported that there were cost effective treatments to change a road to decrease speed. These included narrowing the road, chicanes, curb extensions, lateral shifts, and speed bumps that are easy to override by emergency vehicles.

Mr. Hoyland stated that the Town was working with Mass Dot on traffic calming treatments for Dedham Avenue as part of an upcoming project. Some of these are decreasing the lane from 12' to 10', installing

a proper sidewalk under the train overpass and closing the width of the street. There is an overall goal to decrease the width of town lanes and allow the creation bike lanes.

Ms. DeWolfe sought Committee agreement that 40mph was too fast for town streets. She argued that it was not necessary to spend \$100,000 to calm streets. She'd like to see the speed limit on Dedham Avenue at 20-25mph.

Mr. Hoyland wanted to find an effective path to decrease speeds. He agreed that there were many forward-thinking tools however he was hesitant to adopt them in a major arterial road. He will work with Mass DOT when the resurfacing of the road is scheduled in the summer. He offered to work with Ms. DeWolfe to consider her suggestions.

Ms. DeWolfe noted there are official guidelines for implementing traffic calming issued in January 1, 2023.

Mr. McCullen thought the access to the back entrance to Pollard Middle School off Dedham Avenue provided a rationale to decrease the speed on Dedham Avenue.

Lt. McGrath asked when the Dedham Avenue and South Street intersection was scheduled for reconstruction. Mr. Hoyland responded that it was scheduled 5 to 7 years out.

Vote: Mr. McCullen moved that the DPW investigate Mass DOT processes into speed zone regulations to establish lower speed limits on streets. Lt. McGrath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

5. WEBSTER STREET AND MARK LEE ROAD – CROSSWALK

PETITIONER: Wes Soper, 32 Mark Lee Road

Mr. Soper said he represented his neighborhood. He had gathered over 54 signatures in support of a crosswalk across Webster Street connecting Mark Lee Road to Park Avenue. He would also like to see traffic calming measures to help decrease speeds on Webster Street. Mark Lee Road is a walking route to the Temple, Avery Park, Highland Avenue business district and the T.

He informed there is only one 30 mph sign on Webster Street on the north side but cars go in excess of that speed. There are no signs to indicate it is a residential area, and there is poor visibility of pedestrians because of the curve of the street.

Mr. McCullen said that there was no recent speed study and before the TMAC can consider a solution data is needed. In addition, the corner needs to be evaluated under the safety crosswalk evaluation criteria. Mr. Hoyland advised that crosswalks need to be located where it is safe with good visibility for pedestrian to cross.

Vote: Mr. McCullen moved that a Webster Street at Mark Lee Road and Park Avenue study be conducted for a speed and vehicular count; and that the corner be evaluated under the GTI for safe crosswalks criteria. Ms. Tarantino seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

6. WOODLEDGE ROAD/HILLCREST ROAD/EDWARDEL ROAD – UNSAFE INTERSECTION

PETITIONER: Noah Orenstein, 115 Woodledge Road

Mr. Orenstein was concerned for the children who cross at the intersection on their way to Mitchell school at Woodledge, Hillcrest and Edwardel Roads. The intersection is confusing with a two way stop at Hillcrest and Edwardel Roads with poor visibility from accelerating cars who are coming downhill on Woodledge Road.

Vote: Mr. McCullen moved to appropriately relocate the *Stop* signs on Hillcrest and Edwardal Roads. Ms. Tarantino seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

There was discussion, with Ms. DeWolfe, about other possible options at the location such as installing an advisory sign on the downhill of Woodbridge Road, paint a SLOW on the pavement, curb bump outs, and installing curb cuts.

7. HILLSIDE AVENUE AT CRICKET FIELD – SPEED

PETITIONER: Erik Bailey, 64 Hillside Avenue

Mr. Bailey was concerned about the speed vehicles were taking on the downhill side of Hillside Avenue towards Webster Street as it passes by the Cricket Field. He'd like a *Slow* or *Kids Playing* sign by the park.

Vote: Mr. McCullen moved that speed and vehicle data be collected on Hillside Avenue at Avery Street. Ms. Tarantino seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

8. UPDATE ON SELECT BOARD DISCUSSION OF FURTHER TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEES

Mr. McCullen reported that the Select Board had adopted the recommendation of the Transportation Advisory Safety Committee for the establishment of committees with their detailed respective charters. The DPW will be allowed to nimbly respond and do non-regulatory work without the required committee approval.

Recommended is the establishment of the Mobility Planning and Coordination Committee (MPCC) which has higher policy functions than the TMAC which will replace the TMAC. The timeline for implementation will be determined by the Town Manager and the Select Board. Members of the Rail Trails Committee, TMAC, Planning, Schools will have seats on the MPCC and will advise wholistically on transportation issues for the town.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:19p.m.