

AGE FRIENDLY ACTION COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Remote Meeting  
December 22, 2022

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: January 27, 2023  
TIME: 9:01 AM

Members Present: Judy Morrison, Chair  
Amy Checkoway  
May Forkin  
Susan Polit  
Dana Bickelman

Non-Committee Presenters: Dave Coleman, Chair of Transportation Advisory Committee  
Lucy Friedman-Bell, Belmont liaison to Safe Routes to Schools

Members Absent: Tim Flood  
Lt. Kristin Daley  
Betsy Lipson  
Paul Cowing

**Call To Order**

11:03 am

Chair Morrison called the meeting to order at 11:03 am.

The agenda items to review past meeting minutes, discussion of progress on work forming subcommittees, and introduction of new appointments were postponed.

New business focused on information sharing and discussion from two guests: Lucy Friedman-Bell, Belmont's liaison to Safe Routes to Schools and Dave Coleman, Chair of Belmont's Transportation Advisory Committee. Chair Morrison first presented the guests with an overview of the committee's focus areas.

Friendly-Bell shared that Safe Routes to Schools has worked with Belmont on various projects including a walkability audit and creation of walking route maps for the school department. The maps include the four elementary schools and middle school. She described how the maps were created and showed an example from Belmont and other communities. The process they use is applicable for other populations since it focuses on safe routes for walking and rolling.

Coleman then discussed how in general there is a lot of concern about safe crossings in town. The Belmont Police Department had put out a query on their website a few months ago to solicit feedback on crosswalks and received extensive feedback. There is overlapping concern between students and other ages. One of the benefits of Safe Routes to Schools is that they can do data analysis and show where safety can be improved for students, and then this information can be leveraged in a more general way for pedestrian access. Safe Routes to School has recently expanded focus on high schools. The catchment area for Chenery and the high school (although the high school has not been mapped) provides a townwide perspective in terms of safe routes. Safe routes to school are generally safe routes for everyone.

Friedman-Bell added that to make walking route maps, there is a wide variety of steps that different communities use based on resources and capacity. Generally Safe Routes to School collects from districts anonymous student address data and creates maps that plot all of the addresses of students. She showed the Winn Brook map as an example of routes that they suggest prioritizing. In terms of prioritizing infrastructure improvements, the map shows highly traveled streets. They used addresses for this analysis, and sometimes do walk observations as well, which can be more time and resource intensive. They also sometimes do parent/guardian surveys to get additional data. It would also be possible to include on this kind of map which intersections are ADA compliant.

Coleman shared that Winn Brook also benefited from a Signs and Lines grant to make safety improvements. Belmont commissioned a townwide traffic survey in 2018 so monitored traffic then and had counts of the number of cars. The Transportation Advisory Committee has also sent out a few members to specific crossings to do counts at different points. Lighted crossings where one pushes a button to warn cars that someone is in the crosswalk are a level of improvement that can result from this kind of program. There are various programs through MassDOT, one of which is Safe Routes to Schools, which help towns plan and execute by funding infrastructure improvements.

Chair Morrison asked what kind of partnerships are possible.

Friedman-Bell clarified that her organization is focused on the school population and is not able to create maps for other purposes. The town planning department is probably the best entity to partner with to create a map.

Coleman brought up that the Beech Street center is one logical location to focus on in terms of a pedestrian plan for seniors, and since it is between the Wellington School and Butler School, students are also likely walking nearby. Belmont does not have pedestrian or cycling plan (overall plan) to lay out routes across town. If this committee can identify areas that should be focused on, the Transportation Advisory Committee can help identify policy changes or sign/pain/curb removal that can help. It may be helpful to start with a few problem areas in terms of action.

Polit noted the general need for sidewalk repairs.

Chair Morrison and Bickelman discussed the possibility of a survey of seniors who use the Beech Street Center about where they live. Checkoway raised the concept of surveying all seniors in town to help identify their locations and walkability/transportation concerns.

Possible next steps discussed included convening a small group interested on safe routes for Belmont / Seniors, working together to help set priorities for safe walks, sidewalk repair. Specific steps could include reviewing Chenery map (proxy for town wide) for possible senior routes, partnering with TAC on survey of seniors to facilitate alignment of transportation needs and specific locations.

Next AFAC meeting is January 12, 2023 at 11am.

Chair Morrison adjourned the meeting at 12:10 pm.