

Board of Selectmen – November 22, 2010

Present: Babson, Tsagaris, Searle, Dugan, Gibbs

Also present: Larsen, Connolly, Robinson (departed at the conclusion of item #4)

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Warrants approved: #2011-022 in the amount of \$3,441,339.24

Minutes approved: N/A

1. Citizen Speak

None.

2. Executive Director's Update

None.

3. Library Trustees – Branch Library Maintenance Policy

Representatives of the Library Trustees (Beth Sullivan Woods, Ann Howley, Janice Coduri, Amanda Henshon, Marla Robinson, Ann Mara-Lanza) joined the Board and Ms. Searle summarized a proposal regarding maintenance of the Branch Libraries. The proposal contemplates the Town remaining responsible for such maintenance, while requiring the Library Trustees to make a recurring contribution toward such maintenance, funded by the current lease of the Fells Branch to the Wellesley Children's Community Center, or otherwise. Ms. Henshon indicated the Trustees are supportive of the proposed approach, subject to agreement regarding the amount of the recurring contribution. She also reviewed the status of the Branch leases and noted the current level of lease revenue is \$6,000/year for the Fells Branch and \$200/month for storage at the Hills Branch. She summarized the Branch capital maintenance history. The Boards agreed that Ms. Searle and Ms. Henshon should continue efforts to reach agreement on the amount of the recurring maintenance capital contribution.

In response to a question from the Selectmen, Ms. Henshon indicated that the commitment to raise sufficient funds to operate the Branches for five years had been met. She also noted the formation of the Wellesley Free Library Foundation.

4. Old/New Business

Senior Center - Ms. Tsagaris reported on the results of a recent meeting with the Wellesley Community Center Board. The Community Center Board has invited the Selectmen to submit a proposal regarding the Town's future operation of the Community Center.

St. James Study Committee - Ms. Gibbs noted plans for the Study Committee to meet with the CPC on November 30.

Public Transportation Study Committee - Ms. Gibbs noted the Committee is evaluating the steps required to implement a public transportation system in Wellesley.

5. Quarterly Traffic Update

Lt. Jack Pilecki and Kien Ho, representing the Beta Group, joined the Board and Ms. Babson opened the public hearing.

Walnut Street parking

Mr. Connolly summarized the proposal to eliminate two parking spaces adjacent to the crosswalk on Walnut Street, closest to Washington Street. Mr. Ho summarized Beta's rationale for this change. The Board asked questions. Peg Creonte, 9 Washburn Avenue, expressed support for the elimination of 3 or 4 spaces.

The Board voted (5-0) to amend the Town's Traffic Regulations by adding to Schedule I – No Parking the following:

No Parking

Location	Side	From	To
Walnut Street	North	A point 90 feet west of the Warren Building property line	A point 175 feet west of the Warren Building property line

Prohibition of Right Turn on Red at Linden Street approach to Weston Road

Mr. Connolly summarized the proposal to prohibit right turn on red at this approach. Mr. Ho summarized his rationale for this improvement. Lt. Pilecki indicated that he feels the prohibition would be confusing for motorists, given the signal at this approach is either red or flashing red at all times.

The Board deferred action on this matter.

25 MPH speed limit signs at Morses Pond Access Road and Pond Road

Mr. Connolly and Mr. Ho explained the proposed speed limit signs.

Ms. Babson invited public comment. There was none.

The Board voted (5-0) to approve Special Speed Regulation #7889 to establish a 25 MPH speed limit on Morses Pond Access Road.

The Board voted (5-0) to approve Special Speed Regulation #7907 to establish a 25 MPH speed limit on Pond Road.

Cottage Street

Mr. Connolly summarized the proposal to add a pedestrian crossing signal at the intersection of Cottage Street and Brook Path. Mr. Ho and Lt. Pilecki expressed support for the proposal.

Ms. Babson invited public comment. There was none.

The Board voted (5-0) to support the installation of the pedestrian signal at this intersection.

Mr. Ho summarized the results of the traffic counts done on Cottage Street and reported that the results do not support a truck exclusion under the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) requirements. Despite this result, Lt. Pilecki suggested the Town ask MassDOT to study this matter.

Comeau/Jackson/Oakland Street intersection

Mr. Connolly summarized the proposal to adjust the geometry of this intersection, which would reduce the radius of various approaches. Mr. Ho and Pilecki summarized the rationale for their support of this proposal.

Ms. Babson invited public comment. Hank Hudepohl, 11 Comeau Street, expressed support for the proposal. Beth Caruso, 47 Jackson Road, asked whether thought had been given to reducing the use of Comeau Street for access to Wellesley Avenue. Jack Salerno, 279 Oakland Street, also expressed support for the proposal.

The Board voted (5-0) to move forward with a request for \$20,000-25,000 to pay for the cost of this proposal.

Upham School Zone

Mr. Connolly explained the rationale for the installation of School Zone signage in the Upham School area. Mr. Ho and Mr. Pilecki expressed support.

Ms. Babson invited public comment. Ruth Klinck, 18 Hawthorne Road, expressed support.

The Board voted (5-0) to create a School Zone at Upham School.

Abbott Road crosswalk

Mr. Connolly summarized the proposal to add a crosswalk on Abbott Road near the intersection with Livermore and Windsor. Mr. Ho and Lt. Pilecki expressed their support. Ms. Searle noted the traffic counts do not meet the warrants for a four way stop at this intersection. Mr. Ho provided further explanation for this position.

Ms. Babson invited public comment. Sumedh Mehta, 113 Abbott Road, expressed his objection to the proposal, as he does not believe it will slow the traffic in the area. Keith Higgins, 105 Abbott Road suggested the problem is speed, as opposed to traffic volume, and questions whether the proposal will favorably impact the speed. He also questioned the addition of signs, while there are no signs elsewhere on Abbott Road. Andrea Higgins, 105 Abbott, reiterated that the neighbors are not organized in support of this proposal. Paul Sandman, 93 Abbott Road, similarly expressed that the proposal would not favorably impact speeding on Abbott Road. Rather, there will need to be some more substantive geometric change to achieve this. Ms. Searle noted the Board had received correspondence Norman Boucher, 114 Abbott Road, expressed strong support for the proposal, suggested it is at least a small step in the direction of slowing traffic.

Ms. Babson questioned whether the crosswalk could be moved slightly north from the proposed location, to reduce the impact to the residents at 113 Abbott. Lori Mehta, 113 Abbott Road, questioned the proposed location of the crosswalk. Ms. Searle noted that appropriate locations for a crosswalk on Abbott Road are very limited. Mr. Higgins questioned whether the “neckdown” would be an effective technique for slowing traffic. Mr. Ho answered affirmatively.

The Board voted (5-0) to approve the installation of a crosswalk and a neckdown at the approximate location shown on the proposed plan.

Mr. Mehta further questioned the location of the crosswalk. Ms. Babson suggested he confer with Mr. Ho regarding the specific location of the crosswalk.

Charles Street acceptance

Mr. Connolly summarized the request for this street to be accepted. He reviewed the Board’s policy regarding street acceptances and noted that Steve Fader, Town Engineer has suggested this is a Type 3 street acceptance (i.e., the resident would be responsible for all costs associated with acceptance). Mr. Connolly noted that 75% of the Charles Street residents have expressed their initial support for acceptance, although they have not yet been advised that they might be responsible for a portion of the cost of the required infrastructure improvements.

Christine Carbone, 12 Charles Street, advocated the request be considered a Type 2

The Board deferred action on this item.

Brook Street crosswalk

Mr. Connolly noted the Department of Public Works expects to install the missing section of crosswalk on Brook Street near the intersection with Radcliffe Road in the next few weeks.

Beechwood

Mr. Connolly reported the level of truck traffic counted on this road is insufficient to warrant a truck exclusion.

Emerson and Fiske four-way stop

Mr. Connolly reported the traffic counts at this intersection do not warrant a four-way stop. Mr. Ho confirmed this conclusion.

6. 139 Linden Street – Site Eligibility Letter

Mr. Larsen noted the lapse of the Site Eligibility Letter from the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) regarding the proposed Chapter 40B project at 139 Linden Street. He further explained that reinstatement of the letter is necessary in order for the applicant to proceed with their application to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a comprehensive permit. The Town has been advised that reinstatement of the Site Eligibility Letter will require the Selectmen to submit a request to this effect, such request to be addressed to DHCD.

The Board voted to authorize the Chair to sign a letter to the Department of Housing and Community Development requesting the reinstatement of the Site Eligibility Letter for the Local Initiative Program at 139 Linden Street.

7. Town-Wide Financial Plan

Ms. Babson noted that this agenda item is part of a phased review of the various elements of the Town-Wide Financial Plan (TWFP). Mr. Larsen reviewed the Town's position with respect to the pension and other postemployment benefits (OPEB) liabilities. He reviewed the results of the latest actuarial valuations for both liabilities, the actuarial and market value of related assets, and the trend in the unfunded liabilities. The assumed rate of return on OPEB assets, a key assumption in the actuarial valuation, has been reduced from 8.0% to 7.5%. This reflects the Retirement Board's desire to use conservative assumptions. In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Larsen noted that a similar change is likely to be made for purposes of the next pension valuation. Mr. Larsen also reviewed the projected level of contributions for the next several years, which are consistent with the projections included in the TWFP presented at the 2010 Annual Town Meeting.

The Board concurred with the key elements of the plan for funding these liabilities.

At 10:20, the meeting was adjourned.