

Town of Needham
Transportation Safety Committee

Minutes: January 10, 2024

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

Livestreamed on Zoom: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwW_hSv4x3s&list

ADOPTED MARCH 13, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Justin McCullen; Guus Driessen, Rhain Hoyland, Lt. John McGrath, Tom Ryder, Rebecca Tarantino
MEMBERS ABSENT: Barry McNeilly, Donna Mullin
STAFF PRESENT: Tyler Gabrielski, Management Analyst
STAFF REMOTE: Robert Wilson, Engineer
PUBLIC PRESENT: Melissa Lassonde, Uri and Mira Nurko
PUBLIC REMOTE: Carolyn Kenline

1. INTRODUCTION, ROLL CALL, CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2023

G. DRIESSEN MOVED AND R. TARANTINO SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2023.
VOTE: G. DRIESSEN, AYE; R. HOYLAND, AYE; J. MCCULLEN, AYE; T. RYDER, AYE; R. TARANTINO, AYE; LT. J. MCGRATH ABSTAINED AS HE WAS NOT PRESENT ON 12/13/23. **MOTION CARRIES: 5-0-1**

3. OTHER BUSINESS/TSC STATUS UPDATE REPORT - R. WILSON

CHARLES RIVER ST. NEAR GROVE ST. - Speed limit tab signs have been posted.

BOND ST. AND FALCON ST. - INTERSECTION

C. Kenline of 342 Hillcrest Rd. felt the evaluation did not occur at the time of highest pedestrian traffic. DPW has re-evaluated traffic volume at this intersection and determined it does not warrant need for a 4 way stop sign. Both drivers and pedestrians should take safety ownership especially near schools.

T. Ryder consulted with Town Counsel Chris Heep.

The Town has actively demonstrated they are taking action to implement change where there can be improvement. Multiple intersections will be evaluated for drainage, accessibly compliant ramps and sidewalks. Work would be part of a Capital Improvement Plan which will be a few years into the future.

ACTION: DPW Engineering will determine exact placement of crosswalks by the next meeting.

CROSSWALK SAFETY ON GREAT PLAIN AVE. AT STOCKDALE RD.

DPW has been notified of painting and bollards at Stockdale Rd. and Great Plain Ave.

VISIBILITY ISSUES ON HUNNEWELL ST. BY THORPE PARK TRIANGLE

Petitioners requested to prohibit on-street parking in front of 615 Hunnewell St.

DPW investigated parking and shared road measurements. Members discussed the ongoing construction next door and potential parking restrictions. It is advised to revisit the location once construction has been completed.

ACTION: R. Wilson will notify the petitioner of the decision.

4. MELISSA LASSONDE - INTERSECTION OF CHESTNUT ST. AT OAK ST. OUTSIDE HOSPITAL

M. Lassonde of 165 Maple St. described and members discussed traffic turning movement concerns driving from Needham toward Dover near the hospital. The petitioner requested to eliminate the hospital entrance at Chestnut St. and Oak St.

J. McCullen Moved and R. Tarantino Seconded to conduct a Traffic Count Study including turning movements for four entrances at the intersection of Chestnut St. and Oak St. including a capacity analysis, volume, type and speed. **VOTE:** UNANIMOUS. **MOTION CARRIES: 6-0**

ACTION: Once the study is complete, DPW Engineering will revisit the striping configuration to determine if there is opportunity to adjust lane widths for trucks turning right onto Oak St.

5. MIRA NURKO – SPEEDING AND LACK OF SIDEWALK ON HIGH ROCK ST. BETWEEN CHESTNUT ST. AND WARREN ST.

Uri Nurko of 84 High Rock St. shared a presentation with members describing street safety concerns. The presentation can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwW_hSv4x3s&list

Safety risks include: no pedestrian sidewalk, no bike path, narrow lanes with minimal shoulders, speeding cars, dangerous blind curve, trucks and buses cross over yellow and white lines, limited signage with tree interference, trucks block road making passing dangerous, many families live on this section of High Rock.

Potential solutions include: add a sidewalk, add signage, convert to a one-way street, add speed scanner/electronic speed meter, change the bus route.

Members discussed the right of way, retaining walls, asking Forestry to trim back foliage, and signage. Members discussed temporarily placing battery operated speed signs as a traffic calming measure.

ACTION: DPW Engineering will install radar speed signs at a pole by next week.

J. McCullen Moved and G. Driessen Seconded to install an advisory directional arrow sign and a 20 mile per hour advisory speed limit sign on the inside of the curve on High Rock St. between Chestnut St. and Warren St. as well as on the opposite side of the street at the same curve at the discretion of DPW Engineering. **VOTE:** UNANIMOUS. **MOTION CARRIES: 6-0**

6. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION - INTERSECTION SAFETY OF HILLSIDE AVE. AT WEST ST.

DPW Engineering recommends installation of four way Stop signs and an evaluation as part of their TIP project. Members recommend Comcast and Verizon clean up the telephone pole and cables.

DPW Engineering shared analysis data of traffic volume at the train tracks along West St.

J. McCullen Moved and R. Tarantino Seconded to install an All Way, LCD Stop Sign Condition at West St. and Hillside Ave. intersection and evaluate signage for "Do Not Stop on Tracks" at the right of way as well as notify Verizon to remove the utility pole to increase site line distance, and install "Stop Ahead" signage approaching West St. with new, fluorescent yellow tabs. **VOTE:** UNANIMOUS. **MOTION CARRIES: 6-0**

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

Members discussed notifying petitioners in advance if a matter is not within the purview of the TSC such as matters requiring long-term planning and changes to the Capital Plan.

Members discussed editing the Transportation Safety Committee Concern Form to include more clarity. **<https://www.needhamma.gov/forms.aspx?FID=180>**. Members discussed updating the TSC web site.

Members discussed how to engage the Needham community around changing driving behavior as many petitions center around driver speed safety. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT - ROLL CALL VOTE

G. DRIESSEN MOVED AND R. TARANTINO SECONDED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:56 PM.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIES: 6-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary