

Town of Needham
Transportation Safety Committee

Minutes: June 12, 2024

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

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

ADOPTED JULY 10, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tyler Gabrielski, Lt. John McGrath, Justin McCullen, Barry McNeilly,
Donna Mullin, Tom Ryder, Rebecca Tarantino
MEMBERS ABSENT: Guus Driessen
STAFF: Robert Wilson
GUEST: Christopher Gerstel, Parks & Recreation; Scott Stevens, 18 George Aggott Rd.

1. INTRODUCTION, ROLL CALL, CALL TO ORDER

At 7:05 p.m., J. McCullen called the meeting to order, took roll call, and disclosed the video recording.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 15, 2024

J. MCGRATH MOVED AND R. TARANTINO SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 15, 2024 WITH ONE CORRECTION.

VOTE: T. GABRIELSKI, AYE; J. MCCULLEN, AYE; B. MCNEILLY, AYE; D. MULLIN, AYE; T. RYDER, AYE; R. TARANTINO, AYE. **ABSTAINED:** J. MCGRATH WAS NOT PRESENT ON 5/15/24. **MOTION CARRIES: 6-0**

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

BANCROFT ST. AND FALCON ST. - Crosswalks have been painted in the locations requested.

STOCKDALE RD. AND GREAT PLAIN AVE. - The crosswalk has been completed.

- Significant tree coverage limits pushbutton, flashing signs at the crosswalk.
 - The flashing sign contractor estimates \$40,000 to run electric service to the other side.
- Line of sight is not limited. Members determined that crossing is safe here.

PEACEDALE RD. - Traffic count has been completed.

- Daily southbound traffic count was 337 cars, 85% of which traveled at 31 mph; northbound the traffic count was 440 cars traveling at 28 mph. A few vehicles traveled at about 40 mph.
- Traffic volume is inconsistent at outlying intersections including emergency vehicles.

It was determined that no defect of signal timing or speed would warrant additional treatment.

WARREN ST AND KIMBALL ST. - Permanent speed radar signs are being considered.

ACTION: *T. Gabrielski will secure neighbors' endorsement to install solar signs.*

GREENDALE AVE. AND CIMINO RD. - Crosswalk investigation continues.

MARK LEE RD. AND WEBSTER ST. - Crosswalk investigation continues.

4. TAL DIBNER, DINA ITKIN - CROSSINGS AT HUNNEWELL ST. NEAR SUDBURY PATH, ARDMORE RD.

D. Itkin of Taylor St. reviewed the 5-way intersection of Wellesley Ave. and Comeau St. and Hunnewell St. and Ardmore Rd. The Petitioners are looking for signage, crosswalks or lights as there is low visibility to cross and cars speed past pedestrians. Members discussed the intersection:

- The Town of Wellesley could not add a crosswalk as a sidewalk does not exist.

- There is no clear line of sight since cars enter from every direction making it unsafe.
- T. Ryder reached out to Wellesley who requested a formal letter of cooperation.

ACTION: T. Ryder will contact Wellesley Engineering Dept. to discuss the intersection and bring suggestions back to the TSC to discuss concept plans.

5. FAITH PONGOR, CHRIS CURRAN - SPEEDING AND OTHER HAZARDS ON BROOKSIDE RD.

Carrie Pistenmaa spoke on behalf of Petitioner, Faith Pongor, who was not present.

- Narrow road with blind turns, a hill; used as a cut-through
- No existing sidewalk and minimal shoulder
- Paving will increase vehicle speeds.
- Make the road a one-way road with a sidewalk; 75% of residents agree
- Limit road access to neighborhood residents, cut back vegetation, widen the road, and add curbs.

Members suggested a one-way road is unlikely due to the lengthy and Wellesley-accessible road.

Utility providers are relocating service at double poles. Appropriate signage should be assessed.

J. McCULLEN MOVED AND R. TARANTINO SECONDED TO CONDUCT A SPEED STUDY, SPEED TYPE, MARKING AND SIGNAGE ASSESSMENTS OF THE NEEDHAM PORTION OF BROOKSIDE ST. AMENDED TO INCLUDE EVALUATING THE TURN FROM FOREST ST. ONTO BROOKSIDE RD.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

6. PARKING IN GEORGE AGGOTT NEIGHBORHOOD - PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION

C. Gerstel solicited ideas to remedy parking issues near Aggott Rd. fields, primarily DeFazio Field.

- Most residents follow parking lot rules, but 10% park on George Aggott Rd.
- During the school year, field use is granted to sports groups; vehicle traffic and parking are busy.
- Signage exists for "No Parking Here to Corner" suggesting parking is allowed.

Members discussed options:

- "Residents Only Parking" sign and "20 mph Advisory" signs
- A crosswalk will be installed inviting drop-offs and pick-ups.
- Yellow sign, "No DeFazio Parking Allowed", or, "No Drop-off or Pick-up for DeFazio Field
- "No Parking" restriction for everyone including Aggott Rd. residents
- Without a parking restriction, it is legal to park on the street.

ACTION: Email sports coaches to inform players and families not to park on George Aggott Rd.

ACTION: Promote yellow signs to neighborhood residents and return with feedback.

7. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION - THICKLY SETTLED 25 MPH STATUTORY SPEED LIMITS

Members discussed Federal law and Town bylaws for speed limits in thickly settled neighborhoods. They compared statutory speed limits without signage to signs warning drivers they are entering a statutory speed zone. They also discussed the effectiveness of townwide statutory speed limits, which are placed at the entrance to residential neighborhoods rather than at the town entrance. Some members expressed that townwide statutory speed limits would be easier to enforce than specific areas identified with signage.

- Boston, Cambridge, Dedham, and Newton place statutory speed limit signs at town entrances.
- Hingham, Sharon and Westford place statutory speed limit signs at neighborhood entrances.

The fundamental issue is whether Needham will follow the spirit of the regulation which is a townwide, statutory speed limit versus the demarcation of thickly settled speed limits which is a carve-out of the regulation. The townwide option is preferred due to the difficulty of enforcing a neighborhood policy. Members discussed an unposted, townwide statutory speed limit and posting the statutory speed limit at every entrance into Needham. DPW Engineering discussed statutory speed limits in the proximity of schools, recreation areas, hospitals, fields, and parks and recreation areas. Members discussed mortality rates for vehicle accidents when traveling at 25 mph versus 35 mph. A statutory speed limit would save lives. T. Gabrielski spoke with towns that enforce statutory speed limits on specific streets. There is a period of public education where police officers pull drivers over to educate rather than cite drivers. Citing drivers for speeding would require only a Select Board vote and not a Town Meeting vote.

ACTION: J. McGrath, R. Wilson, and T. Gabrielski will provide data for discussion at the next meeting.

- Enforcement data comparing success of townwide versus demarcated areas for a statutory speed limit
- What citations are permitted to ticket violators?
- What are the enforcement limitations or pushback in other towns?
- Is it legal for speeding to be written into a Town bylaw?
- Will there be a public meeting or go directly to the Select Board?

8. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION - ELECTIONS FOR CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR POSITIONS

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

9. MATTERS NOT ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR WITHIN 48 HOURS OF THE MEETING - NONE

10. ADJOURNMENT - VOTE

R. TARANTINO MOVED AND J. McGRATH SECONDED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:02 PM.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS. MOTION CARRIES: 7-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary

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