

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
May 19, 2008
Minutes

Present: Chief Douglas - Chairman
Bill Parker
Bob Courage
Dave Wheeler
Mike Putnam, Board of Selectman representative

Absent: Bill Ruoff
Kevin Lynch
Gil Archambault

Kathryn Parenti, Recording Secretary

1. Roll Call vote required by the BOS.

OLD BUSINESS:

2. Discussion: Parking and Crosswalks: *Request from the Board of Selectmen regarding the two (2) parking spaces in front of the Milford Diner and on Middle Street*

F. Douglas began by noting the items for discussion on the agenda were the same items that were discussed at the last meeting. At the conclusion of the last meeting, there were two (2) recommendations that were presented to the BOS: one was with regard to the flow of traffic on Middle Street and the other was the two (2) parking spaces in front of the Milford Diner. The Committee recommended angled parking on Middle Street and the elimination of a parking space to gain a good line of sight. The outline that was handed out listed several options for each area. He was looking to see how the Committee felt about each option and would personally report to the BOS the results of the discussion. He noted this discussion was occurring because of M. Putnam's stand on the issue in front of the Milford Diner. He also noted the BOS did not like the angled parking suggestion for Middle Street. He stated he had met with Guy Scaife, Town Administrator, to discuss what the BOS was looking for. He noted he had spent a lot of time looking over past minutes and going to the locations. F. Douglas continued on with the crosswalk by the Diner:

OPTION I

- o Eliminate (1) northern parking spot in front of Milford Diner:
 - Define amount of parking space being eliminated (feet)
 - Increased pedestrian sight distance- eliminates safety concern
 - Possible negative impact on business @ Milford Diner
 - No accident data supporting safety issue
 - Many reports of "near misses" at crosswalk location

OPTION II

- Eliminate Crosswalk in front of Milford Diner:
 - Utilize crosswalk further south of Diner to Island to west side of Oval
 - Add crosswalk on north side of bridge, running east to west towards Post Office
 - This option allows for parking spaces to remain
 - No substantial impact on pedestrian foot traffic
 - Eliminates the pedestrian safety concern
 - Allows pedestrian foot traffic to flow east/west at two (2) locations

OPTION III

- Designate two parking spots in front of Diner as “Compact Vehicles Only” if viable option:
 - Define size/dimensions of parking spaces
 - No impact on business @ Milford Diner
- Define “Compact vehicle” **only** if this is viable option
 - Definition of size of vehicle and parking spaces
 - Provide backup information on dimensions

F. Douglas stated Option II would make it slightly more difficult for the elderly living on Bridge Street to get to the post office. If they added the crosswalk right before the turn onto Amherst Street at the three-way intersection, two sides of the intersection are controlled by stop signs and the crosswalk would have over 250 feet of sight distance. A handicapped ramp would have to be constructed there. He stated B. Ruoff was not opposed to that option or Option I either. This option would allow the parking spaces in front of the diner to stay.

F. Douglas then read the options for the Middle Street/Putnam Street intersection; the problem is poor sight alignment and traffic flow:

OPTION I

- Angle parking vs. 90 degree parking:
 - Increase in sight alignment
 - Enhanced public safety for motorists and pedestrians at intersection
 - Number of parking spaces lost if angle parking was to be implemented
 - One-way on Middle Street not adopted
 - Inconvenient to motorists-traffic flow eastbound a concern
 - No accident data supporting safety issue
 - Many reports of “near misses” at intersection

M. Putnam stated the BOS was worried about creating traffic flow issues getting into and out of the parking spaces on Middle Street.

OPTION II

- Install “Stop” Sign and possible “bump out” at intersection on Middle Street and Putnam Street:
 - Increase in sight alignment
 - Enhanced public safety for motorists and pedestrians at intersection
 - Fits criteria of Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
 - Page 41, STOP sign applications sections A, B,C and D
 - Intersection enhancements may be coverage by already acquired grant monies

- Crosswalk is contained with the intersection, public safety concern
- Ninety degree intersection, public safety concern
- Emergency service location (Ambulance Bay), public safety concern
- Fire Department emergency response at various times, public safety concern
- Heavy traffic flow at peak times to avoid Nashua Street, public safety concern
- No engineer study has been completed on this intersection
- No accident data supporting safety issue
- Many reports of “near misses” at intersection
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F. Douglas noted in the afternoons, at peak traffic times, Middle Street is used as a cut through to the Oval and is heavily traveled, not including times when Fire and Ambulance need to travel on the road. He noted there has not been any engineer study on that intersection but there have been many near misses.

OPTION III

- Designate two (2) parking spots in Municipal Parking Lot on Middle Street as “Compact Vehicles Only”:
 - Define size/dimensions of parking spaces
 - No impact on businesses
 - Improved sight alignment/distance
 - Enhanced public safety for motorist and pedestrians

F. Douglas noted he had tried to cover all the bases and would like to get the consensus of the Committee. He noted B. Ruoff supported the stop sign on Middle Street. He would like to give the outline to the BOS so they have options to choose from.

B. Parker asked if the outline would be submitted with the recommendations made by the Committee.

M. Putnam asked about B. Parker’s recommendation for the placement of the crosswalk at the diner.

F. Douglas noted he recommended the crosswalk be moved north of the diner, where the turn onto Amherst Street is and it would cross over Mont Vernon Street.

M. Putnam wondered if that was a good idea, taking into consideration B. Ruoff’s comments at the last meeting regarding the construction of the bridge.

F. Douglas replied the crosswalk would not be on the bridge itself but would be on solid ground.

B. Parker felt that would be a viable option.

M. Putnam replied he preferred the Bridge Street crosswalk but did not want to move the parking space to allow for more travel room on the bridge.

B. Parker thought one space would be lost with that option.

M. Putnam stated they would be able to leave the parking spaces alone if the crosswalk were angled from Bridge Street to across the Oval.

D. Wheeler noted, with Option II and the addition of the crosswalk at the turn at Amherst Street, there was a lot to be aware of at that intersection. He noted drivers are unable to see cars beyond the lead car.

B. Parker thought it was a good alternative.

M. Putnam stated he had gone down to look at the areas with Tim Finan, Selectman, after the last BOS meeting. They felt moving the parking spaces was not a good idea and would cause too much congestion.

F. Douglas asked if they should eliminate Option II.

B. Courage felt placing the crosswalk on the north side of the bridge was a good idea and there was good sight distance. If they placed the crosswalk where M. Putnam wants it, it would be crossing over two (2) long lanes of traffic.

M. Putnam responded if the crosswalk is to the north of the bridge, drivers may look to the left and drive without looking to see if anyone was in the crosswalk.

B. Courage noted the crosswalk would be dangerous at any location in that area. He also felt using the crosswalk across the island would be a viable solution.

F. Douglas was concerned that it would be too inconvenient for the elderly who live on Bridge Street. He noted he was looking for a recommendation from the Committee and wondered if they should add an additional option.

B. Parker felt they could remove the option mentioning compact cars and replace it with the other suggestion.

M. Putnam reiterated his idea that the crosswalk should begin at the corner of Bridge Street, at the Diner side before the parking space and go across the Oval at an angle. There would not be any bridge construction issue and he felt there was plenty of space between the southern most parking space and the crosswalk.

F. Douglas asked if the sight alignment was fine at that location.

M. Putnam replied it was.

F. Douglas noted he would take out Option III and insert this idea in its place.

B. Parker asked if they would like him to sketch this idea on pictometry.

F. Douglas reported the angled cross walks are not an idea that is liked by G. Scaife.

B. Parker noted the cross walk in front of the library was at an angle and this was not that different.

F. Douglas asked if there was a motion by the Committee to recommend Option I. There were no motions; none recommended this. He asked if there was a recommendation for Option II.

F. Douglas and B. Courage were in favor; M. Putnam, D. Wheeler and B. Parker were not in favor. He asked if there were any recommendations for the new Option III. B. Parker, D.

Wheeler and M. Putnam were in favor. F. Douglas and B. Courage were not.

B. Parker noted with regard to downtown traffic designs, good pedestrian access to the post office is important. He noted one plan for future improvements shows a roundabout at the post office intersection.

F. Douglas wanted their positions to be noted in the minutes so the BOS would be aware of the situation.

F. Douglas asked if anyone liked any options with regard to Middle and Putnam Streets.

B. Parker stated he liked Option II. He stated there were currently twenty (20) spaces; one is sixteen (16) feet wide while most are between eleven (11) and twelve (12) feet wide. He felt, with a bump out, they could comfortably get nineteen (19) spaces.

M. Putnam asked if the bump out would be at Kilkenny's.

B. Parker replied it would be on the other side of the road, where the sidewalk goes to the parking area.

M. Putnam was not sure how the bump out would affect the ambulance department and if it would have a negative impact on the flow of traffic on Middle Street.

B. Courage stated a stop sign could be placed on Middle Street on an island and there would be no need for one at Putnam Street.

M. Putnam noted people would run the stop sign as it would not be natural to stop in the middle of the road.

B. Courage replied if drivers come up Putnam to pull out onto Middle Street, there was no sight distance from Middle Street looking back toward School Street. If there was a stop sign on Putnam Street, and no traffic control device on Middle Street for the traffic traveling west

bound, the drivers pulling out of Putnam Street can't see. If the traffic control device is at Middle Street, on a built out curved island, that would control the minimum traffic getting out from Putnam Street. This situation is similar to driving down Mont Vernon Street and stopping at the sign at the North River Road intersection. He didn't think that would be a problem and would be a good spot for a cross walk.

B. Parker said with Option II there should be two (2) stop signs, one on Putnam and one on Middle?

M. Putnam inquired about the bump out option.

F. Douglas stated the sidewalk is painted and the stop sign could be placed there, on Putnam Street. He noted they could make the bump out come out more. He noted that he and G. Archambault had proposed the bump out on the other side of the street before and no one was happy with that suggestion.

B. Parker said he would go along with Option II with the two (2) stop signs – one stop sign on Putnam Street and one on Middle Street.

F. Douglas noted the stop sign allows them to keep the parking spaces.

M. Putnam asked what would happen at peak traffic times with the backed up traffic and people trying to get out of parking spaces.

B. Parker felt that would not be a problem since the cars would only be stopped for a short time at the stop sign.

D. Wheeler stated he was missing the purpose of adding a stop sign on Middle Street if one was already on Putnam Street.

F. Douglas replied there was bad sight alignment in both directions, from Putnam Street headed southbound and from Middle Street headed westbound.

D. Wheeler asked if the bump out would be at Putnam Street.

B. Parker felt to make this work they would take more time to work on options. He wondered if they could wait on this one, work on the options and then send it along later with the Committee's recommendations.

F. Douglas asked if everyone was in favor of tabling the Middle and Putnam Street discussion. All were in favor of tabling; none were opposed.

B. Parker said he would look at pictometry and sketch out a couple of scenarios.

F. Douglas asked about Option III.

B. Parker suggested getting rid of it.

F. Douglas stated he would substitute the compact car option with the different crosswalk option for the area in front of the Diner and they would not submit recommendations for Putnam Street at this time. He noted he would like to have the suggestions ready for the next BOS meeting and have the BOS decide which option to pursue. He asked if the Committee was ok with that.

All were in agreement; none were opposed.

4. Approval of minutes from April 28, 2008.

F. Douglas felt B. Courage, who had had some computer issues might not have had a chance to read the minutes and he felt the Committee should wait until the next meeting to approve them.

All were in favor of this; none were opposed.

F. Douglas asked if there were any additional items to discuss. There were none.

B. Parker made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

M. Putnam seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45.