

Approved 8/19/2019

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By Town Clerk, Patricia E. Dzuris at 1:35 pm, Aug 21, 2019

Town of Chelmsford
Board of Selectmen
40 Groton Rd.
North Chelmsford, Ma 01863

**Public Input Session MINUTES
June 12, 2019**

Attending:

Kenneth Lefebvre, Chairman
Patricia Wojtas, Vice Chairman
Emily Antul, Clerk
Virginia Crocker Timmins, Selectman

Paul Cohen, Town Manager

Not Present:

George Dixon, Selectman

Please note that all documents referenced in these minutes are on file at the Town Manager's Office, 50 Billerica Rd., Chelmsford, Mass. This meeting was video recorded by Chelmsford Telemedia.

Chairman Lefebvre opened the Public Input Session at 7:00PM.

Some residents provided e-mail input, which Chairman Lefebvre read into the record throughout the session.

Chairman Lefebvre explained that this session is being held as many residents have voiced concerns about traffic issues, and the Board is compiling a more complete list of issues to try to address via a plan to be presented at the end of the summer.

Email, no name provided: Listed concerns about unsafe crosswalks at Cottage Row, and the topography of Princeton Blvd, the writer requested a traffic light to slow people down, and to install speed bumps to slow down traffic. This document was presented as a petition, signed by multiple residents.

Email, Brian Stripp, High St., noted increased traffic by heavy trucks on High St. This street is increasingly being used as a cut through, and there is a lot of speeding. He wants a truck exclusion to be created for this street, as it is a scenic road.

Beth Logan, Lovett Lane, noted concerns at the intersection of Fletcher St. and North Rd., where the lanes are too narrow and there is not enough room to make turns safely. She suggested widening this road or change the angle of the turn. The turn from near Bartlett Park by the Library causes people to stop when they don't have to because of poor signage. People do not stop at the four-way stop signs at School St. The bridge over Rt. 495 on Westford Rd. is in horrible condition; it is crumbling. School St., by the railroad tracks, is worse than ever, and not safe for bicyclists.

Dave Rand, Dunstable Rd. by Ledge Rd., stated that trucks coming from the quarries are downshifting because they are speeding, and it is noisy. He suggested adding an industrial spur from the quarry by the underpass at Rt. 3 to re-route the truck traffic.

Email, Mark Duffy, Stonehill Road, noted a significant increase in trucks on Ledge Rd. between 6:30-7:00AM. He provided photos. He cautioned that any truck restrictions will use Ledge Rd., and it is very hard for a large truck to turn off from Ledge Rd.

Dana Ruth, Swain Rd., explained dump truck noise wakes them up by 6:15AM every day, and they run through 4PM. They go too fast, and material comes off the trucks. One day the debris went from Ledge Rd. to Rt. 3. Trucks appear to be overloaded, and the material spills out. Regular traffic on Swain Rd. speed often; they appear to be racing. This most often occurs late afternoon to early evening; she is concerned about child safety.

E-mail, John Bissonette, Dunstable Rd., noted some truck drivers speed on Dunstable Rd in loaded trucks; jake brakes are annoying, and stone is spilling from the trucks. This issue lessened after police were notified, but it still happens. Lt. Spence has been very helpful. He would like to see jake brakes barred in residential areas.

Beth Logan, Lovett Lane, added a site concern at the intersection of Davis and Old Westford Roads where it is hard to see up the hill on Davis Rd. and people drive too fast. Different intersections have sight line problems when it snows, and some people have bushes that need to be trimmed back.

Chairman Lefebvre received 2 phone calls about why there is not a left turn only protected light on North Rd. going onto Parkhurst Rd.

Emily Antul, Selectman, received a call about the lack of sidewalks in several areas around Varney Playground and Sherman Rd. which is very dark at night for pedestrians. She felt the Town needs more forms of public transportation, more shuttles during rush hour, more sidewalks, more buses, and public transit systems need more funding. The Town needs to work with other communities for park and ride or carpooling options, as there is also a need for less single occupant cars on the road.

Aaron Cunningham, 67 Billerica Rd., explained he lives across from Town Hall. He likes having the fire station across the street from his home. However, when firetrucks need to leave, people speed down Perham St. to avoid the area when the red light is on. When travelling on North Rd. towards Drum Hill, people pass you when you are trying to take a left turn into McCarthy Middle School; drivers are aggressive and drive off the road in order to pass. He suggested widening the road or stop the passing. Traffic congestion in general is building and frustration is building as some people sometimes wait 30 minutes to get down the road. He doesn't want to see people get hurt.

Chairman Lefebvre agreed North Rd. is a problem by the school and kids have difficulty crossing over from Chelmsford Village.

A resident from Swain Rd. that lives by the incline explained she's 80 years old and never knew what jake brakes were. Cars go around the trucks, it is terrible. She and her husband are always cleaning debris, and someone is going to get hurt because the trucks are speeding.

Jerry Hall, Lovett Lane, suggested having more police enforcement, and having the state police weigh the trucks. To him, the issue is overdevelopment. All those road trips add up.

Kimberly Woods, Ledge Rd, explained the truck traffic has exponentially increased since Newport Materials opened, trucks drive on peoples' lawns and it is not safe.

Email, Karen Spengler, Ledge Rd., is very concerned about increased truck traffic on Ledge Rd. over last year. This interferes with kids getting off buses as the trucks don't stop for pedestrians and travel very fast. Kids are being endangered. Trucks do not respect safety or speed limits. This is a Westford business costing Chelmsford taxpayers money. An alternate route for trucks needs to be created.

George Bacon, 93 Westford St. explained some asphalt trucks use Pine Hill Rd. to Westford St. to Dalton Rd. The trucks are loaded, and the jake brakes are very loud. Doesn't happen all the time, but it happens, and they go through the historic district.

Justin Bates, Oak Hill Rd., has kids that ride bikes in the neighborhood. He has friends that drive trucks, and knows about Newport Materials' expansion. The trucks do go down Ledge Rd. very fast. The turn onto Dunstable Rd. is hard with the telephone pole there. He sees lines of trucks at 7:30AM. This is too much truck traffic.

Joanne Ralls, Smith St., noted the traffic light at North and Parkhurst Roads does not allow for protected left turns, which makes the intersection unusable. A left turn arrow light is needed.

Earl Guilmette, 75 Ledge Rd., felt someone should build another road to get onto Rt. 3 from Ledge Rd. This was tried in 1955 and rejected as being too close to Groton Rd., but it needs to be done now because of all the increased traffic.

Melissa Laurin, 44 Ledge Rd. explained she works from home and sees the truck traffic increase and they are very fast. Two trucks can't pass without running onto lawns which is not safe for pedestrians. They run from 5:00AM to 4:00PM during week, and 6:00AM to 3:00PM on weekends. She has called police multiple times. She called Newport and other companies, they are not cooperative. The traffic will probably get worse over time. She looks forward to hearing what will the Town do about the volume, and the roads need to be safe for residents to walk and drive.

Email from Eric Hill, who resides at the corner of Ledge and Dunstable Rd., noted that quality of sound is loud, and he is concerned about safety with school buses and trucks. They are large, visually impaired trucks in a small residential neighborhood. The noise is irritating and makes his house shake seven days a week.

Deena Steelan, 2 Ledge Rd., the trucks have ruined their lawn and irrigation system by running over the space of her yard, and her children can't play in the driveway because she is afraid they will be hit by a speeding large truck.

Derek Perry, Ledge Rd., explained the truck traffic is horrid, and it is not safe for kids. He was told the school bus can't go down the road because it's too narrow, yet there are more than 25 trucks using the road. Drivers have no regard for property and there is lots of trash. Kids can't ride bikes around this neighborhood. The road is not wide enough for two vehicles to pass each other. Newport Materials doesn't seem to care, as no one will return phone calls.

Email-Sarah Ray, 49 Billerica Rd, Apt. 1, noted the speed limit is 20mph, yet many people go 40-50 mph. There have been many accidents in this area. Please address speeding; there is a school nearby. Additional police enforcement was suggested as a way to slow down the speeding traffic, flashing speed signs or speed bumps

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Cheryl Ryan, 230 Dunstable Rd., stated there has been a huge increase in truck traffic. It is noisy and they can't keep their windows open. Passing is dangerous, especially for runners and pedestrians. Truck traffic has started as early as 5:30AM.

Email: Susan MacKinnon, 16 Cathy Rd. understands traffic is necessary, but speeding and running lights is not. Something must be done.

Susan Olsen, 140 Groton Rd., asked if the DPW or Police Department could install a "stop ahead" sign near her intersection, as there have been four recent accidents because of cars are not stopping on Main St. Police presence is needed at 8:00AM and between 4:00-5:00PM. She also suggested blinking lights near dangerous intersections. Bigger and brighter signs may help. Intersections are very busy; she suggested reducing the speed limit from 35MPH to 25MPH on Groton Rd. Additional development will make huge problems. She thanked the town for paving Swain Rd., however, truck traffic is still noisy from shifting, and some kind of defect in the road and shakes the ground, and it starts at 5:00AM.

Email: Hazen Rd. resident requested the road be made one-way, as it is used as a cut through from Boston Rd. to Concord Rd. This is a narrow road, and people drive too fast on it.

Chairman Lefebvre received a telephone call from a resident who requested a dedicated traffic officer be placed in Chelmsford.

John Wojcik, 80 Littleton Rd, asked if residents would get a chance to talk to state people about the issues being discussed tonight. Chairman Lefebvre advised that the Board of Selectmen will go through these concerns, and figure out what can be done by the Town, or they will try to get answers on why nothing can be done. Mr. Wojcik advised that he would like communication to continue, there are issues with sidewalks on Littleton Rd., too. The smells from the asphalt plant are horrible. Chairman Lefebvre advised the goal is to get a baseline tonight. He stated that he visited the 80 Littleton Rd. area, and he saw what they have been dealing with. Mr. Wojcik asked the Police Chief why Aggregate is allowed to operate on Sundays, and he feels this needs to stop. People want to use their yards and sleep at night without all the truck noise. The Town is trying to improve the Center, but it is not easy to get to.

Debbie Dery, Steadman St., thanked the Police Chief for bringing the 30mph speed limit to Stedman St. A police traffic study report done from March 20, 2019-March 27, 2019, indicated there were 82,238 cars on Stedman St, and many were speeding. She asked about the weight of the trucks, as they are getting bigger and heavier. The truck traffic starts at 4:30AM. She understands you can't stop the trucks, and you can't stop traffic from other communities. At the corner of Steadman St and Rt.110 seems to be an assumption there are two lanes and there is not. Not all people are distracted, they are just travelling too fast. No one stops for buses. She described other incidents where cars aren't stopping for anyone, not even ambulances, and they are going too fast. People need to be made aware that what they are doing is not safe. People, children and dog walkers aren't safe on the sidewalk. Cars are crashing onto the sidewalks. There is truck traffic on North and Dalton Rds. Ms. Dery suggested hosting a Safety Awareness Month event. Ms. Dery recalled other dangerous incidents that have occurred because of speeding.

Shirley Bujnowski, 79 Ledge Rd., which is a dirt road; 450 feet of the road is her property and she pays taxes on it. The road is next to her house. She knows the quarry was sold to an asphalt plant. She suggested going back to the Town of Westford to direct the traffic through their town, where the company is located. She owns ten acres, and her land is worthless because of the truck traffic. She is afraid to mow

her lawn, she has no privacy. The dirt road has been graded, and has sank three feet over the past 60 years. This isn't fair to them. The road is very dusty because of the truck traffic.

Bob Hession, 26 Ledge Rd., will submit a list of questions and observations. He was advised that the asphalt plant is not active at this time. He is looking for a copy of the ordinances that allow commercial trucks in a residential area. He asked if there is a long range or alternate plan for transporting the aggregate material. Children and parents waiting on the corner of Ledge and Dunstable Roads are faced with a safety issue. He suggested designing a safe zone, or placing a traffic officer at that intersection.

Email: Bonnie and Ted Flanagan, 3 Derringer Rd., noted that traffic has increased exponentially on Mill Rd. from the new housing developments in their neighborhood. The curve on Turnpike Rd. is dangerous because drivers cannot see around it.

Nancy Araway, 65 Littleton Rd., felt the residents in the Ledge Road area complaining should be thankful that Westford limited the hours that the trucks from the plant in their town can travel. On Littleton Rd, the trucks run longer. When they hit the manholes, the plumbing shakes, and volume limits are not complied with. The state has a need for asphalt services, even at night. Sidewalks are an issue throughout town, they are in poor shape. The Town needs to invest in the sidewalks in town.

Email from Beth Logan, suggested posting event signs before the prom event on the Town Common to give people time to plan an alternate route and alleviate traffic congestion at that time.

Jerry Hall, Lovett Lane, asked the Police Chief if a detail could be set up to enforce speed and driving on private property. He would help pay for it himself.

Dave Eacrett, 11 Leedburg St., explained that traffic is a part of life. He has been a truck driver since 1968. Chelmsford buys a lot of aggregate and it is needed, as everyone wants their streets paved. Newport Materials needs to weigh their trucks and make sure they comply with current regulations. Police enforcement is needed for overweight trucks, speeding, and jake braking.

Maria Karafelis 26 Quigley Ave., explained she travels to Burlington every day, and drivers in Chelmsford do not respect signs, stops, and lights. The trip takes her 45 minutes if she goes through Chelmsford, it is easier for her to travel through Lowell. There's never anyone around to catch the violators. The conditions of the roads need to be addressed, as they are poor. Accidents creates gridlocks. The police need to be out there to monitor and ticket violators.

Email: Ann Gaudet, Glen Ave., requests the state be asked to adjust the lights on Chelmsford St. by Stop & Shop. She also suggested a stop sign installed at Harold St., by Birch St is not needed.

Soumil Amin, from Tyngsboro, owns a business in Chelmsford, and advised that he travels on Rt 3. He requested that the State be asked to make the speed limit on Rt. 3 65 mph instead of 55 mph.

Email: David Fredericks noted that trade business vehicles parking on Main St. by Lynn Ave., particularly landscape trucks and trailers, block the road. This creates a dangerous situation trying to drive around them, and people should not pass these parked vehicles; they should wait until the vehicles are moved. This also happens by the Agway on Maple Rd. Fedex and UPS trucks do the same, as do trash trucks. Many of these vehicles should not park on the roads, but in people's driveways. The writer also suggested more crosswalks with lights and call buttons for pedestrian and bicyclist safety at the rail trail crossings.

Christine Bowman, 3 Julio St., submitted an email, and was also present to speak. She suggested that the Town establish dedicated truck roads through the town, because of all the recent development throughout Town.

Email-Dottie Jones, 23 Buckman Dr. explained that the traffic light timing on North Rd. needs to be adjusted, as it makes it difficult to get into her neighborhood.

Email-John Solmie, described major problems accessing Rt. 495 and Rt. 3. The e-mail listed multiple access points in Chelmsford and Westford.

Mary Gill Leonard, Scotty Hollow Condos, asked what was going to happen after the asphalt plants begin actual production, if existing problems are already this severe. She can smell the gas from the aggregate plant on Littleton Rd., and sees it getting worse in North Chelmsford. She suggested a study on how many trucks travel now and what the proposed number will be once the plants are open for actual production.

Email-Patricia Robert-Hayes, 191 Main St., wrote that she sees many more plates from NH, and many more trucks from everywhere. There are many more accidents on Main St., and they are becoming more severe.

Debbie Dery, Stedman St., asked the Town Manager whether Aggregate was supposed to use a chemical to reduce the smells. Mr. Cohen advised that the State is supposed to monitor their activity.

E-mail, Rich Freitas, noted that recent growth and traffic increases on Turnpike Rd. have created more frequent close calls due to bad site lines at the bottom of Turnpike Rd. The DPW has been notified of this situation.

E-mail, Christine Bowman, noted heavy traffic congestion concerns with multiple areas of Turnpike Rd., Mill Rd., Golden Cove Rd., and Billerica Rd. She listed speeding concerns, and the significant increase of construction vehicles due to many development projects on Turnpike & Mill Rds. The increased traffic makes conditions not safe for pedestrians, and has increased the number of vehicle accidents. Backups are long and occur daily at certain times of the day. She suggested installing more lights and road widening, as well as possible ways to re-direct some of this traffic. There is lots of cut-through traffic from everywhere. She requested more information on contamination at 81 & 84 Turnpike Rd.

Ruth Monahan, West Chelmsford, suggested enforcing the speed limits that already exist. Enforcement may get people to avoid certain areas and would discourage speeding.

Nancy Araway, 65 Littleton Rd., pointed out that emissions limits are set by the State. Chelmsford has nuisance bylaws that are stricter than the State limits, and these can be enforced through daily fines.

Rich Fratus, Precinct 4, wished to follow up on points in his email. He thanked the Town for taking care of the overgrowth he noted on Turnpike & Mill Rd., and for the proposed improvements at the intersection.

Chairman Lefebvre received a text message from an unidentified resident noting concerns about left-hand turns at Rogers Rd. in the morning.

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The Board will create a list and break it down by what is state responsibility and what the town can address and will report back in a month or so.

Police Chief Spinney explained there are thousands of vehicles that move through the town every week. Five patrol officers cover the community as the department does not have a full time traffic officer. The department had 35,000 calls for service last year. Patrol officers deal with what they can in between calls for service. The officers are very busy. They do not have truck restriction authority at all. They can try to get an officer out early in the mornings, but service calls will take priority. The department can work with the DPW on site line issues. He encouraged residents to keep the calls coming, noting the department is doing the best they can with available resources. He noted officers are seeing a volume problem, but not a speed problem on Ledge Rd. He surmised that truckers probably see the cruiser and let others know. The asphalt company can be called as well.

Press questions:

Margaret Smith, Eagle Independent, asked whether there could be dialogue with the Town of Westford on the issues on Ledge Rd. Chairman Lefebvre noted that the Assistant Town Manager has reached out to Tyngsboro and Westford, however, they will not gain anything by working with Chelmsford. He reiterated the process going forward on addressing concerns brought up tonight.

A resident requested that Newport Materials send a representative to a future meeting to provide input on some of these issues.

Nancy Araway advised that a copy of the nuisance bylaws can be obtained from the building inspector.

Robert Wood, Swain Rd., asked whether a no jake brake sign be installed, similar to what is done in Westford. He noted that there are still two potholes on Swain Rd. and lines need to be painted.

The Public Input Session was ended at 8:55PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vivian W. Merrill
Recording Secretary

Supporting Documents:

- E-mails from Brian Stripp, Mark Duffy, John Bissonette, Karen Spengler, Eric Hill, Sara Ray, Susan MacKinnon, Christine Bowman, James (no last name shows), Bonnie Towle Flanagan, Beth Logan, Ann & Ralph Gaudette, Dave Fredericks, Dottie Jones, John Salmi, Patti Hayes, Richard Fratus
- Supporting maps of referenced areas
- Input Session Attendance Sign-In Sheets
- Signed Petition