

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM held via Zoom, by Alex McDonald, Millburn Pedestrian Advisory Board Acting Chairperson. Advisory Board Members Present: Diane Thall-Eglow, Deputy Mayor, Township Committee; Alex McDonald, Business Administrator; Brian Gilfedder, Police Chief, Millburn Police; Christine Bugel, Assistant Township Engineer; Mara Epstein, PTOC Safety Committee Co-Chair; Dr. Christine Burton, Millburn School Superintendent; Jeremy Sokop, Resident; Brian Sobelman, Resident

Also Present: Peter Smeraldo, Sgt., Millburn Police Traffic Bureau; Farah Kassim, Administrative Assistant; Rachael Lerner and Jesse Schachter, Resident

Advisory Board Members Absent: Sowmya Jairam, Resident

Mr. McDonald started the meeting and welcomed everyone, he invited Mr. Sokop and Mr. Sobelman to introduce themselves to the Board. Mr. Sokop and Mr. Sobelman shared a little bit about themselves and why they volunteered to be a part of the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Board.

Board Business:

Mr. McDonald invited nominations for a chairperson and a secretary, since there were no nominations, Mr. McDonald will serve as Chairman of the PSAB, and Farah Kassim to take notes and complete the minutes.

Old Business:

Reports:

Committee Member - Deputy Mayor Diane Thall-Eglow spoke about the 'No right on Red' coming up Main Street to Ridgewood. At the moment the sign says 'No Right on Red' during 7-10 am and 2 - 4 pm (school hours) she suggested that the Board along with, the Traffic department take a further look at it since school hours often vary. Ms. Thall-Eglow also suggested replacing the 'No Right on Red' with 'When Children Are Present' as they do in other Townships. Secondly, Ms. Thall-Eglow asked that the Board address safety considerations for pedestrians and commuters at the Short Hills train station since there has been an increase in the purchase of commuters parking tickets recently, there may be opportunities for new grants that the Board can look into applying. The Township Committee Meeting will be discussing this at the next meeting. Mr. McDonald advised that after the Township Committee Meeting, he will ensure that the PSAB is updated.

Mr. McDonald spoke further on the Plan for Short Hills train station, he mentioned that he emailed the engineers at Silverman and was waiting to hear back from them. They may need to come before the PSAB to discuss their plans particularly during the construction to provide safe pedestrian access to the Glenwood School. Secondly, the Township had applied for a Safe Route to School grant for the Deerfield section and are waiting for a response.

Chief Gilfedder invited Sgt. Peter Smeraldo to give the report. Sgt. Smeraldo reported that as of Monday, February 14, 2022, Millburn is fully staffed with crossing guards. In the event a

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2022

crossing guard is unable to report to his/her post, there are enough guards to fill in. Sgt. Smeraldo said they are still filtering calls and communicating with ACMS regularly. In regards to cones, Sgt. Smeraldo reported that he and Ms. Bugel spoke with Brightview Engineering about some potential safety improvements for the intersection of Ridgewood and Locust. Since those plans are in the early stages and may or may not transpire, they discussed placing flex cones at that intersection.

Ms. Christine Bugel

1. Construction on Cypress Street is complete. All-way stop control was installed at Cypress with Glen and Cypress with Myrtle.
2. The icing condition on Troy Drive at the intersection of Lawrence Drive was addressed in December by resurfacing the roadway.
3. Work has been completed on two of the three Traffic Issues Management requests received last year. Speed humps have been installed on Ridgewood Road at the intersection of Ivy Terrace. Pavement markings and signs were installed along Glen Avenue between Brookside Drive and Old Short Hills Road. New reflective pavement markings were installed at the intersections of Burnside Drive, Woodcrest Avenue, and Marion Avenue. Additionally, the double yellow centerline was repainted near Farley Road to emphasize the curve on Glen.
4. The Engineering Department is actively working on the Traffic Issues Management requests that have been reported at the intersections of Ridgewood Road with Locust Drive and re-evaluating the intersection of Myrtle Avenue with Pine Terrace, after feedback received during the last meeting. The intersections were reviewed with the On-Call Traffic Consultant, Bright View Engineering. Recommendations should be available to share with the group at the April 20th meeting.
5. A grant request was submitted to Sustainable NJ to purchase safety equipment to upgrade the crosswalk on Brookside Drive at the Paper Mill Playhouse. The proposal includes an additional LED advance warning sign at the curve on Brookside to the northeast of the crosswalk, as well as active LED warning signs at the crosswalk and new reflective pavement markings.
6. The 2022 NJDOT infrastructure grant will be used to resurface Short Hills Avenue between Hobart Avenue and the Springfield Town Line. Pedestrian safety improvements with that project will include a new sidewalk near the tennis courts, upgrades to curb ramps within the project limits, and repair of the curb and sidewalk under the train bridge.
7. The 2022 Community Development grant from Essex County will include upgrades to curb ramps in the Glenwood section of town at select intersections along Woodland Avenue and Baltusrol Way that are not ADA compliant.

Mr. McDonald inquired if that grant included Coniston and Hobart, to which Ms. Bugel responded that they are not part of the 2022 Community Development grant. However, Coniston and Hobart was included in the budget line item, if approved that will be completed as part of a larger safety improvement project. Ms. Thall-Eglow inquired about 'All Way Stops' at intersections in the Poet section to which Mr. McDonald responded that it was already reported to the Traffic Department as well as Engineering to determine if all-way stops are warranted at those intersections. Ms. Bugel added that the Engineering Department already started discussions with Brightview.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2022

Dr. Christine Burton added that having crossing guards all staffed has really been helpful. Dr. Burton announced that there is a new Buildings and Grounds Director. Dr. Burton reported that school buses have been running full-day schedules and thanked Department of Public Works for notifications of emergency road closures which were helpful with making changes to bus routes.

Dr. Burton suggested enforcing wearing helmets considering the amount of children riding without helmets and with the weather is warming up, it would be a good time to promote helmet safety. Ms. Epstein offered to reach out to their representative from Trans options who had some bike safety items and helmets for give away to individual schools. Ms. Epstein will also reach out to schools to ensure they are taking advantage of that free program.

PTOC Report -

Ms. Epstein inquired about Hartshorn - traffic signal at White Oak Ridge Road and Hobart to which Mr. McDonald responded that the paperwork has been signed by the Township and they are awaiting the resident to sign and return the paperwork. Once received it will be handed over to the County to build the traffic signal. Ms. Epstein asked if the ordinance for the easement was passed and Mr. McDonald confirmed that it was. Ms. Epstein reported that there have been many complaints regarding issues whilst dropping off and picking up at the intersection of Hawthorne, which has now lead to requests to have a police officer posted there occasionally. Sgt. Smeraldo said they will add the intersection of Hawthorne to their rotation. Ms. Epstein reported that a crosswalk sign was damaged during snow plowing at Ridgewood near Bailey, and Cypress, Sgt. Smeraldo asked Ms. Epstein to send over pictures for their review.

Ms. Epstein reported that she spoke with her contact regarding the Deerfield grant, they are still waiting on a decision to be made, she will keep the board posted.

Ms. Epstein inquired if the solar speed signs for Glenwood were added to the budget, Mr. McDonald said the Town Committee is currently going through the budget and nothing has been finalized as yet. There is a request to reinstate the crossing guard at the crosswalk of Lupine and Dogwood Drive intersection. Mr. McDonald answered that they will need to re-evaluate if some areas warrant having a cross guard or not and that discussion will be looked at when reviewing the entire package. The crossing guard contract renewal is approaching sometime in April/May of this year and the Township Committee will be deciding if they will be extending the contract for another year. The High School was trying to get a meeting together with Ms. Bugel and Dr. Burton regarding the implementation of safety measures at Bodwell.

Ms. Epstein reported that she came up with a Social Media idea called 'Meet your crossing guard' which can be used as a method to recruit new crossing guards, Mr. McDonald responded that we would need to get some more information to pass along to our Public Information officer before we can make a decision.

Ms. Epstein reported that they would like to continue with the educational series that the Police department offers to the schools and wanted to let the Police Department know that schools will be reaching out coordinate that directly.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2022

Resident Report

Mr. Sokop suggested looking into 'See Me' flags to be used on major roads where there are a lot of commuters/pedestrians. Mr. Sokop inquired if it was a violation to not wear a helmet while riding a bike, to which Chief Gilfedder confirmed yes. Mr. Sokop asked the Board what would be his task as a resident and part of the PSAB in the interim of the next meeting. Mr. McDonald advised Mr. Sokop that while the PSAB sees value in his perspective as a resident, the general focus of this group should be efforts to help educate the public on pedestrian safety. Ms. Thall-Eglow added that there is a need to educate drivers about speeding and looking out for pedestrians on crosswalks.

Mr. Sobelman asked who he can speak with regarding changes/updates to the Township website to make reporting easier for PSAB concerns. Mr. McDonald suggested Mr. Sobelman forward those suggestions to him for his review and will pass them on to the Public Information Officer. Mr. Sobelman inquired about pedestrian crash data on the Millburn Township website, Sgt. Smeraldo explained that our crash data is reported to the State, Mr. McDonald added that the Township website information is from the NJ Division of Highway traffic safety but can take a further look into adding a pedestrian category. Mr. Sobelman alerted the board of a pipe sticking out of the ground at the intersection of Ridgewood and Mountain. Ms. Bugel will reach out to PSE&G to find out if the gas vent is still needed. Mr. Sobelman inquired if a request can be put in for a crosswalk to be re-stripped at the intersection of Wyoming and Ridgewood. Since Wyoming is a county road, Ms. Bugel will put in a request to re-stripe the crosswalk at that intersection.

New Business

Mr. McDonald inquired about the date for the upcoming Bike-Walk, Ms. Epstein confirmed that the event is set for May 4th. Mr. McDonald opened up the floor for ideas on what was discussed earlier regarding an educational campaign to promote safety in conjunction with the Bike-Walk, feel free to email the board if you have any thoughts, ideas, or slogans on anything specific that this board should be educating the public on.

Mr. McDonald opened the floor to discuss how the members would like to continue the board meetings, if the preference is in-person meetings as opposed to virtual (zoom) meetings. Some members said Zoom was more convenient and preferred to continue with the virtual meetings.

Questions

Mr. McDonald opened the floor for questions from the public. Ms. Duckworth inquired about a missing pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Millburn and Wyoming. Ms. Bugel will reach out to the County to see if they have plans to restore the crosswalk at that intersection. Ms. Duckworth mentioned the crosswalk at the Post Office, drivers have difficulty seeing pedestrians crossing due to parked vehicles. Ms. Bugel reported that there are no plans to make any changes at Millburn and Whittingham as the large crosswalk already has flashing pedestrian signs on it.

Open Hearing

Rachel Lerner spoke about traffic safety in the South Mountain area, there were two (2) incidents that she is aware of that were probably not reported. Ms. Lerner added that distracted driving in

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2022

her opinion seems to be the root cause and is in favor of an educational campaign to raise awareness, she added that the 'see me' flags may be a good idea for areas where there are no crosswalks.

Mike Lanzafama and David Minno gave a brief presentation on the Chatman Road Project in regards to pedestrian safety. Mr. McDonald suggested looking at alternative methods of alerting pedestrians of garage doors opening. Mr. McDonald suggested in addition to the sanctions on the wall they may want to consider other warning systems at the sidewalk level in the event that pedestrians may not look up at the building whilst walking on the sidewalk.

Mr. McDonald will add to the agenda for the next meeting so that we can get an update from Mr. Lanzafama and Mr. Minno regarding this concern.

Mr. McDonald opened the floor for questions.

Mr. McDonald called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, to which Ms. Thall-Eglow second.

Next meeting: April 20, 2022 7:00 AM via Zoom Conference

Alex McDonald, Advisory Board Chair

Advisory Board Approved - April 20, 2022