

City Council Committee Reports for 2020

DATE: April 7, 2021 **RECORDER:** McCauley-Chair, with input from Jane Snow

COMMITTEE: Public Safety

Councillors Attending		Others Attending	Address
Barry N. Connell		<i>See public comment</i>	
Joseph H. Devlin	<i>p</i>		
Afroz Khan			
Byron J. Lane	<i>X</i>		
James J. McCauley	<i>X</i>		
Heather L. Shand			
Charles F. Tontar	<i>p</i>		
Bruce L. Vogel	<i>X</i>		
Christine E. Wallace	<i>x</i>		
Sharif I. Zeid			
Jared J. Eigerman			

AGENDA ITEMS

ACTION TAKEN

<i>AGENDA ITEMS</i>	<i>ACTION TAKEN</i>
Approval of Minutes	<i>none</i>
Merrimac St Stripping Plan	<i>hold</i>
ORD List of Sidewalks	<i>In committee</i>

Topic: Public Safety

Date: Apr 7, 2021 06:24 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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Approval of Minutes from prior Public Safety Meeting

Minutes for 1/20, 2/17 approved with discussion about any progress on RT1 Rotary Speed change (Ans: no immediate update). 3-0

Merrimac St Stripping Plan

Cnclr Wallace has asked for PS review of the plan. Plan from Beta sent to City Engineer for review.



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Discussion:

Cnclr Wallace: Comments on the Pioneer League area. Also, this plan lays out safety from Rotary through Mersen. Opportunity to improve existing conditions.

Public Comment. Tricia Whitcomb 496 Merrimac - would like to see this a safety zone to reduce speed. Andy Masia 3 Moulton St- Merrimac St has no sidewalk on South side - would like a sidewalk at Merrimac St. No pedestrian path there. Would day care qualify as a school zone. Needs to be 20 mph all the time. Spoke of flashing yellow light. Cllr Vogel- where is did you want sidewalk? Intersection of Merrimac & Moulton Jenny Donahue- 18 Cherry St. supports idea of having it a safety zone. Paul O'Brien Merrimac St 20 yrs resident there about 100yds from Field. Sat on TSAC and this has been going on for 5 yrs. Made worst because paved and it increased speed making street more dangerous. Feels a flashing light would work well there. City seems to be more concerned about cosmetic verse safety. Bill Walsh- Pres of Pioneer League and met with Councilor Wallace and McCauley the other day. Cars travel too fast on Merrimac St. Got 6 barrels. Accidents are a common occurrence. Need to do something. Hear screeching brakes frequently matter of time before something happens Kip Weese – Lucy Dr. abuts rotary. When people come area rotary they speed up. Suggested signage for speed limits. Cllr Tontar- add to list of possible crosswalks. Coffin St – no sidewalks on street. Had requested crosswalk for Coffin and Merrimac. Difficult if anyone wants to get out. When I was the Ward 4 Cllr Pioneer I was able to get parking spaces for Pioneer League on Merrimac St striped. Parked cars on Merrimac St help folks to slow down. Applied for Safe Rtes. to school but it did not qualify. Did try to have blinking lights repaired and was told they could not be repaired. Juliet Walker – 13 Eagle St member Newburyport liveable streets. Looking at this when we can fix it. Projects need to be reviewed earlier. Speed needs to be slowed down. Support Cllr Wallace. Would like city to have a 5 ft shoulder at a minimum. Concern about speed as people come around rotary. Would support flashing beacons. Bill Walsh – appreciate blinking sign but it is right at crosswalk – could it be back 100 ft. Joel Rusnak- 470 Merrimac St. Diagonal to park. Witnessed accidents. Parking on North side very dangerous. Would eliminate people crossing the street. Jane Snow 9 Coffin St. thank you for considering Coffin St. Did try to get a sidewalk on that side from Coffin to Jefferson last year but was unsuccessful. I believe flashing/ blinking light helps alert drivers that a game is in session. Feels that cars for Pioneer league on Merrimac are dangerous. Could we consider flashing light and no parking on opposite side of street when lights are flashing so kids wouldn't be daring across street to their cars. Also, since I believe children's playground is going to be moved I would love to see that are and the current gravel area expanded for parking. Folks would then not be backing out into Merrimac St but driving out into it. Also, folks parking there are very mindful of the kids getting into cars. Edward Nystrom 35 Pine Hill Rd- coach – saw a serious accident last year. Won't let kids go behind the car as cars going behind. Would like it so kids could ride bikes to park. Cllr McCauley- my kids played there 20 yrs ago and it was bad then.

Cllr Vogel asked Mr. Taintor's letter be shared due to his experience in this. Letter was put up on the screen. Mr. Taintor feels striping perpetuates an out of date approach to street design. John Eric White-city engineer- got the plan last week and did measuring. 11ft travel lane with parallel parking is dangerous.

There is no one size fits all for this. Want to work with Beta on this. Recommend taking trees down and it gives you more space and that could be used so people are backing into a shoulder instead of a road. Safety Zone would be good. Feels a flashing beacon on either side is a good idea. Good idea to work with league to make the gravel parking area better more cars could be parked there. Cllr Lane- played there as a kid. Long and short we need to do something ASAP. Try to do some things to slow the traffic done as soon as possible. Cllr Vogel- concern about putting down stripping until there is a better plan. Need to do it right. Cllr Wallace- when John Eric says go back to the drawing board he is talking about tweaking it. Working with Pioneer Park folks and DPW for traffic calming things. Cllr McCauley – our intent here was to gather information – so thank you for this. Will share this with TSAC and express our concerns at their meeting tomorrow. First steps toward getting something done. Residents are keen observers as to what goes on there every day. We have in attendance Parks Commissioner, Kim Turner and even though Public Comment is over I would like to hear from her. Board approved. Kim Turner 27 High St Parks Commissioner. Parks have been working on this and have a design they have been working on. John Eric spoke about removing trees and Parks Commission would have to approve this. There are wetlands at head of that parking area. Appreciate all the comments. Appreciate all the comments. Cllr McCauley- what does Committee want to do with this – leave it in committee or pass it along to TSAC. We could do both. Cllr Vogel moved to keep it in both committees. Recording will be posted and given to city engineer.

Committee: 3-0 let this stay in committee as more info is gathered.



Taintor comments
re Merrimac St stripi

From: Christine Wallace <christinewallace.ward4@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 5:58 PM

To: McCauley Jim <mccauleyward5@gmail.com>; Byron Lane <byron@byronlanenbpt.com>; Bruce Vogel <bruce@vogelatlarge.com>

Cc: White Jon-Eric <jewwhite@cityofnewburyport.com>; Matthew Coogan <mcoogan@cityofnewburyport.com>; Jamie Tuccolo <jtuccolo@cityofnewburyport.com>; Anthony Furnari <AFurnari@CityofNewburyport.com>; Kimberly Turner <duffykt@gmail.com>; Lise Reid <lreid@cityofnewburyport.com>; Jared Eigerman <jeigerman@cityofnewburyport.com>

Subject: Comments on Draft Merrimac Street Striping Plan

Dear Members of the Public Safety Committee,

Below are my initial thoughts on the draft Merrimac Street Striping plan in preparation for tonight's meeting. Please note that these are higher-level comments and I defer to the City Engineer's review for more specific comments on layout and dimensions. I will provide more detailed comments as the design gets refined.

1). This is a rare opportunity where we have general agreement among numerous stakeholders (Ie Residents, Pioneer League, Parks) that Merrimac Street at Lower Atkinson is extremely unsafe and needs to be improved over existing conditions. The long-term goal as depicted in the Lower Atkinson Master Plan is to get all ballgame parking internal to the park and get parking off of the street. Rather than stripe what was there before, we have the opportunity now for an interim solution to make conditions safer and get us that much closer to the final solution. Whatever we stripe in the street now will likely be there for years to come.

2). In order to get more cars off the street, it is critical the parking in the gravel lot is maximized. In order to do this, lines should be striped on the gravel similar to how it is done at the Cherry Hill Soccer fields. The City Engineer should design a maximized parking layout for the gravel lot and DPS/Parks could restore the gravel area and paint lines.

3). Merrimac from Moulton Street to Plummer Ave should be designated a 20 mph "Safety Zone" per MA law. This would allow for additional markings and would bring awareness to drivers that this is a special zone. City Council would need to pass this, and as Ward Councilor I would be happy to sponsor it.

4). In order to improve the safety of the Lower Atkinson area right now, there are some critical incremental construction-related changes to curbing and sidewalk the city should do, such as:

- Install crosswalks at Moulton Street and Plummer Ave. This would provide the brackets for the Safety Zone, and would allow pedestrians to get from the sidewalk on the north side to the neighborhoods or park on the other side. Currently there is no way to cross Merrimac to get up towards High Street without going through the park (which is impassable in the winter).

- Install sidewalk on the south side of Merrimac Street from Moulton to the park. Currently people walk in the street from the neighborhoods or for ballgames. A sidewalk would also narrow the cross-section of the road as cars come in from the roundabout and would help naturally slow traffic prior to reaching the angled parking area.

- Install a push-button light at the crosswalk at the main entrance of the park and provide a clear means of egress to get to the park itself. The central crosswalk may need to be relocated slightly.

5) Serious consideration should be given to not have parking in the parallel spots due to children darting out into traffic and due to the difficulty of fitting parking plus two lanes of traffic. From a public safety perspective, it may be difficult for a police car or fire truck to get through.

6) For other areas of Merrimac Street, I will defer to the City Engineer's review with regards to the layout and dimensions. I do want to make sure in general there is a uniform 11-ft travel lane and minimum 5-ft shoulder throughout. Any sort of permanent traffic calming for the entire stretch should be implemented wherever possible.

Thank you

Christine Wallace

Newburyport Ward 4 Councillor

christinewallace.ward4@gmail.com

978-701-5521 (cell)

COMM283 1-27-2021 Proposal to Reduce Speed Limits entering/exiting Rt 1 Rotary

Craft a Priority List of Crosswalks with input from all ward councillors.

Ask is for a plan to restore these xwalks

Public Comment

Jennie Donahue: Crossing Rt is a challenge now, and will be a challenge ongoing.

Charlie Tontar: Add Coffin and Woodlawn

Actions:

Committee vote to keep in committee while following actions play out. (3-0)

Share list with DPS Deputy Director

Take draft to TSAC (4/8)

Priority Crosswalks to be Added or Improved
Prepared for Public Safety Meeting 4/7/21 – DRAFT

Priority to be defined as: Major Street with access to school, park, destination (ie downtown, Sr Ctr, Hospital, etc)

Ward 1

- Repaint on Water St

Ward 2

- High Street at Clipper City Rail Trail (at March's Hill)
- High Street at State Street
- State at Brown/Greenleaf
- Water Street mid-block at the Tannery
- High Street and Market Street

Ward 3

- Route 1/Winter/Summer Streets
- Merrimac Street at Kent Street / Cashman Park
- Merrimac Street at Boardman Street
- Merrimac Street at the Foundry

Ward 4

- High Street at North Atkinson
- High Street at Myrtle Street
- High Street at Bresnahan/Senior Center main entrance
- Merrimac Street at Moulton Street
- Merrimac Street at Plummer Ave
- Merrimac at Main Entrance to Lower Atkinson
- High Street at Woodland Ave
- Merrimac and Tyng
- Merrimac and Coffin

Ward 5

- Low Street at Colby Farm Lane /
- Low Street at North Atkinson Street
- **High Street at North Atkinson*
- **High Street at Myrtle Street*
- **High Street at Bresnahan/Senior Center main entrance*
- **Turkey Hill Road at Crow Lane*
- **Turkey Hill Road at Hale Street*

**Means duplicate from another Ward crossing into Ward 5*

Ward 6

- Turkey Hill Road at Crow Lane
- Turkey Hill Road at Hale Street

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