

**Town of Arlington  
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, November 16, 2004 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Jeff Maxtutis, Lt. Jim McHugh, Mike Rademacher, John Sanchez, Scott Smith, Ed Starr

Others present: Stephen Makowka, Peter Szerlag

**1. The minutes of 10/26/2004 were approved unanimously.**

**2. Public Comment**

Peter Szerlag had two suggestions:

- Flashing sign on Park Ave. northbound warning of Downing square
- One resident of Winslow towers complained that the Walk/Don't Walk signs in Arlington Center are difficult to see. Lt. McHugh noted that we are in the process of moving from incandescent to LED.

Stephen Makowka had several comments on Russell Terrace area

- He noted that the Board of Selectmen voted the recommendations back in January 2002
- Improvements to Russell Terrace and the Winslow Street intersection are planned for next spring. We need to make sure the recommendations are incorporated.
- Residents are pleasantly surprised by the apparently modest traffic impact of Russell Place, but it may be wise to do traffic counts again.
- Revisit alternate side parking on Russell Street with the neighbors.

John Sanchez arrived at this point.

**4. Snow Emergency Issues**

Scott Smith presented a draft plan for one-side parking during snowy conditions. Issues included getting the word out and enforcement. It was noted that our current options now are either to keep the current parking regulations or to declare a snow emergency with no on street parking at all. This plan is intended to deal with the period between 1 day and a week or so after a major snowstorm, where some parking needs to be permitted (so that customers can access businesses) but many streets are not yet wide enough to permit parking on both sides.

It was agreed to try it on a voluntary basis first, with John Sanchez, Jim McHugh and Scott Smith to work out the details of the plan and how it should be publicized.

**5. Churchill Avenue**

Ed Starr presented some speed and volume data. Mike Rademacher agreed to lead the working group. He and Lt. McHugh will contact the neighbors.

**6. Dallin School**

Elisabeth and Jeff presented the current plans for the new school. Issues identified by committee members included

- Connection between George St, and Renfrew St. in very poor condition

- Can pedestrian access be provided direct to Dow Avenue (along a paper street)?

#### **7. Board of Selectmen Meeting 11/8/2004**

Ed Starr reported on the Board of Selectmen meeting of 11/8/2004. Our recommendations on Cedar /Waverley/Renfrew were quickly voted, with words of praise for the report that Jeff Maxtutis prepared.

Our recommendations for Jason / Norfolk were also voted, although some neighbors objected to the relocation of the crosswalk and bus stop.

#### **8. Symmes Subcommittee**

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported that the subcommittee had met with Patrick McMahon (Fish Associates) and Jane Howard (Howard/Stein-Hudson). The subcommittee is now dealing with the issue of the base volume on Summer Street, as previous studies had reported divergent numbers.

#### **9. Downing Square and Traffic Calming**

Elisabeth Carr-Jones raised the question of whether the desire for traffic calming in the streets near Downing Square (for example, Lowell Street near the reservoir, and Park Avenue Extension near Peirce School) should be considered as part of the Downing Square process. Meanwhile, the Town Manager had requested that speed humps be put in on the street parallel to the bike path that connects Water Street and Mill Street. This street (really a parking area) is seeing some use as a cut through. Scott Smith noted that there already is precedence for traffic calming in a similar location (the parking area between Linwood Street and Lakehill Avenue in East Arlington). In addition to the long-standing speed bumps, speed humps were recently installed in this area.

Scott Smith recommended a two-pronged approach:

- Go ahead with the traffic calming on the street connecting Water and Mill. Given the parking and pedestrian traffic, this is meant to be an extremely low speed street. This effort might start with a raised crosswalk in the middle, supplemented by other speed humps.
- Meanwhile, develop decision criteria for other roads.

There was general agreement with this suggestion, except that the raised crosswalk might be overly expensive. Speed humps might be a better option.

Ed Starr suggested that we also obtain one of the portable devices from Recycled Technology, to do an experiment. He asked John Sanchez to obtain price information for the planned humps on the street connecting Water and Mill, and suggested that emergency services be involved in any planned experiments.

#### **10. Department News**

Lt. McHugh reported that the Police Department has received permission to hire two additional officers.

#### **11. Green Line Extension**

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported on a meeting that she attended where the MBTA presented plans to add transit service between Lechmere and West Medford. Currently, the advisory committee has no Arlington representation although these plans could have an effect on Arlington. (For example, the planned route parallels existing bus route 80, a route that terminates in Arlington Center.)

The basic options (with some additional variations) are as follows:

- Extending the Green Line light rail along an existing commuter rail right of way from Lechmere to West Medford (variations include several diversions to Union Square, Somerville)
- Running a bus rapid transit line from Lechmere to West Medford.

Construction is still a number of years away, as funding has to be secured and a final design selected.

## **12. Mass. Ave Corridor**

Scott Smith reported that the kickoff meeting with VHB for the Mass Ave corridor study will be on 11/23 at 4 PM. On December 2nd, there will also be a public meeting in Belmont on the Trapelo Road redesign.

## **13. Route 60 / Mass Ave.**

Ed Starr reported that it was time for the working group to have another meeting. We will need decision criteria for choosing among the options. It appears that the signals can be interconnected with new controllers for about \$150K, a lower cost than expected. He asked committee members for feedback on the questions he had drafted for the Vision 2020 survey.

## **14. Staffing / New TAC member**

Ralph Elwell reported that we had one potential candidate for the at-large position, but had not heard from the Chamber of Commerce about their position. There was general agreement that the effort to find a new at-large member needed to be better publicized, and therefore we should keep the position open for a few more weeks. Ralph agreed to draft an announcement and to speak with Jack Hurd.

## **15. Member Choice: Jason / Norfolk**

John Sanchez reported that it might be possible to complete the move of the Jason/Norfolk crosswalk to Jason/Woodland during the next few weeks. Ed Starr, meanwhile, had suggested some changes to improve the visibility of the existing signage at the Jason/Norfolk crosswalk. It was unanimously voted that, if the crosswalk cannot be moved before the end of this month, that the Town implement Ed's recommendations. The recommendations were for the existing crosswalk at Norfolk: 1) place a lime-green crosswalk ahead sign on the first telephone pole after Gray St traveling southbound on Jason. 2) move the crosswalk signs for northbound traffic on Jason to before the tree that now blocks their visibility.

## **16 Lemelson**

Mike Rademacher reported that he had sent an e-mail to Jack Duranceau asking about the status of the project, but had not yet received a response.

**The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM**

**Handouts:**

Agenda package including agenda, status of actions from 10/26/2004, Churchill Avenue request and traffic counts, Jason/Norfolk pictures, and status of actions to be done. – from Ed Starr

Potential questions for Vision 2020 survey – from Ed Starr

Minutes from 10/26/2004, Census Transportation Planning Package journey-to-work data for Arlington, announcement of Trapelo Road meeting, and guidelines for snow emergency parking – from Scott Smith

Dallin School locus map and MBTA Beyond Lechmere options – from Elisabeth Carr Jones