

Meeting Minutes

9-14-2023 TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE– 5pm

Zoom Link - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82370334648>

Recording link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/xMH4J3ZZDloRuOb1uwXhcqQE9PC-QPYoGYGgit3HOA7Y9C89CBLrVIQv7cILT4dJ.rPNrUnJRgeEooz7g>

Attendees

Members in Attendance:

Andrew Levine, Chief of Staff, Co-Chair
Wayne Amaral, DPS Director, Co-Chair
Jim McCauley, City Councilor
Christine Wallace, City Councilor
Jennie Donahue, City Councilor
Andy Port, Planning Director

Members absent:

Mark Murray, City Marshal
Richard Jones, City Clerk
Steve Bradbury, Fire Chief
Tony Collins, Transportation Planner for MVPC

AGENDA

• **Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before this meeting**

- Taken first in agenda because of number of residents wishing to speak to the issue of Merrimac St at Cashman Park. Director Port put up slide of the area pulled from Google Maps street view.
- Resident Laura Corry began discussion of issue and summarized concerns. She goes to the park twice a day. People are flying down Merrimac St. There are no traffic slowing signs from the Mersen site to Kent Street. People are not slowing down. Not just residents also tourists. Cars go by and do not stop at crosswalk. Local folks say there has been numerous accidents.
- Director Amaral – This is a challenging area and he has been hearing concerns for last few months. DPS will be putting up signs and the vendor is coming in next week to continue painting crosswalks. They are putting up signs near Park lunch and possibly stanchions in street when they come in. Street designed to travel at 30 miles an hour, which cars end up doing as a default.
- Andrew Levine - near Leary's there has been some proposals for that intersection. On our list as a priority. It is on a short list for traffic calming. A bump-out would be great.
- Public Comment on issue:
 - Lindsay Ogilvie- Huge problem with congestion there. People park on crosswalk. Very uncomfortable to cross Merrimac St. Excited to see this being looked at.
 - Andy- lives on Merrill St. Cross by Pop Crowley. There is a tree there and it makes it hard for drivers to see us. I understand I drive slow and it isn't always easy to catch everything. That intersection might benefit from crossing flashing light.
 - Lindsay Lawrence- Thanked everyone for listening to this. Many concerns for the crosswalks in this area. People often do not stop when you are at crosswalk. Some cars stop while others speed thru or even around a car that has stopped. Know flashing lights or bright colors would help. Not sure what solution is.
 - Melinda Krupa – Warren St. -walk a lot of dogs so frequently cross Merrimac St. Doesn't feel signs will slow people down.

Chris Kean lives on Kent St- Kent street is a raceway. I go down and block road so my wife can cross. Thought originally crosswalk was in front of entrance of park which I believe would help for drivers to see people crossing.

Lauren Mahoney- Dove St agree with everything that has been said. Feel flashing light would help.

- Dir Amaral- Crosswalk moved because of near misses when it was in front of park. Sidewalks should not go to parking area of business.
- Cllr Donahue- Merrimac St has historically been abused this way. Traffic flow has always been ruthless. Flashing lights absolutely and more signs but most importantly enforcement. Would like to hear from marshal on how we could do that. Feel presence needs to start happening. Would like feedback from law enforcement.
- Cllr Wallace- thank you to residents who are speaking. Everyone knows we need enforcement and finances to do it. Need money for safety items. These problems have been going on to long.
- Chris Kean – Believes crosswalk could work at old location if moved 10 feet rather than going into parking lot.
- Laura Corry- feel gas station and traffic out of park lunch would be dangerous. Any plans for re-curbings or bump outs in this area.
- Director Amaral- waiting to hear from developer and are working with them on sidewalk.
- **DECISIONS MADE**

- *Item will stay on agenda*
- *DPS taking short term measures to include new signage and paint crosswalks. Administration will discuss enhanced enforcement with Newburyport Police.*
- *City will keep area on Traffic Safety priority list and work with developer at Leary's site about potential mitigation. Will also advance Complete Streets Design that can be implemented when road is next repaired or earlier based on grant/additional funding.*

- **New Business**

- School Crossing Areas: Toppans Lane at High Street and Low Street – Brought up because it is back to school time. Cllr Khan requested this be added to the agenda.
 - Public Comment:
Leah Murnane- wrote to city officials about this. These intersections are terrifying. Busing is not free option if you are within a 1.5 mile area of school and is often not affordable for parents. We are short on crossing guards. Know we need to hire more crossing guard which I have discovered is a school responsibility. Secondly on Low and Hale no one would stop for people trying to cross street. Parents on the other side helped the kids to cross. Light is also malfunctioning. Need flashing light. Feel signs in road would helpful.
Lauren Mahoney- Would love to see a police presence there twice a day. Students almost got hit by a car with flashing light and a parent helping then to cross.
 - Cllr Khan- Have a student at High School and this makes me think of safe routes to school especially with NYS also going to be on Low St. Is there anything in the works to look at that stretch.
 - Dir Port- Youth Services proposed to be there but no plans that I know of currently.
 - Dir Amaral- We have a meeting with a consultant who will propose a scope to look at a traffic study along Low Street and focus on three major places, including at Colby Farm Lane, 59 Low, and Fuller Field.
 - Cllr McCauley- have spent last week and a half at Colby Farm Lane. Light by Toppan is now working and also a crossing guard is there. Ties into speed

study done. More and more people are cutting thru industrial park. Possibly looking at an electric board there. Volume on Low St higher than what we think. Between 7:15 -8am I counted between 700 and 750 cars.

- Cllr Donahue- feels issue with sidewalk, roads, and speed of cars. Feel this could be part of a safe routes to school project. Really liked to see that are explored more. High and Johnson is also an issue. Would like to see if we could put together a longer-term plan so schools are safely routed.
- Dir Amaral- group I am meeting with is same group that did safe routes to school and they did mention area might be good to looked at for Safe Rte. to School. They look at zones. Because of cost may only look at High and Johnson.
- Cllr Wallace- feel corridor study is great for long term planning and also would like to see Merrimac St done. These plans are expensive and we do not have our roadway plan done. Would ask that it be done so we can prioritize our plans.
- Commute from Highland St down to Toppan to Low. Talked about resources for police officer but see an officer parked in their car every day. So could the officer be located closer to intersection. Appreciate committees' attention to this.
- Cllr Donahue – 2nd time today hear police officer tucked in by armory and wonder if that isn't someone we could better use.
- Cllr McCauley- I am living proof that everything the parents are stating is accurate. Police officer at Colby Farm and crossing guards are now out. Felt drivers a little more aware now of the fact - kids are on their way to school and they need to be aware of crosswalks. Doesn't mean we solved the problem - just started to help to make people aware of kids trying to cross.

- **DECISIONS MADE**

- *Will stay on agenda*
- *Andrew will update group on Low Street Design/Study*
- *Will work with Newburyport Police on more enforcement*
- *Will work to recruit more crossing guards*
- *Continue to look for Safe Routes to School Funding for improvements*

- Auburn Street Speeding: Will be moved to next meeting
- Sidewalk and Safety Concerns at Spring, Independent and Otis: Next Meeting
- Electronic Speed Sign on Hale Street: Next Meeting
- Liberty Street Crosswalk: Next Meeting
- 20 Feet from Corner No Parking Policy: Next Meeting
- Approve Previous Meeting's Minutes

- **Vote Taken**

Motion to approve the minutes from July 13, 2023 (1:08 mark in video).

Motion made by Councillor McCauley, Second by Councillor Donahue.

Director Amaral: Yes; Councillor McCauley: Yes; Councillor Donahue: Yes; Councillor Wallace: Yes; Director Port: Yes; Chief of Staff Levine: Yes.

- Minutes approved on a vote of 6-0.

- Updates from MVPC

- Councillor Wallace attended MVPC meeting on Vision Zero. Planners, engineers, police everyone sharing how they address traffic calming issue. Discussed ways to collect data. Feel it would tie nicely into what this group is doing.

Andrew- Geordie Vining is our attendee to that group because of his involvement in safe routes to school.

- **Old Business**

- Colby Farm Lane at Low St/North Atkinson

- Addressed during School Crossing conversation, will be continued to next meeting.

Motion to Adjourn (1:12 mark in video): Motion made by Councillor McCauley, Second by Councillor Donahue. Unanimous vote to adjourn.