

Ten Hills Neighborhood ResiStat Meeting Notes Wednesday, December 12, 2007

City & State Officials Present:

Hon. Carl Sciortino, State Representative, 34th Middlesex
Hon. Walter Pero, Alderman, Ward 4
Daniel Glasser, Aide to Rep. Sciortino
Officer James Slattery, Somerville Police Department
Stephanie Hirsch, SomerStat Director
Ethan Field, ResiStat Analyst

Crime & Police:

The City reported that the large number of hypodermic needles found in the area in March was an anomaly. Since then, very few or no needles have been found each month. The state-wide rise in car break-ins continue to be the biggest crime news; this is driven by people stealing portable electronic devices from cars. Daytime thefts in particular are on the rise. Residents can register their portable electronic devices with the City's WRAP program. Learn more about WRAP and how to prevent car break-ins and theft at:

<http://www.somervillema.gov/spotlight.cfm?id=38> . It was also mentioned that the new Police Chief, who has already begun transitioning in, is a big supporter of Community Policing.

Resident Comments:

- Residents asked for details about the WRAP program and info about car break-ins.
- Residents would like to meet the new police chief at one of these meetings.
- Resident reported a perceived increase in personal property theft at a specific intersection.

Next Steps for City Staff:

- Coordinate with new Police Chief to visit with this Ten Hills group sometime in the spring.
- Follow up on reports of home break-ins.

Next Steps for Residents:

- Keep car doors locked and valuables out of sight, or out of car. Register electronic devices with WRAP.
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City Administration Issues:

The City reported on the status of trash barrels at the boathouse, Grimmons Park plans and resident requests, the steel plates on Mystic Ave by Stop & Shop, tree trimming, 311, and how to make parking on your street for residents only. See presentation for details.

Resident Comments:

- A resident reported someone is emptying their personal trash into a public barrel at Puritan Road & Ten Hills Road. (A resident said that before the barrel was placed there, that person would tie it to a tree!) Another resident reported alcohol-related trash (bottles, beer case boxes, etc.) being placed in the Boathouse trash barrels. *City:* City staff requested that residents monitor these issues to see if there are specific people at specific addresses doing this, or if there are specific times of day when this regularly happens. This kind of thing is difficult to monitor without more details.
- Residents asked about new blue Snow Emergency lights. *City:* Full Snow Emergency policies are detailed in a new brochure: <http://www.somervillema.gov/spotlight.cfm?id=46> Residents asked about an unusual-looking environmental device in Grimmons. *City:* This is an air-quality monitor. *Next day update:* This testing is part of an air-quality study before and after the Ikea/Assembly Square development, to measure any changes in pollution as a result of the development. There are 60 or so within a ½ mile radius of the intersection of Rt. 28 and I-93. They will be up for a couple of weeks in Nov-Dec, and then will come down (they may already be down) and go back up in a few years after the development is finished.
- Residents reiterated their concern about the steel plates on Mystic Ave and suggested a simple solution would help. *City:* City is exploring quick solutions to reduce the bump; need to make sure they're legal and sustainable.
- Resident reported that there is a fallen tree at Bailey Road and Ten Hills road. Another resident reported two dead trees on Bailey Road on the highway side, close to Ten Hills Road. Resident not sure if those have been removed or not.
- Residents reported numerous non-Somerville residents using Ten Hills streets for long-term parking (e.g. driving in from the suburbs & parking, taking a taxi to the airport, and then returning a week later.) Residents also predicted that the parking problem will get worse as the development continues at Assembly Square. *City:* While we can't ticket for non-resident, there is a law that requires moving a car every 48 hours. If you report it to 311, the 48 hours begins from the point at which a City official observes the car parked in a specific spot (not from when you report it.) If you report early, a week-long offender can be ticketed.

Next Steps for City Staff:

- Continue to prioritize resolving the issue with the Mystic Ave plates
- Report fallen tree (done) and investigate possible dead trees.

Next Steps for Residents:

- Watch for any illegal dumping of personal trash in public barrels. Report details to police or to 311.
- Watch for cars you know are from out of town that park for extended periods of time on Ten Hills streets, and report as necessary.
- If desired, initiate process for making parking on some Ten Hills Streets Resident-Only using the form: http://www.somervillema.gov/CoS_Content/documents/forms/PermitParkingApp.pdf

State Issues:

City staff and Rep. Sciortino's office reported on progress made on DCR, Mass Highway, & MBTA requests. See presentation for details. Updates not in presentation: The Somerville Conservation Commission had concerns about some of the vegetation clearing (some by DCR, some by residents) because of soil erosion and wetlands protection. The Commission has invited the DCR to come to their January 22 meeting (7PM, 3rd floor of City Hall) to start a dialogue that will hopefully lead to a common understanding. That meeting will be open to the public, though it's likely that they will have more public-comment-oriented meetings on future dates.

Regarding the MBTA bus stop on Mystic Ave at Temple Road: The MBTA enlists a contractor to assess need and do construction of stops. The contractor has determined that the number of people boarding the bus on that side of the intersection doesn't warrant a full bus shelter. Rep. Sciortino is continuing to request that they at least pave a strip along Mystic Avenue at that bus stop.

Resident Comments:

- Residents noted there *is* a shelter on the opposite side of the intersection, on the Temple Street side. *Rep. Sciortino:* This is because most people are boarding the bus on that side to go to Sullivan Square and take the T downtown. They then return in the evening and get off the bus on the Ten Hills side. The contractor only places shelters where many people wait to *get on* the bus. They don't place them where many people *get off* the bus because people do not wait at the bus stop.
- A resident repeated a previous observation that there are no painted crosswalks at any point along Shore Drive, and requested that the DCR paint one (or more) there.
- Resident mentioned that near the *Blessing of the Bay* boathouse many of the benches are falling apart and should be repaired or replaced. Residents also noted that there were a number of square concrete areas that look designed for picnic tables, but there are no table.
- A resident reported that the lights under I-93 over Shore Drive have not been fixed.
- Regarding trash in downspouts under I-93 on Temple Road: Residents report that workers for a specific painting company gather there every day around 7AM, and are placing the trash there (residents report no other negative experiences with this company.)
- Residents inquired again about buses/vehicles parked under I-93. *Rep. Sciortino:* Anyone who parks under a highway is required to have a State-issued permit; we are currently awaiting a list of people who have such permits.

Residents reiterated and stressed previous concerns about traffic flow at the intersection of Rt. 28 and Mystic Ave:

- Residents claim many people are running red lights in this area. Residents report witnessing accidents or having family members who have been injured in accidents in this area. Even if the traffic flow can't be improved, a resident asked if larger signs/signals can be placed? Another suggested a delay/pause in signal changes (i.e. between when one signal turns red and when the cross-street signal turns green).

- A resident made a comment about the concrete wall where Rt. 28N emerges out from underneath the intersection with Mystic Ave. The residents reported that for drivers coming on Rt. 28S into that intersection on the North side of I-93, the concrete wall obstructs vision and makes it difficult to see oncoming traffic coming from Mystic Ave Westbound. Could that concrete wall be converted to a metal fence, like the fence that is on top of that all already?
- The same resident noted that for drivers on Rt. 28 S emerging from underneath I-93 and crossing Mystic Ave, drivers occasionally look beyond the traffic signal that is intended for them, and see the signal intended for drivers on Mystic Ave Eastbound. The resident reported (once or twice) personally misinterpreting the far traffic signal as being for them, and almost illegally pulling out into the intersection against their own red light. The resident also reported seeing another driver making this same mistake. Can the light for Mystic Ave Eastbound be rotated or covered slightly, so that a driver on Rt. 28 S doesn't misinterpret that light as being for them?

Next Steps for City:

- Report outcomes of January Somerville Conservation Commission meeting with DCR to Ten Hills residents.
- Communicate with painting company about trash in downspouts under I-93 on Temple Road.
- Outline timeline for Rt. 28 traffic mitigation work, in collaboration with State projects for area.

Possible Follow-up Items in State Jurisdiction:

- Continue to inquire about paving MBTA bus stop on Mystic Ave at Temple Road.
- Investigate the possibility of additional crosswalks across Shore Drive.
- Investigate possibility of repair or replacement of benches at *Blessings of the Bay* boathouse, place picnic tables or benches on empty concrete platforms.
- Continue to look for solutions for removing trash in downspouts on Temple Road under I-93. Possibly place trash barrel at corner of Mystic Ave & Temple street.
- Request repair of lights under I-93 over Shore Drive.
- Continue investigation of permits issued to vehicles parked under I-93 near Bailey Road.
- Investigate the possibility for changes in signaling and signage at the intersection of Rt. 28 and Mystic Ave and the I-93 ramps to reduce possible risk of accidents. Investigate possibility of specific requests mentioned above. Possibly request directed patrol of this area to monitor for traffic violations (failure to stop on red, etc.)

Results of Priorities Survey:

I received 9 completed surveys. With so few responses, we can't necessarily use the results to prioritize all City and State work for the whole neighborhood, but it *will* help us prioritize our time in future ResiStat meetings. Here are the average ratings for each topic, separated into City issues and State issues:

City Issues:	Avg
Addressing traffic related to Assembly Square Development	9.3
Reducing nighttime noise/disturbances	8.4
Traffic speed/volume on Temple Road	7.9
Having a river/shore cleanup	7.0
Enforcement of overnight commercial vehicle parking on streets.	6.9
Reducing nighttime noise/disturbances	6.2
"No Trucks" sign updates at Temple Road	5.8
Addressing steel plates at Mystic Ave near Stop & Shop	5.6
Resident-Only parking for my street	4.9

State Issues:	Avg
Lights over Shore Drive underneath I-93	8.4
Trash & Cleanliness under I-93	8.0
Trash barrel at Fellsway West & Shore Drive	6.3
MBTA Stop on Mystic Ave at Temple Road	6.3
Benches along the river by shore drive	6.0
Airplane Noise	5.9
Enforcement of No-Wake and No-Night-Use laws on River.	5.2

Other issues mentioned by residents as important:

Rt. 28 Traffic

Continue Community policing

Monitoring suspected drug & alcohol use along Shore Dr, Puritan Rd. & Highway

Graffiti along wall holding up Ten Hills Road along Highway

Resident parking will become more important as IKEA comes closer