

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
October 1, 2009**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlie Hileman, Chair
Austin Brown
Heidi Perry
Seth LaJeunesse
Daniel Amoni

STAFF PRESENT

Jeff Brubaker

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Michael Krasnov

GUESTS PRESENT

Robin Michler
David Jessee

I. Call to Order

Charlie Hileman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:12 PM, following the joint review session.

II. Approval of minutes

MOTION (Perry, LaJeunesse second): The TAB approved the meeting minutes, as amended, of the September 17, 2009, meeting. Ayes (4): Hileman, Perry, LaJeunesse, Amoni. Nays (0). Abstentions (1): Brown. Absent (1): Krasnov.

III. Discussion of joint review item: Balanced Movement Studio (N. Greensboro St.)

David Jessee, a property owner in the vicinity of the proposed site, expressed interest in listening to the TAB's comments on the project. Perry said that the TAB has been looking into pedestrian safety in the area and considering whether the crosswalks need to be relocated. Hileman said that there is a tendency for cars to speed in the area, both coming into and leaving downtown. He stressed that the TAB wants work with the Board of Aldermen and NCDOT to change the situation.

Jessee said that the studio would add a heavily trafficked ingress/egress, forcing him to "shoehorn" another ingress/egress on his property. The development would essentially cut his property off. Jessee would like to see his property fronting on Shelton St. join together with the proposed Balanced Movement property, relocate an existing building, extend Shelton St. east, and get the intersection signaled. Amoni disagreed with a traffic signal, suggesting that the delay from existing signals is the reason motorists accelerate once they get past them. Jessee suggested a crosswalk with a flashing signal.

Jessee and the TAB discussed the site planning details of joining the properties. Hileman said that the feasibility of doing so might not be able to be best addressed by the TAB. Brown asked whether the idea was to ultimately connect Parker St. with Shelton St. The TAB discussed connecting Greensboro St. and Lloyd St. Perry said that the connection was something to look into, but

suggested that the TAB isn't the board to communicate the site planning details with the Balanced Movement applicant. Hileman suggested that Jessee discuss the plan with the Planning Board.

The TAB further discussed the use of the Shelton St. crosswalk. Hileman said a traffic light would slow traffic down. Amoni said that that would lead to more accidents. Perry suggested that the Balanced Movement Studio development might influence NCDOT to install something more visible at the intersection. She said she was happy to see the applicant's provision of bicycle parking.

IV. Staff follow-up on September 17 meeting items

A. Safe Routes to School grant

Brubaker said that the SRTS guidelines suggested that the grant did need to be spent on the Elm St. sidewalk. The bond expenditures reimbursed by the grant can be used for other projects.

B. Long Range Transit Plan

Brubaker said that the 2035 Long Range Transit Plan was the capital plan for transit in the area now served by Chapel Hill Transit. He mentioned the presentation on the plan by David Bonk and Steve Spade scheduled for the Board of Aldermen meeting on Oct. 6th.

V. Monitoring Pedestrian Activity on N. Greensboro St.

Hileman gave an overview of observations from the filming of pedestrian activity. There were 118 clips of about 15-30 sec. each. There was an issue for about 1 out of every 20 or 30 pedestrians. Things were particularly bad near Short St. About 20% were not using crosswalks. Bad situations occurred when pedestrians stepped out into the travel way. When they didn't trust cars to stop, they would stay on the sidewalk, and things seemed to be fine. Perry observed pedestrians walking south until there was an opening in traffic.

The TAB discussed the placement of the camera. Hileman noted that there are so many distractions for vehicles, such as traffic control signs. He suggested summarizing the clips to convey different types of conflicts. LaJeunesse asked if any older or disabled pedestrians were observed. Brown said there were people with strollers. He cautioned against collecting counts for the video. Brown provided an example of in Boulder, CO, where signs embedded with four flashing lights flanked crosswalks. Michler said he saw a similar design in Charlotte. The TAB discussed whether NCDOT could install a similar traffic control on Greensboro St.

Hileman suggested more filming at Shelton St., showing the situation from cars' perspective, and eventually presenting to the Board of Aldermen and NCDOT. The TAB discussed the feasibility of a raised or fully painted crosswalk.

VI. Homestead Rd. traffic

Hileman noted that in the past the TAB recommended greater connectivity to the north and south of Homestead near the High School, diversification of commercial and residential uses, and a moratorium on development until the Town could assess the zoning in the area. Perry said that Homestead Rd. project has been on the TIP at various times, but that Chapel Hill and Carrboro had differing recommendations for the project. Hileman stressed that the Town needs to be very clear about what it wants for the project. Perry said that the traffic on side roads is more of an issue than traffic on Homestead. Amoni said that the Town needs to be very clear on what the problem is.

The TAB discussed the Goddard School project. Perry said that the project would contribute to the mixed-use nature of the development, and that it might be able to get people out of their cars that would travel on Homestead Rd. Hileman reiterated that the TAB supported the project because the traffic contribution would be minimal; the existing (background) traffic is the issue.

Brown suggested attracting businesses that will have the workers who can afford to live there. Hileman said that the Town should also look into connectivity in the area. Brown suggested including the schools, since they are a big generator of vehicle trips. Perry noted that elementary and middle schools are huge traffic generators as well, but even after reducing school traffic, development along Homestead will still generate traffic. Hileman suggested discussing with the Board of Aldermen.

VII. Other business

Amoni brought up the lack of crosswalks on Weaver St. between W. Main St. and Greensboro St, suggesting that one or two safe places to cross would be useful. Perry and others agreed that the lighting on Weaver St. is poor. The TAB discussed the difficulty of crossing W. Main St. at Weaver St. and Poplar Ave. LaJeunesse asked if there has been any pressure in the past to put W. Main St. on a road diet. Amoni mentioned the Downtown Circulation Plan's recommendation to reduce the street to two traveled lanes with on-street parking.

Hileman suggested having a pedestrian and bicycle forum. Amoni said that the idea of going in front of the Board of Aldermen is more powerful. Perry suggested taking photos of the lighting situation on Weaver St. before the next meeting.

The TAB discussed Greenways Commission representation. Hileman indicated that he will attend until a new TAB representative is designated.

Brown mentioned that he provided information to the Goddard School applicant on bike parking vendors and associated costs.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 PM.