

**Traffic Working Group - Middle and High School
Minutes
July 8, 2022**

Attending were: Roy Epstein, Chair, Select Board Representative, Jeffrey Held, Larry Link, Ranganath Nayak, Martin November, Vice Chair, Jeffrey Roth, Transportation Advisory Committee, Representative, Alex Thurston, Mary Wybieralla, Secretary, Sgt. Paul Garabedian, Belmont Police Dept.

The meeting was called to order by Roy Epstein at 8:02am.

Roy Epstein said the Committee needs to vote a recommendation to the Select Board for the start of the school year.

Roy Epstein opened the meeting to Public Comment.

Chi-Ting Huang, Goden St.: I support the current plan banning parking 7-10am. This should be expanded to include Myrtle Street. The current plan works even though some kids get around it.

Deborah Galli, Myrtle St.: lower Myrtle Street should be included in the current restrictions. Problems moved to Myrtle when the plan was implemented on other streets. Myrtle hasn't been included. I wanted to confirm that lower Myrtle will be included with these restrictions.

Erika Wolf, Goden St.: I think the 7-10am restrictions should continue to be implemented. It's not perfect, but it works.

Liliane Wong, Myrtle St.: I want to add to Deborah's comment. We were the recipients of what happened when restrictions were implemented. It is impossible to get up Myrtle.

Helen Golding: The 7-10am ban is working well. A 2 hour restriction would require police resources.

Sue Demb, Louise Rd.: I haven't had a problem. A 2 hour restriction would be a problem for contractors.

Priscilla Hughes, Louise Rd.: There are difficulties accessing driveways and trash pick up. The hour restriction seems to work well.

Carolyn Bishop, Orchard St.: I agree with the original restriction. Those hours are most effective. Some students do move their cars, maybe a one side restriction for lower Orchard/Oak/Myrtle Streets.

Roy Epstein responded that the committee received many emails last week. Ninety-nine percent were in favor of the current restriction. No one was in favor of a two-hour restriction.

Louise and Bert Halstead, Louise Rd.: We agree that 7-10 am works well. There less inconvenience for residents than a 2 hour ban would.

Roy Epstein said that he wanted to make it clear that the primary reason to consider a two hour ban was finding something that was the easiest for the police to enforce.

Sgt. Garabedian responded there are advantages to a time restriction. He also said the police could go either way.

Priscilla Hughes said there is a problem with space at intersections with cars parking 10-20ft within them. It is difficult to see especially with large SUVs.

Roy Epstein said the Concord Ave. restriping- should improve the clearance on corners.

Deborah Galli said she was representing lower Myrtle St. she wanted to confirm that lower Myrtle will be included.

Roy Epstein responded that he was not prepared to confirm. This is something the Committee needs to discuss.

Chi-Ting Huang asked if there was any clarity from the High School about using the driveway for drop off/pick up. Should we extend parking restrictions to 3-5pm?

Roy Epstein responded the school will make the driveway available for drop off. He believes this includes pick up.

Roy Epstein explained the reasons to do a 3-hour restriction instead of 2 hours. The issue is students leaving school- moving cars and parking before 10am. This created issues on Oak and Orchard Streets. This is a geographically localized issue but effects radiate out. It is a balancing act to find something that would achieve something for the side streets. The goal is to get students to park on the school side of Concord Ave.

We need to make a recommendation to the Select Board. The DPW has to get permanent signs which need to be there for school opening.

Jeffrey Roth said he had a discussion with a Stone Rd. resident who was concerned with the excessive quantity of signs. This is a valid concern.

Roy Epstein said this concern has been expressed by others on Stone Rd. If there is no sign, there is nothing to enforce.

Sgt. Garabedian said he would defer to DPW. One at the beginning of the street, and one at the end may be enough.

Roy Epstein said we should put a minimum number of signs to enforce the restriction. Whatever the minimum, that is what we should use.

Sgt. Garabedian said we should consult with DPW to see what options are.

Roy Epstein closed public comment at 8:38am.

Committee Deliberations:

Roy Epstein said the Committee needed to formulate proposals as motions to vote as recommendations for the Select Board.

Roy shared a presentation with the Committee. He estimates that 146 parking spaces on Concord Ave. He spoke to the Superintendent who is open to making 15 spaces available on campus which will bring available student parking spaces to 160. This is more than enough for the Fall. In terms of drop off, Roy proposed space on the school side that would accommodate 5 cars at a time. Opposite the School side, a drop off can fit 9 cars.

Roy proposed signage for the drop-off zones that included no parking 2-3pm to cover the pick-up period.

Roy strongly recommended there be no lottery this year. We should be able to accommodate juniors and seniors without a lottery.

He proposed using 100 feet of the parking lane from the foot of Orchard St. on the school side for drop off. It has to be available as a pick up location from 2-3pm.

On the south side of Concord, cars going east, there is a situation at Goden where people are dropping off in the crosswalk. The parking spaces after the crosswalk are where students would park. The drop off is by Orchard. Signage should be augmented with a sign proposing “no stopping, no drop off”. A short section after that between Goden and Orchard, is a parking area after restriping. Mark this area as a drop off/pick up. No parking 7-11am and 2-3pm, to utilize as much as possible for drop off/pick up.

Roy is proposing that the restrictions on side streets be extended to end at 11am. That will be enough of a deterrent for students arriving mid morning. There would be exemptions for commercial vehicles and residents could get placards. After 11am it would be unrestricted.

The restriping will mark a 20ft buffer at intersections.

Jeffrey Roth said it should be pretty clear with the restriping.

Roy Epstein emphasized that it is important to get something in place before the start of the school year. Refinements can be proposed at a later date.

Roy Epstein said that Martin November had various proposals that should be addressed to TAC because of the far reaching effects on traffic flow.

Jeffrey Held responded thank you for your thoughtful presentation. I support your recommendations. I need clarity on the signage and coordination with the restriping.

Roy Epstein said the police will be on top of enforcement. The Select Board needs to address parking fines. The schedule of ticket fines have not changed for 10 years. If the Select Board raises these fines, it would get people's attention and be sufficient as a deterrent.

Larry Link said he wanted to raise Myrtle Street.

Roy Epstein responded Myrtle/Cottage are the only side streets with one side parking only. You don't have the congestion that was the issue on other side streets. There is potential interaction with Wellington overflow. The chicane will get us by.

Larry Link said you could have the 7-11am restriction on the lower half of Myrtle, the chicane sign would be left in place.

Alex Thurston said he would support discussing Myrtle/Cottage today.

Martin November said Roy Epstein's point is well taken. He would like to include Myrtle, but agreed with the need to get something in place and take it up at a later date.

Alex Thurston responded that while this proposal is the right direction, it will cause a problem at Oak at pick up. By including Myrtle, it is one way to look at one-side only parking.

Roy Epstein said Oak St. residents are opposed to chicane.

Alex Thurston said Oak St. is a difficult street to pass through when cars are parked. This is compounded at pick up. Oak is impassable.

Roy Epstein asked Sgt. Garabedian if the chicane system says no parking but someone is pulled over idling, are they parking?

Sgt. Garabedian responded they are not parking. The police tell people to "move on" when someone is sitting there.

Larry Link said he thought it was unfair if lower Myrtle has a problem. It should be clear to students.

Martin November responded we need to focus on parking today because we need something in place. The intent of this is to address what we experienced this year and see how traffic patterns are affected by the high school. We seem to be focused on cars, making it efficient for cars, not about safety, not student's safe passage to school. The stoplight installed to address the F rating of the Concord/Goden intersection. Any pushback by Goden residents is considered NIMBY. We don't want stuff on our street. I recommend today we take these one by one, encourage us to reconsider drop off, take up parking and approve the move eastbound.

Jeffrey Roth said I strongly agree with Martin. If the lottery should dole out that number of spots, make it unlimited- going against initiatives- limit and discourage driving to school. Making it free and unlimited increases demand.

Roy Epstein said regarding the lottery, I envision the school side is going to be a public street with public parking with no time restrictions. It is a public street, not a parking lot. It is a different situation.

Jeffrey Roth said we have a precedent last year. There are 15 spaces available on campus this year.

Roy Epstein responded it is not a guarantee those spaces are available. The school dept. is looking into it.

Jeffrey Roth left the meeting.

Martin November said Newton does have one. It is done by the town, not the school. Green space is at a premium, there is no parking lot for students. There are spots available. This could be a way to eliminate car traffic for safety. Encourage car pools/biking/walking to school. Making parking available for all students at all times is not good.

Roy Epstein asked Sgt. Garabedian if Concord Ave. has spaces, can students be prevented from parking with a lottery in place. How can you prevent parking on a public street?

Martin November responded that the city of Newton does this.

Roy Epstein said there would be 5 Committee votes for the 5 recommendations to the Select Board.

1. Motion made by Roy Epstein: That the following streets be posted with parking restrictions to be in effect from 7am to 11am when school is in session:

Goden St. (below School St.)

Oak St.

Orchard St. (below School St.)

Orchard Circle

Stone Rd.

Louise Rd.

Emerson St.

These restrictions will not apply to commercial vehicles, vehicles on public business, vehicles that display a valid parking placard.

Motion seconded by Mary Wybieralla.

Larry Link moved to add lower Myrtle Street at the current chicane.

This motion was seconded by Alex Thurston.

Vote : Larry Link: yes

Roy Epstein: no
Mary Wybieralla: no
Martin November: no
Alex Thurston: yes
Ron Nayak: yes
Jeffrey Held: no
The motion to add Myrtle Street was defeated.

The Committee voted on the original motion as presented by Roy Epstein.

Vote: Roy Epstein: yes
Martin November: yes
Alex Thurston: no
Larry Link: abstained
Jeffrey Held: yes
Ron Nayak: yes
Mary Wybieralla: yes
The motion was approved.

2. Motion made by Roy Epstein: That the parking spaces on Concord Ave. (south side) between Goden St. and Orchard St. be posted as no parking from 7-11am and 2-3pm when school is in session. These restrictions will not apply to commercial vehicles, vehicles on public business or vehicles that display a valid parking placard.

Martin November asked for clarification. This motion is talking about the south side of Concord-Eastbound? We should consider moving it.

Alex Thurston asked if the intent is to move acting on these drop off recommendations at a later date?

Martin November responded that this has not been workable as a drop off. It is after Goden/Cottage. It is not used. Made a motion to consider it at a later date.

Larry Link said it is an improving situation. It is not perfect.

Martin November responded it is just not tenable.

Alex Thurston seconded this motion for later consideration.

Vote: Roy Epstein: no
Mary Wybieralla: no
Martin November: yes
Larry Link: no
Jeffrey Held: no
Ron Nayak: no
Alex Thurston: no
The motion for later consideration was defeated.

Larry Link seconded the original motion.

Vote: Larry Link: yes

Roy Epstein: yes

Mary Wybieralla: yes

Martin November: no

Alex Thurston: yes

Ron Nayak: yes

Jeffrey Held: yes

The motion passed.

3. Motion made by Roy Epstein: That the parking spaces on Concord Ave. (north side) from the start of the parking zone opposite Orchard St. and extending east for 100ft., be posted as no parking from 7-9am and 2-3pm when school is in session.

Larry Link seconded.

Vote: Roy Epstein: yes

Mary Wybieralla: yes

Martin November: yes

Ron Nayak: yes

Alex Thurston: yes

Larry Link: yes

Jeffrey Held: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Motion made by Roy Epstein: That Concord Ave. (south side) from Goden St. to the driveway at 258 Concord Ave. be posted as no parking/no stopping.

Seconded by Martin November.

Ron Nayak asked if this was only when school in session or all the time.

Roy Epstein responded that this area is cross-hatched on the Nelson Nygaard plan as no parking.

Jeffrey Held said the signage needs to be clear.

Vote: Roy Epstein: yes

Mary Wybieralla: yes

Martin November: yes

Ron Nayak: yes

Jeffrey Held: yes

Alex Thurston: yes

Larry Link: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Motion made by Roy Epstein: That Orchard St. (southbound) from Concord Ave. to ten feet past the fire hydrant in front of 3 Orchard St. be posted as no parking/ no stopping.

Seconded by Mary Wybieralla.

Vote: Roy Epstein: yes

Mary Wybieralla: yes

Martin November: yes
Ron Nayak: yes
Jeffrey Held: yes
Larry Link: yes
Alex Thurston: yes
The motion passed unanimously.

Roy Epstein due to the time we can reconvene in August or September and again consider the Myrtle St. chicane.

Alex Thurston moved to accept the June 24, 2022 Minutes.
Larry Link seconded.
The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Larry Link said we should work with the Climate Action Committee at the school and work together to encourage other ways to get to school.

Ran Nayak moved to adjourn.
Seconded by Martin November.
Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02am.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Wybieralla