

SELECTMEN'S PEDESTRIAN SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING – January 3, 2006
D R A F T

Members Present: Arline Lomazzo, Chairman; Robert Tuthill, Joseph Williams, Andy Kirkman, Robert McKnight, Dean Goss, Francis “Kip” Burgweger and Robert Brady.

Absent: Pat Jackson; Dr. Susan Wallerstein and Janice Domiziano, ex-officio BOE members.

Guests: VinnieDiMarco, Chairman Selectmen's Transportation Committee; Dennis Folger, GEMS; Michael Bocchino, President - Byram Neighborhood Assn.

Meeting called to order/began: 7:30 PM in the Gisborne Room, Town Hall

Approval of Minutes – of Dec. 13, 2005 were approved as written by unanimous consent.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Transportation Planner Position - The Chairman distributed a copy of the current proposal being submitted to the First Selectman for the '07 budget (one of 3 proposals) being initiated by Diane Fox, Town Planner, P&Z Department. It was noted that the P&Z Commission has not yet taken a position on these current requests, but may do so shortly.

Mr. Vinnie DiMarco provided a history of the Selectmen's Transportation Committee's previous job description which is broader and was submitted 2003, but not approved, as well as background of a Selectmen's Transportation Task Force report (1998). This report cited the need for a “broader vision” especially for Transportation management strategies with Transportation Management as a separate town unit. There was a Traffic Management Study (2002) and Parking Study (Desmond Report) which resulted in the creation of a Parking Services Manager. After a long discussion, in which Mr. Brady expressed concerns that this proposal needs to identify the problems which need to be addressed/solved (a “To Do” list) and a position with executive authority should be created, having its own budget, to address specific goals of transportation. A question that was debated, without conclusion, was to whom the planner would report. A lengthy discussion followed. Recognizing that this specific job description may not be exactly to our liking in each detail, with some concern that it may become too focused on reviewing P&Z applications, the committee took the following action:

MOTION: The Selectmen's Pedestrian Safety Committee will mention to the First Selectman at our Jan. 9th meeting, that the concept of a Transportation Planner be considered. Motion: Tuthill; seconded: Williams. Vote was unanimous.

MOTION: That the Selectmen's Pedestrian Safety Committee favors the creation of a new position of Transportation Planner. That it be done on a short term basis to prove its value. And that the Planner report to the First Selectman. We are not endorsing the specific job description currently being considered, but would leave that for further revision. Motion: Tuthill; Seconded McKnight. Vote was unanimous.

2. Update on CIP Safe Routes Budget '07 – The Chairman reported on a recent meeting with Mr. Ed Gomeau and Commissioner Bob Kalm at which a total of \$750,000 of proposed traffic calming projects be cut/postponed. This was taken from an almost \$2,000,000 proposed budget line.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Western Middle School Inventory Recommendations - With the assistance of Mr. Michael Bocchino, the committee made its decisions recorded in the Inventory Chart.

An urgent, immediate need- the pedestrian crossing at Henry St. & W. Jr. Highway is an extreme hazard. There is not enough visibility for drivers to stop their cars in time for children in the crosswalk. The likelihood of accident is very high and Dr. Rau, Principal, Hamilton Ave. School has also verified this opinion.

(continued on next page)

MOTION: The Selectmen’s Pedestrian Safety Committee will send a letter to the First Selectman Mr. Jim Lash and to Mr. Garo Garabedian, Traffic Engineer DPW, recommending that on Western Middle School Highway – corner of Henry St. – a stop sign or traffic signal be installed on the west side of the road facing north. This is an urgent request due to the hazards of crossing Hamilton Avenue school children in physical education classes from the Western campus to the Hamill Skating Rink.

Motion: Brady; seconded: Tuthill. Passed by unanimous consent.

MOTION: The SPSC recommends that the reconstruction of the Byram Rd. sidewalk from Frontage to Richland Rd. be given high priority for the '07/'08 CIP Budget and that it include some protective barriers from the RR bridge north to High St. (Motion: same as above) Passed by unanimous consent.

The committee agreed that the topography of the road often results in students walking off the curb where cars come very close to the curb especially on the hilly portions of the sidewalks. The students are in danger.

2. **Update on North Street -** Request by Mr. & Mrs. Hartch for pathway was referred back to SPSC by Joe Roberto, Highway Dept. to be placed in the long-term inventory as CIP new sidewalk project. The chairman had a further conversation with the resident in a subsequent telephone conversation.
3. **E. Putnam Ave. at Temple Shalom (vic. Old Church Rd.) –** Letter to Board of Selectman, as drafted, was approved to be sent to Board of Selectmen and DPW Officials. Request is for Conn DOT to install additional guard rails/protective barriers from existing guard rail west to Temple Shalom driveway (or vicinity). Students walking to school on a hilly, curving road used as an I-95 connector poses danger.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. **Criteria re: Establishing Priorities Townwide Inventory –** A preliminary list was distributed which will be the basis of the discussion at our upcoming meeting with Mr. Lash & Mr. Gomeau,, Mr. Kalm and Mr. Thompson on Jan. 9, 2006. It is expected that a rating format can be developed with their assistance.
2. **Need for Policy Recommendations to be developed –** At Mr. Brady’s suggestion the committee agreed it will work on some issues which we believe should result in clearer and definite policy changes re: standards of construction, costing new construction, traffic control, traffic calming and maintenance of existing sidewalks. We will formalize these needs some time before summer. (See e-mail dated Aug. 16, 2004).
3. **SWRPA -** We were informed by Paul Settlemyer that SWRPA is embarking on a two year effort to produce a Bicycle and Transportation Plan. The Chairman, Ray Rauth, was contacted by the Chairman.
4. **PLANS FOR FEB. & MARCH MEETINGS -** The committee will reconvene in late March or early April. Until then members will attend scheduled BET Budget meetings during this period for the '07 budget proposals. A list of Safe Routes projects, with specific details, will be obtained so we can follow them as well as other projects in our purview. Attendance at these meetings is essential.

Meeting adjourned: 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Arline Lomazzo, Secretary

cc: Bd.Selectmen
TownClerk
SPSC Members
Comm. Bob Kalm, DPW
David Thompson, Chief Engineer
Garo Garabedian, Traffic Engineer
Joe Roberto, Highway Supt.
Diane Fox, Town Planner, P&Z
Mr. Vinnie Di Marco, STC Chairman