



Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, August 29, 2023
7:00pm

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects, and signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting was conducted via remote participation.

Select Board participants:

Rich Maiore, Charles Oliver, Don Ludwig, Kara Minar, Erin McBee

Town Department participants:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet and DPW Director Tim Kilhart

Ayer Road project; Dept of Transportation (DOT) response to curb bump outs

Letter from DOT (Attachment A)

Town Administrator Tim Bragan explained the recent letter from DOT regarding their concerns with the curb extensions in the current plan requires a response from the Select Board. In the letter, DOT recommends the town not utilize the curb extensions as proposed. Their primary concern is the curb extensions may be unexpected for motorists and on-road bicyclists. In addition, the curb extensions may require modifications of catch basin locations as well as impact snow/ice removal. They acknowledged the desire to implement traffic calming features and would be supportive of other strategies.

Select Board member Kara Minar was not in favor of making this change. Having been involved with this project from the beginning, she is sensitive to traffic calming measures included to satisfy town residents' concerns related to traffic and speed on Ayer Road.

DPW Director Tim Kilhart reiterated what was stated in the letter that if the town chooses to move forward with the curb extensions if issues arise the town will be responsible for implementing any modification to the design. He asked the Select Board to discuss this in order to have the final plans completed moving the project forward.

Minar was reluctant to make any changes to the project without having input from the public. She questioned why this was coming up now and why it had to be acted on now. She suggested holding off on any decisions until their next meeting.

Transportation Advisory Committee member Stacia Donahue was able to confirm a public hearing being held at the 25% hearing in February.

Erin McBee asked for clarity on DOT's suggestion for other traffic calming measures. Kilhart said measures available are already included in the current plan.

Don Ludwig agreed with the letter stating he is not in favor of the bump outs. He was not on the Select Board when the plan was designed. He does not understand reducing the shoulder as a traffic calming method.

Charles Oliver admitted he does not know enough about road design and would defer to those who do.

Tim Kilhart as the DPW Director is not in favor of the bump outs and has spoken to Police Chief James Babu who also is not in favor of them. He is confident the narrowing of road shoulders, beacons at the crosswalks and newly painted crosswalks will have the same effect on traffic calming. Kilhart confirmed the town's consultant was also not in favor of the bump outs.

Minar strongly advocated for more time to allow the public to weigh in on this proposed change. She is not convinced waiting a couple of weeks would put the project timeline in jeopardy. Bragan reminded the board this topic was delayed from the last meeting until this evening to allow the entire board to be present. In addition, he explained the town cannot get to 75% until we settle this design question and with other steps required for this project, such as takings, making this decision now is crucial to keeping the project on track.

Kara Minar made a motion seconded by Charles Oliver to move discussion until the September 19th meeting when TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) can provide input as well as other public comment at that time. By a roll call, Mc-Bee – nay, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – nay, Maiore – nay, the board did not pass the motion. (2-3)

Ludwig made a motion to move ahead with the 75% design with recommendation to not include bump outs. Motion was seconded by Charles Oliver. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – nay, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted in favor of the motion. (4-1)

DPW Director Tim Kilhart will follow up with the Department of Transportation to move the project forward. He expects to have more information for the October Town Meeting.

TAC member Bruce Leicher spoke briefly to suggest contacting Senator Jamie Eldridge to assist with the project.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.



Maura Healey, Governor
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Gina Fiandaca, Secretary & CEO
Jonathan L. Gulliver, Highway Administrator



July 27, 2023

Attachment A

Timothy Bragan
13 Ayer Road
Harvard, Ma 01451

Re: Harvard - Ayer Road (Project No. 609213): Curb Extensions

Dear Mr. Bragan,

As requested, I am writing to provide the District's recommendations regarding traffic calming and specifically, curb extensions associated with the subject project. The District has reviewed the technical memo provided by the Town's design consultant, as well as 75% design submission.

The District does not recommend the Town utilize the curb extensions, as proposed in the 75% design. As noted in our review, these are not consistent with the guidance that is provided in Section 16.6.2.3 of MassDOT's Project Development & Design Guide. Our primary concern is that the curb extensions may be unexpected for motorists and on-road bicyclists, resulting in crashes with the vertical curb or sudden evasive maneuvers. Further, the Town should be aware that the curb extensions may also require modifications of catch basin locations to reduce gutter spread and may impact snow and ice removal during heavy snowfalls.

If the Town chooses to move forward with the curb extensions, please be aware that should issues arise, the Town will be responsible for implementing any modifications to the design.

The District acknowledges and supports the community's desire to implement traffic calming features and would be supportive of other traffic calming strategies or an alternate detail, where the curb extensions are constructed with scored concrete in the shoulders.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Ann Sullivan, Project Development Engineer, in the MassDOT office, who can be reached at (774) 364-4389 or by email at ann.sullivan@dot.state.ma.us.

Very truly yours,

Barry J. Lorion Digitally signed by Barry J. Lorion
Date: 2023.07.28 12:58:29 -04'00'

Barry Lorion
District Highway Director
MassDOT – Highway Division District 3

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ec: Muazzez Reardon, Project Manager