

Perry Park Neighborhood ResiStat Meeting Notes

Monday, October 29, 2007

City Officials Present:

Maryann Heuston, Alderman, Ward 2
Stephanie Hirsch, SomerStat Director
Ethan Field, ResiStat Analyst
Jim Kotzuba, Director of Traffic & Parking
Terry Smith, Senior Engineer, Traffic & Parking
Officer James McNally, Somerville Police Department

Dane Street & Dane Ave:

Jim Kotzuba & Terry Smith reported some options for improving the intersection of Dane Street with Dane Ave and Village St: City data show that there have not actually been a high number of accidents reported at that intersection, and none since 2005. Utility pole also blocks view, but the City can't change that. Unfortunately, Federal guidelines preclude that intersection from getting a Stop sign.

Resident Comments:

- The speed is still a problem. There are many young families moving into the neighborhood and are concerned about letting their children out in the street. Could there be additional signage put in that would slow traffic?
- Visibility at that intersection makes it difficult to see oncoming Dane Street traffic.
- The *amount* of cut-through traffic is a concern. Dane Street, but also Nevada, Skehan, Village, and Hanson. At Hanson & Skehan, people don't stop for the stop sign.
- People also use Leland St/Dane Ave to avoid the light at Dane Street & Washington. Could we make those 'resident traffic only' for certain hours?
- At a number of the repaved intersections, the double yellow lines have not yet been repainted. *City Staff Response:* Traffic studies have actually shown that having the double yellow lines causes people to go faster. Drivers think that by staying to the left of the yellow lines, they can go as fast as they want without worrying about oncoming traffic. Removing them makes drivers more cautious.
- People also frequently speed on Concord Ave & Newton Street. *City Staff Response:* By request, SPD monitored that street and found almost no actual speeders. 30 mph (the legal citywide limit) *seems* like it's fast on a small street, but it's actually under the speed limit.

Next Steps for City Staff:

- At the intersection, explore the following options:
 - Addressing spaces where visibility is obstructed.
 - City is doing significantly increased enforcement of the State law that prohibits parking within 20 feet of an intersection.
 - Place reflective tape on the guardrails which will draw attention to the turn. Placing "chevron" signs (with arrows indicating a turn) at the corner. Placing a sign indicating two-way traffic.

- If speeding is a concern, the Police could potentially install a speed board on Dane Street.
 - Explore placing a “local-traffic only during rush hour” sign on Leland St / Dane Ave at Washington.
 - SPD can’t to monitor every intersection every day, but could examine critical intersections if it’s a serious repeated concern.
 - Traffic & Parking supports a process to petition the State to reduce the citywide speed limit to 25 mph.
-

Breaking & Entering and Theft:

Residents & Police acknowledge the *same* set of people are doing break-ins, getting caught, sent to jail & prison, getting out and repeating the cycle again. Penalties do get stiffer for repeat offenders, but the cycle continues. Officer McNally says that residents can help shorten the crime portion of that cycle, by watching out for suspicious activity in the neighborhood and calling it in (911). The City’s new WRAP program (Web-based Registry Anti-theft Program) can help address this problem. You can register small electronic devices (laptops, mp3 players, GPS devices, etc.) This will help us catch criminals who pawn registered devices.

Resident Comments:

- This program is very helpful – should be more widely advertised! Distribute flyers in cafes, shops with parking lots, and other public spaces. Also, how does this interact with personal property insurance policies... can I get a discount on my insurance by enrolling in this program?

Next Steps for City Staff:

- Distribute WRAP flyer widely
 - Investigate whether or not insurance companies might give discounts for registering with WRAP.
-

Perry Park Renovations

Resident comments:

Residents all agreed the new park is very nice; lighting is good, people are already using it.

- A resident observed that parents are letting their kids out of their strollers to move around more often than they did in the past. A bench that a resident requested has been installed! One resident commented that there aren’t as many toys for little kids to play with; could some be added?
 - A resident asked about the DPW mowing the grass in the park; it seems a little overgrown already. Other people theorized that it’s because it’s new grass and so late in the year, they’re letting the grass get more deeply rooted. If the grass in any City park seems to be overgrown, use the City’s 311 program (by web or phone) and report it.
-

Beacon Street:

City reported that the full length of Beacon Street, from Somerville Ave to Inman Square, is the next major project for the City after Somerville Ave is done.

Resident Comments:

- Residents reported that on Beacon Street near the Northeast corner of Beacon & Washington Street (in front of the Wine & Cheese Cask) there is often flooding during storms and icing over during winter. There is an old driveway curb-cut there that is no longer used. When the street & sidewalks are redesigned, those old curb-cuts should be removed and the street raised.
- Residents also reported the parking lot of a particular local business on Beacon Street. They reported seeing glass, trash, brush, and an improperly placed dumpster. *City Staff Response:* Call 311 and to request inspection of a property if they suspect code violations. Repeated visits by Inspectional Services have led to change in some non-compliant businesses.

Next Steps for City Staff:

- Remove unused curb-cuts when Beacon St redesign is done.
- Investigate specific complaints about businesses.