

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: July 3, 2024  
TIME: 9:24 AM

**Traffic Working Group - Middle and High School  
Minutes  
June 14, 2024**

**Attending were:** Roy Epstein, Chair, Select Board Representative, Jeffrey Held, Resident, Larry Link, Resident, Ran Nayak, Resident, Martin November, Vice Chair, Jeffrey Roth, Transportation Advisory Committee, Mary Wybieralla, Secretary, Resident, Glenn Clancy, Town Engineer

**Member absent:** Alex Thurston, Resident, Patrice Garvin

Roy Epstein called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

Roy Epstein said this Committee goes out of existence June 30, 2024. He asked that the Minutes for this meeting be approved subject to minor edits by the Chair.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for July 7, 2023 were amended to reflect more fully what Jeffrey Roth and Larry Link said at the meeting. Martin November made a motion to approve the July 7, 2023 minutes as amended, seconded by Mary Wybieralla.

The vote: Roy Epstein yes  
Larry Link yes  
Jeffrey Held yes  
Martin November yes  
Jeffrey Roth yes  
Ron Nayak abstained (he did not attend the July 7, 2023 Meeting)  
Mary Wybieralla yes

The minutes for August 4, 2023 were amended with changes suggested by Larry Link regarding communication by the School Department to the community about access to the school campus. Jeffrey Roth made a motion to approve the August 4, 2023 minutes as amended, seconded by Larry Link. seconded the motion.

The vote: Roy Epstein yes  
Jeffrey Held yes  
Larry Link yes  
Martin November yes  
Ron Nayak abstained (he did not attend the August 4, 2023 Meeting)  
Jeffrey Roth yes  
Mary Wybieralla yes

**II. Committee Wrap Up Discussion:**

Roy Epstein thanked the committee members for serving, recognizing that it has not always been easy and that the committee has had to reconcile different points of view.

He reviewed what he considered to be the accomplishments of the committee, including:

- Reduction of unsafe drop-offs compared to the opening of BHS in 2021
- Convincing School Dept to open the BHS loop for dropoff and pickup to reduce congestion on the side streets. Over 200 cars use the loop.
- Reduction of U-turns on Goden St at peak times

Good utilization of the dropoff zones on Concord Ave near Orchard St  
Reduction of vehicle congestion through adjustments to the signal cycles and timings at Concord/Goden and adjustment to the 360 degree camera on the signal  
Control of the volume of the pedestrian locator tone from the Concord/Goden signals. The pedestrian locator units were replaced on all eight poles at a cost of several thousand dollars.  
Success in directing student parkers to the intended spaces on Concord Ave  
Establishing workable traffic flow at the Hittinger St driveway, particularly with the reversal of direction on Underwood St.

Roy Epstein viewed a main outcome of the committee as getting students to park in the Concord Avenue corridor instead of on the side streets. Student parking still presents some problems. Students park on the side streets, particularly Oak St, before 11 am. The key issue is that the number of parkers can exceed the number of unrestricted spaces available along the corridor.

The technical issues with the signal have been resolved. The signal is functioning as well as it can. A major reason for congestion at Concord/Goden during the morning peak is the all-way stop on the pedestrian cycle. This is necessary for safety but the cycle lasts for about 40 seconds, and a lot of cars can queue in that time during the peak.

Roy Epstein said his hope had always been that students riding bikes would go down Orchard Street and cross Concord at that signal, and not use Common to Concord. That has been reasonably successful. The Middle School traffic, with the reversal of Underwood Street, and crosswalks on Concord Ave. is serviceable. There was a Crossing Guard at the Underwood/Concord crosswalk.

TAC might be the most appropriate body to continue to work on student parking. There appear to be unused parking spaces in the Middle School lot and Roy Epstein has already asked the School Dept whether some of them could be allocated to students. The question of police enforcement also should be addressed. Limiting parking to just one side of Oak St might be helpful but that would require agreement by the residents on the street.

Roy Epstein said there doesn't seem to be a problem with traffic drop offs on Hittinger.

Jeffrey Roth said the crossing guard at Concord/Underwood was only there until November, and then went away. He thinks the left turn out of Underwood is dangerous and that cars are not stopping at the stop line - there have been a lot of close calls. It is compounded by a car parked on Concord, blocking the view for left turning cars. There are no police there, parked cars block visibility.

Glenn Clancy said there is a plan to improve the Concord/Underwood crosswalk with a bump out, curbs, and raising the crosswalk. The plan is to eliminate the crossing at Trowbridge which is too big and dangerous. The town has received a Complete Streets grant for this work. We are finalizing the design. The plan is to bring it to TAC in July.

Glenn Clancy stated the biggest challenge appears to be the traffic coming out of Baker Street. The turn restriction on Baker was removed. This pushes cars further down Hittinger. There is no conflict with cut-through and Middle School Traffic. The idea is to take advantage of the shared path.

Larry Link said he was concerned with the signage on Hittinger. There is a provision under MUTCD to create special speed zones. We should investigate. Glenn Clancy responded he would look into what was allowed per MUTCD.

Larry Link said there is a high number of pedestrians coming down Underwood, as well as kids walking to the playing fields. The signs around the school are not uniform. On Hittinger, bicyclists are not on the sidewalk. The street needs a bike lane.

Martin November said he appreciated Roy's efforts reclaiming this Committee. This Committee was up against several impediments. There was a lot of discussion concerning traffic, and the entrance to the school campus. Secondly we have limited or no traffic enforcement. There are significant financial constraints to evaluate and implement mitigation. Poor bus ridership continues and no incentive like charging fees for parking, encouraging people not to drive, or car pool. The safety of students walking and biking must be prioritized - repair sidewalks, limit traffic. There is an opportunity for turn restrictions into the neighborhood to enhance safety. Limited enforcement makes it difficult.

Larry Link said he talked to the School Department about bus fee. There has been a major change to these fees. The bus situation is complicated due to schedule coordination.

Lucia Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent of Schools asked about the schedule for the MBTA underpass. When will it be completed? This will get cars off Concord Avenue.

Glenn Clancy said MassDOT will bid the project in winter 2026. Realistically, this underpass shouldn't be counted on until Spring 2028.

Jeffrey Held left the meeting at 9:00am

Mary Wybieralla said the School/Goden intersection is still an issue. The traffic signal at Goden/Concord creates gridlock in the intersection, obstructing crosswalks. Bicyclists and pedestrians are weaving around traffic. There have been several near misses. This is a safety issue. The traffic signal greatly impacts this intersection and School Street. This issue has not been addressed. Turn restriction requests have not been adequately addressed.

Wendy Murphy, Resident, Stone Road: said students don't comprehend the narrowness of these streets. Notices should be sent where it's impassible, shouldn't park on both sides of these streets. She also asked if a U turn on Concord at the traffic signal be allowed. This would alleviate congestion and reduce traffic going onto lower Goden. There is plenty of space to allow it.

Roy Epstein told Glenn Clancy it might be worth looking at-if you allowed a U turn on left arrow. Glenn Clancy responded he would have to look at the timing. There may be a reason the traffic division wouldn't allow U-turns there.

Glenn Clancy said that no one seems to be able to get their head around turn restrictions.

Larry Link said the School flashing light is not working.

Roy Epstein thanked the Committee for its service. We can make a motion to adjourn with the understanding the Minutes for this Meeting be approved subject to minor edits by the Chair.

Larry Link asked about student parking fees for Concord Ave.

Roy Epstein responded there is a range of questions about charging to park on public street. If only charged for Concord, students will migrate to the side streets. It is a complicated management question.

Larry Link said enforcement continues to be a problem.

Roy Epstein responded these issues require a coordinated effort with the School Dept., TAC and the Town.

Larry Link said there are still missing signs for restricted parking on Stone, Orchard and Emerson.

Roy Epstein responded that DPW would have to look at this.

Glenn Clancy asked Larry Link to email the list of missing signs and he will follow up with DPW.

Roy Epstein made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ran Nayak.

Vote: Roy Epstein yes

Larry Link yes

Ron Nayak yes

Martin November yes

Jeffrey Roth yes

Mary Wybieralla yes

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 am

Respectfully submitted

Mary Wybieralla, Secretary