

Town of Needham
Transportation Safety Committee
Minutes: October 11, 2023

Location: Forbes/McLeod Community Room, Public Safety Building
88 Chestnut Street

Livestreamed on Zoom: <https://youtu.be/kqkdBmzhLsw?si=NLzh8arZskujGNW1>

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 8, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Chair, Justin McCullen; Rhain Hoyland, Lt. John McGrath, Barry McNeilly, Donna Mullin, Rebecca Tarantino
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Guus Driessen, Tom Ryder
STAFF PRESENT:	Tyler Gabrielski, Management Analyst
STAFF REMOTE:	Robert Wilson, Engineer; Traffic Officer Bayiates
PUBLIC PRESENT:	Leila Amerling, Cory Rhoades

1. INTRODUCTION AND ROLL CALL

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:02 p.m., Chair McCullen called the meeting to order, took roll call, and disclosed the video recording.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

MOTION:	J. McGrath moved to approve the Minutes of September 13, 2023.
SECONDED:	D. Mullin
ABSTAINED:	R. Tarantino for the reason she was not present on September 13, 2023
ROLL-CALL VOTE:	R. Hoyland, aye; J. McCullen, aye; J. McGrath, aye; B. McNeilly, aye; D. Mullin, aye. Unanimous.
MOTION CARRIES:	5-0-1

3. OTHER BUSINESS/TSC STATUS UPDATE REPORT

JULY 2023-5, BOND ST. AT FALCON ST. AREA AND WASHINGTON AVE AND BANCROFT ST.

Review and study of the intersection is not complete due to unavailable staff to make observation.

HIGH ROCK AND OAK ST.

Two Traffic Studies had been completed prior to narrowing the lanes.

- Speeds on High Rock St. were 34 mph.
- Speeds on Oak St. were between 25-29 mph

The lanes have been narrowed on Oak Street.

The next phase of the Traffic Study will continue.

Tubes were placed between Maple St. and Linden St.

Members discussed whether this was the best location for the tubes for this Traffic Study.

OCTOBER 2023-3, GOULD ST. AND KEARNEY INTERSECTION

Members reviewed preliminary design sketches forwarded by R. Wilson.

Engineering surveyors viewed actual field conditions.

- A little striping was suggested.
- Add a stop sign across the street near the stop bar.

JULY 2023-3, COUNTRY WAY

Members reviewed preliminary design sketches suggesting configuration changes.

- Switch the intersection around; add a speed bump to slow traffic from the arm at Country Way.

- Members considered the impact on the neighborhood of adding an island.

AUGUST 2023-3, KENDRICK ST. SLIP RAMP

Members reviewed actual data counts.

HIGH ROCK & OAK ST. PILOT PROJECTS

Members discussed calming lines for the Highland St. project. From High Rock to the Railroad Bridge, a bike lane was added. DPW supports bike lanes; Select Board endorsed this.

Was DPW overstepping their bounds by adding a bike lane without going through a bylaw regulation change? Technically, yes. It was decided not to make a bike lane because the road is disjointed.

Members of the Executive Committee want "Share the Road" bike lanes from the Rail Trail downtown to Chestnut St. When the surface was restriped from Chestnut St. to the Railroad Bridge, there was no room for a 5 foot bike lane with the 12 foot traffic lane. The recommendation is not to mark it as it is a shoulder. It could be safer if it were wider for bike lanes. It is on hold for further discussion.

Members discussed a second issue with the Highland St. project. The striping is not continual. The side striping and center striping were not done at the same time. Residents feel the road creates unrest as it appears to narrow even without a center line and causes confusion with oncoming traffic. It was suggested and duly noted that DPW do both stripes down the center and sides simultaneously.

DPW suggests to double-stripe High Rock from Chestnut St. to beyond the bridge to get the lanes to the same width. They will observe the road over the winter.

4. ANDREA DANNENBERG - SPEED AND VISIBILITY ISSUES ON CHARLES RIVER ST.

At 7:15 pm, the petitioner was not present.

5. LEILA AMERLING - CROSSWALK SAFETY ACROSS GREAT PLAIN AVE. AT LINDEN ST.

Leila Amerling of 341 Nehoiden St. and Cory Rhoades of 19 Washburn Ave. presented.

L. Amerling has 3 small children some of whom attend preschool within the church. She uses the crosswalk daily on Linden St. off High Rock. The yield signs are not noticed and thus ineffective.

There have been unsafe encounters within the crosswalk. A driver almost hit she and her child in the stroller in the crosswalk. A woman came out of the Post Office to say someone was hit the week prior.

This intersection is where Town Center ends and the speed changes from 25 to 35 mph. Drivers speed up. The 25 mph sign on one side is just before the Yield sign. The 35 mph sign on the opposite side is not before the Yield sign. The petitioner suggests a stop sign so people are forced to stop.

C. Rhoades spoke with neighbors who use phrases such as "close call, near miss, scary." Two issues: from Washburn Ave. to Linden St., the utility pole is in the line of sight.

From Linden St. to Great Plain Ave., the road changes from two lanes to one lane; people jockey for the one lane. The crosswalk is not near the Post Office. He spoke with the crossing guard who said he doesn't have enough hands to stop all the traffic coming from different directions.

Members discussed the similarity of the Maple Ave. intersection.

Traffic Officers agreed the line of sight is a problem. There is no parking the last 30-40 feet of the intersection where two lanes converge into one lane from 35 mph to 25 mph. There is too much going on at this intersection: the Post Office, Linden St., the school, daycare, the church, and Town Center.

Members discussed why a stop sign cannot be installed according to the Federal manual.

Long-term Solution

Phase II of the approved Downtown project including this intersection is being planned. Pedestrian and multi-mobile improvements split around Town will effect this intersection. The present sign placement blocks the driver's view of a pedestrian waiting to cross. It is possible to move the crosswalk across the street so it originates at the Post Office.

Short-term Solutions

- Increase the signage; add a blinking warning light at the crossing
- Members discussed gathering compliance data on use of crossing signals.
- LED blinking signs
 - Add an orange barricade, jersey barrier
 - Move the 35 mph sign further back up the roadway from the Post Office intersection

MOTION:	J. McGrath moved to add the signage, "Warning Crosswalk Ahead" to the Jersey barriers from both approaches of Great Plain Ave. at Linden St. similar to that at Maple St. crossing; move the regulatory speed sign 200 feet or the number of allowable feet down Central St.
SECONDED:	D. Mullin
ABSTAINED:	R. Tarantino for the reason she was not present on September 13, 2023
ROLL-CALL VOTE:	R. Hoyland, aye; J. McCullen, aye; J. McGrath, aye; B. McNeilly, aye; D. Mullin, aye. Unanimous.
MOTION CARRIES:	5-0-1

6. HEATHER FINNEGAN - SPEEDING ON MELLEN ST.

At 7:37 pm, the petitioner was not present. This matter will be discontinued for the time being.

7. CAITLIN SIEGRIST - SIGNAGE/VISIBILITY AT INTERSECTION OF MAC KINTOSH AVE. AND MASON RD.

At 7:37 pm, the petitioner was not present.

8. DENISE ZEIDMAN - SPEEDING/CROSSWALK ON WEST ST. AT GLEN GARY RD.

At 7:37 pm, the petitioner was not present.

9. MATTERS NOT ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR WITHIN 48 HOURS OF THE MEETING

J. McCullen will obtain specifications and quotations for portable, battery operated radar, speed signs that could be attached to various locations in Town to conduct Speed Studies.

10. ADJOURNMENT - ROLL CALL VOTE

MOTION:	R. Tarantino motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m.
SECONDED:	D. Mullin
ROLL-CALL VOTE:	R. Hoyland, aye; J. McCullen, aye; J. McGrath, aye; B. McNeilly, aye; D. Mullin, aye; R. Tarantino, aye. Unanimous.
MOTION CARRIES:	6-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary