

## PEDI/BIKE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, May 3, 7PM @City Hall

Attending: Gabrielle Watson, Ellen Katz, Sargeant Jon Goc, Alice Golub, Ryan Bagwell, John Blazej, Kate Lipper-Garabedian

Notes: Alice Golub (with Gabrielle Watson additions)

Gabrielle called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM and introduced SargeantGoc to discuss traffic safety issues and potential use of cameras. Sgt Goc gave an overview of Melrose Police Dept and their role in traffic safety enforcement. The current traffic safety officer is out on medical leave and will be retiring in July. He hopes to have the spot filled soon thereafter. There is currently a staffing issue which results in only 3 patrolmen on duty during each of 3 daily shifts. There are also 2 new hire parking enforcement officers who are police dept employees but not police officers. The committee was surprised at the lean numbers of the police force which of course impacts traffic safety implementation. Much of the enforcement is reactive, that is to say, responding to traffic complaints by residents.

Q: Average # of speeding complaints a week? 1-2 a week in the Summer. Most are Howard, Upam, Pleasant, West Wyoming. Officers have discretion as to when pull someone over. Generally, do it when it's apx 10 mph over speed limit.

Q: would it be possible to encourage a policy of pulling people over when they're 5 mph over the speed limit? Almost impossible. Officers have discretion.

SgtGoc stated that of the 1000+ citations issued on annual basis, only 200-300 resulted in monetary fines. The others were strictly written warnings.

- 2015: 1,049 total tickets (citations) issued. Of these, 800 were warnings. Rest were monitory, criminal or other.
- 2016: 1,028; 727 were warnings.
- Verbal warnings are in addition to this. Apx 550/600 verbals per year.

He did not have data on how Melrose compares to other towns. He did not have breakdown as to number issued to Melrose vs non/Melrose residents. Would have to do a citation search. Police computer system "not the best." Most traffic complaints occur in the spring and summer months when road conditions are prime for speeding.

Expects the new traffic officer to produce an increase of 25% over these figures. The prior/current officer was doing a lot of parking citations. 7:45 – 4:45. Missing evening rush hour. Hoping new position will have some night shifts.

It was asked how new 25 MPH city wide speed limit will be enforced. Public Service Announcements will be posted in Melrose papers as well as on City website and Mayor's Blog. Additionally, new speed limit signs will be posted on streets upon entering Melrose from Stoneham, Saugus, Malden and Wakefield. It is responsibility of Police Chief Lyle to set procedure and no staffing changes can occur without his say. Sgt Goc will meet with his officers to come up with a reasonable enforcement plan. It will take some time for everyone to get used to the new regulations.

Sgt Goc discussed traffic study conducted on Upham Street but unfortunately there was a technical glitch so the results cannot be verified. He has obtained new equipment that will be installed shortly and he promises to share data as soon as it becomes available. He would like to have baseline info of current speeds prior to the June 1<sup>st</sup> change. He also shared that Melrose will be part of a State Grant "click it or ticket" . MPD will be out enforcing seatbelt and "no device" regulations shortly.

It was also suggested that MPD include school crossing guards in safety discussions, particularly with respect to school zone vehicle, pedestrian and bike traffic issues as they deal with this on a daily basis. Sargent Goc has talked with David Watson about the Fellsway& Tremont, Melrose area. Shared a lot of ideas with him, and hopes some good suggestions come out of it. School crosswalk guards are supervised by the school department. Barbara Belmonte is their supervisor.

→ Action Item: Tom Blazej& Gabrielle to help connect Barbara Belmonte to David Watson and Stacey from WalkBoston, so they can talk with the crossing guards as part of the Middle School/High School pedestrian and bicycle study project.

Per Sgt Goc, there are currently no guidelines or procedures as to traffic policies ie when to issue verbal, written warning or issue monetary fine. It is pretty much at discretion of the officer on duty. It was asked why more tickets with monetary fines are not written as this would provide additional revenue to the city. Sgt Goc responded that unlike several neighboring towns, this has not been "the culture" in Melrose.

The issue of police visibility was raised – residents want to see the police doing their jobs. Sgt Goc indicated that he would bring this up with MPD.

As this discussion ran quite long, no other business was conducted. It was decided that a small group would meet this week-end to finalize plans for May 13<sup>th</sup> "Healthy Melrose" participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alice C. Golub