



Winthrop Board or Committee Public Body Minutes

Name of Public Body: Public Safety Committee

Date and Time of Meeting: November 3, 2021 6:00 PM

Location of Meeting: Remote by Zoom

Attending: Barbara Flockhart, Chair, Rob Demarco, Peter Christopher, Rachel Kelly

In Audience: Julia Wallerice, Suzanne Lenard, Peter Gill, Jim Letterie, Nicole ?, Mark McClelland, Jen Powell, Karen Chavez

Committee Members were all present. Rachel administered the Zoom Audience and multiple people participated by Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:20.

Rachel Reported on potential funding sources but assured us that the 2008 Feasibility Study and Traffic Study is too old and will need to be repeated to apply for a grant. Barbara gave some background on the concern about traffic safety as parents dropped off and picked-up their students creating a back-up on Revere Street, and earlier efforts to create an emergency exit, which is now a padlocked gate leading emergency vehicles through the Senior Housing Development, which is not an acceptable regular route. Efforts had been made to create a route through Governors Park and the willingness of their board to discuss the option which would cross the DPW yard, a drainage ditch, a fence, two small parking spaces, and exit through the back of Governors Park onto Winthrop Street and out to Banks Street and Morton Street. It was suggested that if that route were opened traffic should go into the school that way and exit by Kennedy Drive diminishing the problem of cars wondering through Governors Park.

The following solutions were suggested by the meeting participants:

- Governors Park access Route. Issues: 1) possible environmental problems with the drainage ditch. 2) timeframe to implement. 3) additional discussions and impacts on Governor's Park since parking spaces allotted are too small. 4) Relocation of part of DPW yard. Cost: \$500,000 Concern: environmental issue
- A Walking Route through Belle Isle Walkway and the Yard Waste Road, using the public parking lot on Morton Street. Issues: 1) Convincing parents to walk their children to school thru this route. 2) Necessary improvements to connect walkway to Yard Waste Road. 2) Building sidewalk on the Yard Waste Road to make it safe from active car traffic and crosswalks at Kennedy Drive. Cost: \$200,000 Concern: environmental issue and does not benefit a lot of people

-- Steve Calla's suggestion that the GFB School be retrofitted for the Public Safety Building including the Health Department and the Recreation Department and building a new elementary school on the old Middle School Site. Issues: 1) Potential pushback from MSBA and tax-payers to build a new school when we have so recently built three new schools. 2) Length of time, estimated at 6 years, to fund raise, design, permit, and build the new school and retrofit GFB. Cost: \$80 million and 6-10 years

-- A Walking School Bus with parents parking at a nearby parking lot, but off Kennedy Drive, and guided walking for the students to the school. Issues: 1) finding adequate parking for parents to drop off their students within reasonable walking distance for small children. 2) convincing parents to turn their children over to walking guides. Cost: School Committee potential plan

-- Turning both GFB and Cummings back into neighborhood schools. Issues: 1) Problem of mixing very young children with older 2) Class size may be less efficient or desirable. Cost: \$200,000 School Committee potential plan

-- Stagger arrival and departure times more than currently. Issues: 1) Parents need to leave for work. 2) Parents may need to pick up children in Cummings School. Cost: \$0 School Committee potential plan

-- Using Bayou Street as access route. Issues. 1) Feasibility study already determined there would be an environmental problem. 2) Traffic from each route would essentially be crossing into the other route. 3) Construction on Revere Street for the next two years would delay implementation. Cost: Concern: environmental issue and 2-3 years construction

-- Build the Governor's Park Route only for pedestrians. Issues: 1) Possible environmental problems with the drainage ditch. 2) Additional discussions with Governors Park. 3) Relocation of part of DPW yard. Cost: \$300,000-500,000 Concern: 2-3 years construction and does not benefit a lot of people

Julia Wallerice advocated for using pedestrian and bicycle routes and not relying on cars.

Jen Powell encouraged involving GFB Principal in considerations.

Barbara thought that if people were willing to walk their children to school the parents in the nearby Highlands would be doing it already.

Several participants encouraged looking at lower cost and sooner-accomplished options.

It was agreed that once the minutes listing the suggestions was written Barbara and Jim should add rough estimates of the cost to each and the minutes would be distributed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM