

Town of Natick  
Safety Committee Minutes  
October 27, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Lt. Brian Lauzon, Natick Safety Officer at 10:07 a.m.

Members in attendance:      Chief Nicholas S. Mabardy      Lt. Brian Lauzon  
   Mr. William Hurley              Mr. John Slamin  
   Mr. Robert Ward                 Mr. Michael Melchiorri  
   Mr. Thomas Hladick             Mr. Glen Glater

Also in attendance:            Mr. Joshua Ostroff, Board of Selectmen Member  
   Several residents from the Hillside Road neighborhood  
   Deputy Chief Rick White, Natick Fire Department

OLD BUSINESS:            The Committee approved the Minutes of the September 15, 2009 Safety Committee meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Committee discussed the request for a “Hidden Driveway Sign” from the resident of #6 Glen Street. In an email to Lt. Lauzon, the resident stated that her driveway exits right on the curve on Glen Street, resulting in motorists traveling east on Glen Street, being unable to see her vehicle exiting her driveway until they are extremely close to her. The committee VOTED to replace the existing “Blind Driveway” sign as well as repair or replace the 20 MPH speed limit sign.

Cochituate Rail Trail Conceptual Design: Ms. Martha White, Town Administrator and Mr. Joshua Ostroff, Board of Selectmen and Rail Trail Advisory Committee member, asked the Safety Committee to review the Cochituate Rail Trail Conceptual Design. The committee is also formally invited to attend a public information meeting on the rail trail project on Monday, November 23, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Morse Institute Library. **The safety committee has been asked to review the conceptual design and respond in writing with their comments no later than October 30, 2009.** They were further advised that their response will be included in the appendix of the Study. Members were asked to specifically address future public safety needs should the rail trail project advance. Also of interest would be any special design considerations that the committee feels the consultant should take into consideration for emergency vehicle access along the corridor. There was discussion regarding how to keep this area safe, with bicycle patrols. The consultant has already been in contact with the neighbors and plans to address their concerns at the meeting on November 23, 2009. The rail trail is four miles long with two and three quarter miles in Natick. The committee discussed how the bridges in this area would be maintained and who would be responsible for their upkeep. It was determined that a representative from the safety committee should be appointed to the Rail Trail Advisory

Committee. Board of Selectmen Member Joshua Ostroff agreed that this would be an important first step in determining the committee's recommendations as we move forward.

**The committee reviewed a request from a Natick Village resident for the installation of additional street lights in the area of Kendall Crossing/Deerfield/Natick Village.** The committee discussed the lighting in this area and agreed that it is very dark at night. A motion was made to TABLE this issue in order to provide an opportunity for Mr. Hladick and Lt. Lauzon to review and report their recommendations to the committee at their next meeting, which is scheduled for December 29, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

**The committee discussed pedestrian safety on Windsor Avenue at the request of a Windsor Avenue resident.** The resident stated that Natick High School students are forced to walk in the street at times due to flooding, as well as children walking in the street due to lack of sidewalks. The resident believes there is adequate land in front of his home (#7 Windsor Avenue) or on the other side of the street for the construction of a continuation of the sidewalk that now ends at Moore Street. In his email to the Chairman of the Natick School Committee, he went on to state that this area is also poorly lit, which increases the safety concerns after ball games and events at the town fields. The committee determined that this is an unaccepted road in Natick and as a result, it has to go through town meeting to be addressed. This issue was VOTED to table until after it goes before town meeting.

**The Board of Selectmen forwarded a request for recommendations regarding the installation of a crosswalk at two contiguous locations, in order to facilitate pedestrian traffic to the Natick Collection and adjacent areas.** The petitioner went on to state that there is currently a traffic light installed at each of the two intersections and provided a Google map aerial view of the proposed locations of the crosswalks. Lt. Lauzon recommended that since this area is under the Mass Highway layout, this request should be directed to that agency. Lt. Lauzon further advised that the petitioner has been notified.

**The committee reviewed a request originally addressed to Town Administrator, Ms. Martha White, in the form of a petition from close to a dozen residents in the Winter Street area regarding speeding motorists and requesting specific suggestions to slow down the traffic in that area.** Ms. White also requested additional speed monitoring in this area and recommendations from the Safety Committee to address it. The petitioner noted that he has an autistic grandson and fears for his safety. The committee weighed its options regarding possible solutions to this issue, including the possibility of installing a three way stop at the intersections of Winter Street/Nancy Drive, Frost Street/Winter Street and Winter Street and Rathburn. Lt. Lauzon will make an appointment to meet with the River School Principal to discuss students speeding in this area. This issue will be TABLED to allow time to gather more data, including crash statistics from previous years.

**The committee received a request forwarded by the Board of Selectmen from a resident requesting that certain actions be considered to address speeding and other safety concerns in the area of Kendall Lane.** The petitioner had three suggestions for the committee to consider in an effort to resolve this issue, which included speed enforcement, the installation of new and

more visible speed limit and children signs at both ends of the street, and the installation of speed bumps along Kendall Lane. Several possible solutions were considered, including the installation of a raised sidewalk. The committee VOTED to table this issue until their next meeting, which would allow Lt. Lauzon more time to do research on “raised crosswalks”. Lt. Lauzon will make a presentation to the committee on this subject at the December meeting.

**Consideration was given to a request from a Greenwood Road resident which stated, in part, that he would like to hear “suggestions on how to deal with parents who disobey the safety measures in place during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up hours at the intersection of Greenwood and Barnesdale Roads.”** The petitioner further stated that he understood the reasons for removing the crossing guard at this intersection, (budgetary constraints) but as a concerned parent of Brown School children, he is looking for “ways to encourage parents to obey the “no parking” and “do not enter” signs currently in place.” It was agreed that parking enforcement should be the first step to resolving this issue. No vote was required. Lt. Lauzon will arrange for parking enforcement patrols, especially during drop off and pick up times.

**The committee also discussed a request from a resident of Blossom Circle regarding traffic rules around the Blossom Circle/Rutledge Road intersection.** The petitioner’s request is to consider the restriction of motor vehicles exiting Blossom Circle, turning right onto Rutledge Road. He also requested clarification regarding parking or stopping on the curve immediately after the Wilson Middle School entrance. After deliberation the options available to the safety committee for recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, it was VOTED to recommend the installation of “No Parking Signs” from the Wilson School driveway to Rutledge Lane on the south east side. The Committee also pointed out that it was previously recommended by this committee to paint a center line on Rutledge from Route 27 to the Wilson School Driveway. Lastly, the Committee VOTED to recommend that Blossom Circle remain with the restricted time, and the Wilson Middle School Driveway, but be changed to 7:15 a.m., which would be consistent with the other restrictions. An advisory sign on Wentworth @ Rutledge indicating no left turn during these times was also recommended.

**The safety committee was asked to find a solution to an ongoing neighbor dispute on Hillside Road regarding parked motor vehicles blocking access to their neighbor’s driveway.** Both the petitioner and the neighbor were heard by the committee in an effort to consider both sides of this complaint and make any recommendations to the Board of Selectmen to help resolve this heated dispute. It was clear to members of the Safety Committee that this is a long standing and somewhat volatile problem. Lt. Lauzon, town of Natick Safety Officer, stated that it is against the law to block access to driveways. Mr. Hladick stated that there is no parking on the street on snow days in order to allow access for plowing. The second party in this dispute accused the petitioner of being “a terrible driver.” He stated that the safety issue as he sees it is the temporary garage they’ve placed in their driveway. The committee agreed to take the entire issue under advisement and will TABLE THIS ISSUE until they reconvene on Tuesday, December 29, 2009.

**The committee also discussed a request for the installation of five crosswalks within the Natick Industrial Park from B.J.’s Wholesale Club.** BJ’S Wholesale Club proposed the

installation of crosswalks at five separate crossings, as well as the installation of stop signs in these areas. Mr. Hladick and Lt. Lauzon agreed that this will require setting up a meeting with B.J.'s representatives, and a site visit to this area to ensure all pedestrian needs will be met. The issue was TABLED in order to provide time for a full analysis of the area.

#### **ADD ON ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD BY SAFETY OFFICER, LT. LAUZON**

**Lieutenant Lauzon asked the committee to consider the installation of a crosswalk on Grant Street.** The committee supported this suggestion and VOTED to recommend the installation of a crosswalk with proper advisory signage on Route 135 at the intersection of Grant Street.

**Lieutenant Lauzon also asked the committee to discuss the crosswalk at the Lilja School.** It was determined that the crosswalk at the Lilja School as it stands now is unsafe. A concerned parent in attendance at the meeting explained that she walks her children to school and crosses at this intersection, where the crossing guard was removed due to budgetary constraints. Mr. Glater supported the protection of this crosswalk and the petition to keep and secure this crosswalk with the return of a crossing guard at this location. The committee deliberated all of the suggestions brought forward and VOTED to repaint the crosswalk. Lt. Lauzon has submitted a grant application for funds to assist in the design and construction of a raised crosswalk at this location and will report back to the Committee in December.

**Town of Natick Fire Deputy Rick White attended the meeting with a request for permission to put down a temporary (portable) speed bump on Elmwood Avenue, which is an unaccepted Way.** He would then remove this speed bump during winter months to accommodate the needs of snow plows, in an effort to reduce the number of cars using this road as a cut-through and speeding down the street. The committee VOTED to table the request while members consider a more permanent solution to the problem.

#### **FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION:**

A follow-up discussion regarding the Hess Gas Station and proposed 24 Hour convenience store and the construction of sidewalks in this area on New Hampshire/Vermont and Connecticut roadways was continued. The committee VOTED to recommend to the Planning Board to have the developer construct sidewalks on the eastern side of New Hampshire, the western side of Vermont and the northern side of Connecticut Streets, as a necessary pedestrian safety measure.

The committee also addressed a letter from Mr. Phil Kupchik regarding a new traffic sign on the ramp that merges traffic from Route 9 eastbound onto Speen Street in front of the West Natick Fire Station. It was determined that this is Mass Highway property and NO VOTE was taken. Lt. Lauzon will notify Mass Highway of this request and the need for better signage.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.