

## COMMITTEE ON PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY STREET LIGHTING

February 3, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Room 312

(3rd Floor, Town Hall)

### MINUTES

#### Members Present:

Frank Caro, Chair

Jesse Hefter

Adelaide Ketchum

Jennifer Pieszak

Kevin Johnson (Director, Division of Highways and Sanitation, DPW)

Peter Ditto (Director, Division of Engineering and Transportation, DPW)

#### Members Not Present:

Jean Doherty

Todd Kirrane

Meeting began at 7:10 p.m.

The meeting began with discussion about the lack of pedestrian lighting at the large walkway in front / east of the High School / Greenough Street and how it might need this groups attention. Kevin Johnson noted that there is currently a plan to improve lighting in this area with the upgrades planned during the Cypress Playground renovation.

Peter Ditto announced that he will be retiring from the Division of Engineering and Transportation and that this was his last meeting with the committee. Kevin Johnson will become the lead representative for the DPW.

**1.Frank Caro started the meeting with a discussion about the goals for this group and mentioned we should consider the long- term agenda for this committee as funds to implement lighting improvements will be funded in different manners over an extended period of time.** This may inform the way we discuss recommendations for pedestrian friendly lighting improvements consistent with the guidelines established by this group.

- **Beacon Street** – Improved pedestrian lighting the entire length of Beacon Street in Brookline, from St. Mary’s to Cleveland Circle is seen as a top priority. While the Coolidge Corner retail district received a lighting upgrade (circa 2005) during the work under a state contract for Beacon Street roadway improvements there are large lengths of sidewalks that are under lighted. Frank Caro wondered if the State would be a source of funding to extend the lighting improvements beyond the retail districts as the sidewalks are heavily used and not adequately lighted. Jesse Hefter stated that the

current bike lanes may also benefit from improved lighting at the sidewalks. More about bike lanes and lighting was discussed later in the meeting.

- **Washington Street** – The opportunity to possibly upgrade the lighting for pedestrians and streets may be able to be incorporated in the roadway reconstruction work proposed currently in the works for Washington Street from Brookline Village to the Boston border / Corey Road. If lighting improvements are included with the roadway work, trenching for power for new lighting may be more easily accommodated than starting with a non-roadway improvement project. Discussed in previous meetings, partial funding for the lighting improvements may be sought from the state.
- **Winchester Street** – The stretch from Beacon Street to Fuller Street is a heavily trafficked pedestrian route, passing the Brookline Senior Center, and is currently under lighted due to the sparse pattern of light poles, many of which are in conflict with mature street trees. The Winchester Street area is undergoing gas line replacement work and will be scheduled for repaving at the completion of that contract. This is the type of project the group envisions would benefit from CIP funding (assume a target of \$100,000 per year) to address small, high priority pedestrian lighting improvements.
- **Longwood Avenue** – This street is heavily traversed its entire length by commuters to and from the Coolidge Corner, Lawrence School, Longwood T Stop, and the Medical Area. Currently, street lighting is provided by an irregular placement of fixtures on utility poles on the south side of the street. Most pedestrian traffic and the bike lane use the north side for the street which is well shaded by mature street trees blocking the street lighting. All of the many crosswalks appear to be under lighted at this time, increasing the likelihood of pedestrian -vehicular conflicts. The roadway is in fairly good condition and is not slated for reconstruction in the near term. Logwood Avenue is an example of a larger project whose budget would exceed the target CIP funding allocation and could not be dovetailed into a near future roadway project.
- **Future Park Improvements.** As Brookline parks are a pedestrian destination, the committee wonders if pedestrian lighting improvements should be studied and addressed during the design feasibility phase. Some paths in neighborhood parks are also cut-throughs on pedestrian transportation routes.

## 2. The discussion of implementation turned to funding for these projects

- Peter Ditto mentioned that the funding for his groups budget has not kept pace with inflation and they are having to do more with less money.
- Jennifer Pieszak asked if the LED retrofit street lighting had accounted for any savings in terms of less maintenance and reduced energy costs and if this savings had been identified for any projects, etc.
- Kevin Johnson stated that there has been a reduction of maintenance events for street and traffic lighting with 2018 during the initial roll out of LED fixtures and down to 90 outages in 2019. They are now doing most of the maintenance in-

house which makes use of their smaller staff, and now only spend approximately \$5000 / year for outside contractors. His group has also taken on more work with fire alarms / signals. There is no dedicated pool of funds associated with the new savings.

- Frank Caro summarized that there will need to be CIP funds to do smaller projects on an annual basis with larger funds coming from state, Town, or other interested groups / sources for larger projects.

### **3. Crosswalks and lighting.**

Many of the pedestrian lighting issues discussed by the committee have focused on pedestrian visibility at crosswalks.

- Adelaide Ketchum mentioned that the Pedestrian Advisory Committee has been looking at a “Daylighting” strategy for Town of Brookline crosswalks that will increase visibility of crosswalks during the day by removing adjacent parking spaces that obstruct view to crosswalk users.
- Signaled crosswalks were discussed as a possible means to improve visibility of pedestrian users during both day and nighttime. Pros and cons of this solution were discussed. While most were generally in favor of this safety feature, some felt that flashing signals were sometimes missed, perhaps due to placement or ongoing traffic. Kevin Johnson said the cost of signaled crosswalk installations was roughly \$20,000-30,000 each, and that they can be hardwired to the power or solar powered if the location allows. Signaled crosswalks would be under the direction of the Transportation Department and although a solution to reduce pedestrian / vehicular conflicts, would not be considered as a lighting improvement.

### **4. Lighting for bicycles and pedestrians.**

This committee has discussed whether the Brookline cycling community has lighting concerns that should be addressed by our group.

- Jesse Hefter and Frank Caro scheduled to do a short presentation on lighting followed by a Q&A session to the next meeting of Brookline’s Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) on Wednesday, February 5, 2020 (they meet first Wednesday of the month in Room 333). They will report on this meeting at our next PFL committee meeting in March.
- The Beacon Street Bridal Path reconstruction project proposed by the Friends of Beacon Street Bridal Path would provide a new protected bike path and possibly an opportunity to address lighting improvements for bikes and pedestrians along Beacon Street. Kevin Johnson mentioned that currently, the DPW is coordinating with the proposed plan so

that there are no new conflicts constructed that would be counter to the implementation of the plan as designed. Jesse would inquire more about the bridal path at the BAC meeting.

## **5. What's next:**

For the March meeting: Frank Caro asked the committee to start thinking about documentation for the Committee's findings with the possible strategies:

- Frank Caro will look into drafting an outline for the report to include the discussions to date.
- Jennifer Pieszak will start working on how to include the technical aspects of lighting strategies in the report
- Adelaide Ketchum will start to formulate how the report can strategize to prioritize areas for lighting interventions.
- Implementation of the Report's findings will need support / input from the Town engineering department.
- The goal for a CIP funding budget for the lighting improvements needs investigation.
- Develop a strategy to assure that pedestrian lighting is regularly considered as a dimension of Complete Street Policy in all town transportation projects. (A lighting peer review sign-off would be required for Town transportation projects.)
- Investigation into whether the Pedestrian Friendly Lighting Committee should become an independent sustaining committee or move to become a part of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee.
- Jesse Hefter to forward the presentation and feedback to the Bicycle Advisory Meeting (Feb 5, 2020) to the group.
- Frank Caro also mentioned that there should be a public forum to ascertain if there are other lighting issues that have not been considered by the committee that should be addressed.

## **6. Pedestrian Lighting and Brookline Parks.**

Frank Caro will contact Erin Chute Gallentine about participation in an upcoming committee meeting, hopefully for March.

## **7. Review and approval of minutes of 01/6/20 meeting**

Minutes approved by unanimous vote.

## **8. Next meeting**

Monday, March 2

Meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.

Minutes by Jennifer Pieszak