

Town of Needham
Transportation Safety Committee

Minutes: March 13, 2024

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

Livestreamed on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88341769950>

ADOPTED APRIL 10, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Justin McCullen; Guus Driessen, Tyler Gabrielski, Lt. John McGrath, Barry McNeilly, Tom Ryder
MEMBERS ABSENT: Donna Mullin, Rebecca Tarantino
STAFF PRESENT: Robert Wilson
PUBLIC PRESENT: Keith LaFace

1. INTRODUCTION, ROLL CALL, CALL TO ORDER

At 7:00 p.m., J. McCullen called the meeting to order, took roll call, and disclosed the video recording.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2024

G. DRIESSEN MOVED AND T. RYDER SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2024.

VOTE: G. DRIESSEN, AYE; T. GABRIELSKI, AYE; J. MCGRATH, AYE; J. MCCULLEN, AYE; B. MCNEILLY, ABSTAINED; T. RYDER, AYE. **MOTION CARRIES: 5-0.** B. MCNEILLY ABSTAINED FOR THE REASON HE WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE JANUARY 10, 2024 MEETING.

3. OLD BUSINESS/ STATUS UPDATE REPORT - R. WILSON

CROSSWALK AT WEBSTER ST. AT MARK LEE RD. - Members discussed the potential for a crosswalk.

- Add a ramp on both sides of Webster St.
- Construct it as a mid-block crossing with traffic calming measures.

ACTION: For discussion at the May meeting, evaluate where wheelchair ramps could be used considering the GIS map is misaligned compared to the real-life photos.

CROSSING AT EMERSON RD./CHESTNUT ST. - Petitioner, Keith LaFace, 504 Chestnut St. was present. An active bus stop; children aged kindergarten through sixth cross from High Rock St. Neighbors attempted to get this done 10 years ago. Alleviate the situation before a tragedy occurs.

Members discussed criteria for a crosswalk.

Members considered the recent **Traffic Study** for pedestrian crossings and the bus stop.

A previous **Speed Study** revealed drivers travel at 38-39 mph.

The **2015 Crosswalk Project** was stalled because driver speeds were approximately 40 mph and the volume of drivers was over 6,000 vehicles.

Members discussed calming measures such as raised bump outs, a median strip, a berm, a raised table.

This could be a **Capital Construction Project** five years future. Members discussed:

- The intersection may not be the best place for a raised table.
- Do an RRFB (rectangular rapid flashing beacon)
- Because of the use, it's not a walking route. It is being used as a bus stop.
- Do a bump out. Solar could be done here.
- Evaluate catch basins and water flow; may not with a parking lane.
- Is the road or sidewalk plowable near the school?

- Speed zone or safety zone as a treatment (Safety Zone must be near a playground)
 - Laying lines and adding an RRFB would not solve the problem.
- ACTION:** R. Wilson will research rules. Is there a restriction to reduce the de facto speed to 25 mph?

Speed Study data indicate that changing the speed does not change driver behavior.

A long-term solution would be to add controls. Members discussed a short-term solution:

- Add a speed clock indicating to the driver the speed at which they are traveling.
- Add a crosswalk between flashing yellow signs with the RFP, or
- Place Advisory Signs at both sides of the intersection indicating pedestrians crossing
- Show the lines indicating a crosswalk - unmarked, a diamond equals pedestrians.
- Explore a raised crossing impacting drainage.
- Move the sidewalk closer to the railroad for a true mid-block crossing not near the intersection.

ACTION: T. Ryder will research the feasibility of doing a table then a crosswalk RRFB and report back to the Committee.

J. McCULLEN MOVED AND G. DRIESSEN SECONDED TO PLACE ADVISORY SIGNAGE, VERBIAGE TO BE DECIDED, WITH PERMISSION FROM LANDOWNERS TO PLACE AN ADVISORY SIGN.

VOTE: G. DRIESSEN, AYE; T. GABRIELSKI, AYE; J. MCGRATH, AYE; J. MCCULLEN, AYE; B. MCNEILLY, AYE; T. RYDER, AYE. **MOTION CARRIES: 6-0**

R. Wilson provided the Committee with further updates:

- Speed signs are installed and working on High Rock St.
- DPW has installed stanchions on Great Plain Ave. at Stockdale Ave.
- School speed zones have been installed on Highland Ave. near the high school.
- Peacedale Rd. is one of the next stops to be evaluated (see 12/13/23 Minutes)
- Signal timing evaluation at Great Plain Ave. and Greendale Ave. has yet to be scheduled.

ACTION: A Turning Movement Study will be done at the hospital before the April TSC meeting.

CROSSWALK AT CIMINO RD. AND GREENDALE AVE.

Petitioner states her children walk on Greendale Ave. and turn onto Tower to arrive at Mitchell School.

- DPW is performing construction in the area on the watermain, repaving and drainage.
- Engineering determined the Cimino intersection is better crossing location with a ramp on one side.
- A mid-block crossing with cutouts in the road would be needed to make a crossing.
- Depending on feasibility of the project, combine this project with another.
- Traffic calming must be introduced first.
- This is a 4 phase project that may take 10 years to complete.

4. MARY MAREFAT - STREET LIGHTING ON CONCANNON CIRCLE - The petitioner was not present.

5. SCOTT RYNNE – SPEEDING/BLIND CURVE ON PARISH RD.-The petitioner presented slides and photos.

- There is a berm with two blind turns.

The petitioner proposed the following actions:

- Review the unposted speed limit.
- Address the hazardous water and ice at berm base near Tanglewood.
- Enforce a reasonable speed limit including Town plows.

A catch basin exists. Members discussed remedies to include Advisory signage:

- Advisory signage, Contour signs, Speed tab signs and sign locations

- The petitioner should report flooding to DPW through the Town's Reporting System

T. GABRIELSKI MOVED AND J. McCULLEN SECONDED TO HAVE DPW INVESTIGATE THE OPTIMAL LOCATION FOR ADVISORY WARNING SIGNAGE WITH 25 MPH TABS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS ON EITHER END OF THE ZONE FROM JUST BEYOND TANGLEWOOD RD. THROUGH DAMON RD. **VOTE: UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIES: 6-0**

6. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION - WEBSTER ST. TRAFFIC CALMING IMPROVEMENTS

DPW plans this project on Webster St. from the High School to High St. DPW met this week with Police and Fire to discuss impacts to their operations.

- The pre-qualified engineering firm recommended a raised table option.
- The raised table option is effective with less disruption to emergency services operations.
- Members discussed the challenge for crossing guards to control three closely located crossings.
- Curved bump outs are proposed rather than raised crosswalks to continue north of the school pedestrian activity to spread out traffic calming treatments beyond the school corridor.
- Make Highland Ave. being a School Zone and Webster St. being a Safety Zone.
 - Traffic calming measures must exist before instituting a Safety Zone.
- We are exploring whether speed bumps are an effective strategy.
- Utility work being done aligns with our plan. There will be a contribution from utility to help us build out this project. This is not the final design but a conceptual design.
- We intend to do ADA compliant curve ways.
- Schools and abutters would be informed of any proposed change.

ACTION: The Committee will solicit feedback and approval of the high school for raised crosswalks at two locations. The plan is to institute a Safety Zone on Webster St.

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

T. Gabrielski has been promoted to Director of Streets and Transportation with Select Board appointment to this Committee. An interim candidate will replace him in his former position.

Chair, J. McCullen serves on 5 boards and is considering to resign as Chair and stay on as a member.

DPW Transportation Forum, Monday, 3/18/24, 6:30 pm, Powers Hall - Members were invited to the joint meeting between the MPCC, Rail Trail Advisory Committee and the Traffic Safety Committee.

8. ADJOURNMENT - ROLL CALL VOTE

J. McGRATH MOVED AND G. DRIESSEN SECONDED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:30 PM.
VOTE: UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIES: 6-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary

INFORMATIONAL: The Meeting Packet is available at <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>