

**TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY**  
**Public Health & Safety Committee**  
**Middlebury Police Dept Community Room**  
**Monday, March 20, 2017\* Draft Meeting Minutes**

Attending the meeting: Committee members Laura Asermily, Police Chief Thomas Hanley, Fire Chief Dave Shaw, Health Officer Tom Scanlon, Gary Baker, Public Works' Dan Werner and Bill Kernan.

**Call to Order.** Chair Laura Asermily called the meeting to order at 4 pm.

**Approval of Agenda.** Gary Baker moved that the Committee approve the Agenda as presented. Tom Hanley seconded the motion, which was approved by the Committee.

**Approval of Feb 13, 2017 Meeting Minutes:** Gary Baker moved and Dave Shaw seconded without any changes. Passed unanimously.

**Citizens Comments.** None.

**Safe Routes Items:** Laura reviewed Middlebury Safe Routes efforts reported at last meeting.

Confirmed that crosswalk road striping, Main St road sharrows, and new "Please Walk Bikes" sidewalk stencils (on Main St between Cross St and Printers Ally and Merchants Row) will be coinciding and happen sometime in May, depending on dry weather conditions. Bill brought a possible sidewalk stencil. Laura said it was on track. Committee agreed it should include words "Please Walk Bikes." Laura shared that they had passed on a design recommended last year based on what is used in Burlington and that the continuity with Burlington has an advantage. She agreed to forward this and a contact in Burlington Public Works she was given by Local Motion to get the stencil to Bill Kernan. Bill explained that they had tried to remove the old stencils and it didn't really work. Laura said that the priority was getting the new stencil in the no bikes on sidewalks zone specified in the new bike ordinance. Tom Hanley noted that the sharrows by themselves are not clearly understood as meaning bikes can share the road or where the zone begins and ends. Also, the "Share the Roads" signs are not always understood. Laura recalled that the team that worked on the revised bike ordinance had discussed this with Tom and recommended that "Bikes May Use Road" signs in the sharrow zone would make things clearer. Tom wondered if this would work because there are already so many signs competing for attention. Laura suggested two signs—one on a post on Main St near mill St and another on Merchants Row. Tom thought something stenciled on the road would be better, for instance adding the words "begin" and "end." The committee agreed that this would improve the sharrows.

Confirmed that rapid flashing beacon light for Court St/Rt 7 at the Middlebury Rec Park entrance by Dunkin Doughnuts will improve safety and be ordered in summer with aim

to install in time for beginning of next school year. Once installed, the existing blinking lights will be turned off.

Discussed challenge of calming traffic at Creek Rd/Route 7 intersection and concurred that it is not wise to put a rapid flashing beacon light here where crossing would remain dangerous. Agreed that planning commission and DRB need to manage future development to limit driveways emptying onto Rt 7 and to plan and budget for a sidewalk on east side of Rt 7 continuing from Creek Rd to Middle Rd at which time the crosswalk at Creek on Rt 7 could be eliminated.

Discussed challenge of calming traffic on High St in response to complaint submitted by Mona Rae Hill. Laura asked if a speed radar device could help and Tom Hanley said the geography doesn't lend itself to effective placement of a speed radar device. They tried it and it didn't really work. He added that police officers are limited in where they can park to catch speeders. He said the road's narrowness and passing cars' proximity to pedestrians make it feel like cars are passing much faster than the speed limit. He has limited staff to monitor for what could be a highly random number of truly high speeders.

Dave Shaw asked if Public Works could examine lift shields on street lights along Main St by post office/ St Stephens for improved lighting for emergency vehicles and pedestrians. They agreed.

Public Works clarified that timing is best it can be at Cross St to allow for pedestrians to complete crossing when Rt 7 northbound traffic is given signal to turn left. Dan said that pedestrians don't understand that they have more time than they think to complete the crossing. When the white pedestrian light changes to orange, they still have time to finish their crossing if they are in the midst of the road. It is indicting that someone at the corner shouldn't start crossing at this point. Also clarified that timing at the island on Court St/Merchants Row is best it can be. Pedestrians complain that they have to wait really long times at this crosswalk. A minute can feel really long when waiting in cold or rain or managing small children and they are inclined to start walking before getting the signal to cross which or don't use the signal at all. This can frustrate and confuse drivers.

Laura shared a "Give Respect, Get Respect" pamphlet from Local Motion that she distributed at Town Meeting Public Safety Display and uses in trainings to teach rules of the road. It helps emphasize that all users have part to play in slowing down, noticing one another, and sharing the road.

Laura reviewed Middlebury Safe Routes upcoming efforts to highlight safety, including Lock and Learn training (at Midd College, April 6), Bike Smart training (at MHS week of April 17), Bike Swap (at Cannon Park May 6, 9-12), Kelly Boe Memorial Bike Ride (from MUHS to Weybridge and back on Monday May 8, 4 pm with rain date may 15). Laura asked if the committee could discuss in a future meeting what town department, if any, might be the fiscal agent for Middlebury Safe Routes or partner with it to help assume insurance liability for events where town property is used, like the Bike Swap, to

help defray its expenses since it is a small volunteer ad hoc working group supporting the work of the Town in making it bike/ped safe and friendly.

**Downtown Public Bathrooms.** Discussion delayed to next meeting when Terri Arnold and others can be present.

**Fire Department Recruitment.** Laura discussed efforts to help the Middlebury Fire Department fill out its current force, which is down to 34 volunteers, closer to its optimum number, which would be 50. This included a Town Meeting display with copies of applications (none taken), posting flyers and brainstorming with Fire Chief David Shaw about hosting an open house at one of its monthly business meetings at Fire Station 1 for potential recruits to learn what's involved. Chief Shaw thought this had merit. Laura shared that Nick Artim, a member of the committee, suggested targeting some large employers like Cabot, the beverage businesses and Middlebury College staff. It would also be good to work with high school students to bring them along. Middlebury College students do volunteer and are good but limited in calls they can make and gone for summer and breaks. Dave Shaw said it's a challenge to get recruits because fewer employers are willing to release volunteers for emergency calls. He noted that volunteers are expected to do much more training and this is another deterrent. He wanted to vet recruitment ideas with his membership committee first to be sure they would work. We discussed possibility of moving to a regional fire department, noting that emergency medical response can't exist on a volunteer basis for these very reasons. Dave Shaw thought this would be good in due time and that he had seen a very effective model in Prince Georges county.

**Other Business:** Health Officer Tom Scanlon reported that he will be posting **insect born disease public health alerts** at our website and on our bulletin boards. The committee noted the rise of insect born disease.

**Next Meeting.** Monday, April 10, 4 pm at MPD.

**Adjourn.** At 5:15 pm, Gary Baker moved that the Committee adjourn. Dave Shaw seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Asermily  
Public Health and Safety Committee Chair