

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY
Public Health & Safety Committee
Middlebury Police Dept Community Room
Monday, March 19, 2018* Draft Meeting Minutes

Attending the meeting: Committee members Selectboard Member Laura Asermily, Police Chief Thomas Hanley, Fire Chief Dave Shaw, Health Officer Tom Scanlon, Gary Baker, MREMS Director Teena Betourney, Porter Hospital EM Director Mike Leyden, Addison County Sheriff Don Keeler, MPD Chaplain and former Midd College Jewish Chaplain Ira Schiffer, Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay. Committee members absent: Selectboard member Nick Artim, Middlebury College Public Safety Director Lisa Burchard Guests: Kyle Mitchell (MUHS 9th grade student), Anne Christie (East Middlebury resident), Bill Kernan (DPW), Bill Cunningham (ACTR), Jim Gish (Rail Bridge Construction), Keith Grier (CSAC), Karen Duguay (BMP), Dustin Hunt (P&R, Asst Health Officer), Dorothy Mammen (Middlebury resident and GMCEI Transportation Task Force chair), Fred Dunnington (Midd resident, former town planner, Town Poll reporter).

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

Approval of Agenda. David Shaw moved that the Committee approve the Agenda as amended by Laura to eliminate street sign inventory and compost collection updates in order to have adequate time to discuss other agenda items. Tom Hanley seconded the motion, which was approved by the Committee.

Approval of Jan 28, 2018 Meeting Minutes: Tom Scanlon moved and Tom Hanley seconded without any changes. Passed unanimously.

Citizens Comments. East Middlebury resident Anne Christie wanted to know where to find procedure for filing airport noise complaints at town website and at the airport and how to get a report on these complaints. Kathleen Ramsay and Tom Hanley said they would get her the information.

Committee membership and roles: Confirmed that membership would include Selectboard Member Laura Asermily (re-appointed chair), Police Chief Thomas Hanley, Fire Chief Dave Shaw, Health Officer Tom Scanlon, resident at-large Gary Baker, MREMS Director Teena Betourney, Porter Hospital EM Director Mike Leyden, Addison County Sheriff Don Keeler, MPD Chaplain and former Midd College Jewish Chaplain Ira Schiffer (voted in by the committee unanimously), Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay, Selectboard member Nick Artim (alternate), Middlebury College Public Safety Director Lisa Burchard.

Laura recognized that many of the guests in attendance are often copied, invited and appreciated to advance discussion on items that bisect other departments and committees. MUHS ninth grade student Kyle Mitchell introduced himself and explained that he was there in community service and hoped to keep MUHS apprised of the committee's work.

It was clarified that the Public Health & Safety Committee functions as an advisory committee to Selectboard. It focuses on maintaining and enhancing the health and safety of Middlebury residents. It monitors and provides outreach on state health and safety initiatives, including waste collection and hazardous chemical reporting. It discusses local traffic and parking issues, public assemblage and signage concerns, noise, junk, animal or pest complaints, fire safety, emergency preparedness, and more.

Emergency Response Exercise: Porter's Mike Leyden reported that progress is being made toward scheduling an active shooter tabletop exercise in consultation with ACSD. Mary Hogan School will be the scenario. They are now aiming for sometime in April. HCC and Middlebury College will be observers. He clarified that students will not be involved in the exercise—imagine about 50 or so key people in a room working through a simulation. David Shaw shared on active shooter training he took in St Albans recently where the strategy has changed from lockdown drill to a “run, hide, fight” drill with the objective of causing chaos for the shooter and reducing the number of targets. Tom Hanley shared that school safety assessments are being conducted. Don Keeler noted that Middlebury is fortunate to have a dedicated police force that can do this and have a school resource officer to help ensure safety. Other Addison County schools depend on state police who can't be everywhere and are stretched in conducting such reviews and coverage.

Gun Violence: There was much discussion regarding recent response to the Parkland Florida shooting by area youth and in the state legislature, Laura noted the National School Walkout rally on the Cross St Bridge on March 10 and the upcoming March for Our Lives rally on the Middlebury Town Green on March 24. She appreciated how well conducted and attended the March 10 rally was by high school and college students and community members, despite the snow day, and well monitored it was by local law enforcement who were viewed as a helpful presence. She noted that youth and community members are learning their rights to assemble and when a permit and certificate of insurance are needed. Tom Hanley clarified that anyone has the right to assemble on public property as long as they are not obstructing the safety of motor or pedestrian traffic. A public assemblage permit is needed when many will be gathered and police assistance is needed and to manage the scheduling of the use of popular public spaces such as the Town Green so there aren't conflicts and liability is clear and insurance is arranged. For example, you don't want a wedding or music event and a rally conflicting for space.

Committee members shared thoughts on gun control measures. Gary Baker brought documentation showing that there was inaccuracy regarding gun sales over the internet. Tom Hanley stated that gun control needs a broad, open-minded discussion. If someone opines that the solution is that all guns should be outlawed, that's fine- it's a starting point. If someone opines that the 2nd amendment shouldn't be abridged for any reason, that's a starting point as well, and there shouldn't be any derision for any opinion, otherwise we'll never get anywhere and the problem will fester. The committee appreciated his recent comments in the Addison Independent that cautioned against

arming teachers and his stand that we need to focus on early warning systems and interventions.

ACTR bus stop issues: Laura opened discussion by reviewing concerns about the stops at the post office raised by the Better Middlebury Partnership on behalf of the downtown businesses regarding parking availability near the post office, with the suggestion that the ACTR bus stop in front of the post office on the St Stephens side be reconsidered. She asked members to weigh comments in recent letters to editor from ACTR's Jim Moulton and BMP's Karen Duguay as well as points raised at the January PHS meeting. Don Keeler asked if the committee hadn't already settled this by saying it did not support any ACTR bus stops at the Post Office. It was explained that while some members voiced this, the committee didn't decide this. What it did decide was that it was unsafe to have the bus stop straddle the crosswalk to reduce the amount of lost parking. It asked the working group to configure something better which became the current design that allows for a bus pull off in a better site line for all travelers north of the crosswalk. This would be monitored for a three-month trial period, the end of which was approaching at the end of this month.

Dorothy Mammen reported that she monitored parking availability Monday March 19 in the twenty parking spaces on Main St between the temporary bridge and Seymour Street on an hourly basis from 10:15 am to 4:15 pm, including recording license plates to assess turn-over of the parking spaces. She got some interesting results. #1 – She found that between 10:15 and 2:15, 4-6 parking spaces were consistently available. Parking was tight at 3:15 and 4:15, however, with two and then only one space available, respectively. #2 – At each hour after two hours of surveying, an average of four parked vehicles had over-stayed the 2-hour parking limit, including one vehicle parked for over 5 hours, and one for over 6 hours. She felt that there were several things that could be done to improve access to this highly frequented area where many people are making a quick stop at the PO. One is to visit earlier in the day, if possible. Another is to ensure turn-over of vehicles in the parking spaces – by voluntarily refraining from parking in this area for more than two hours; by enforcement; or by using parking meters to keep the vehicles turning over and thus increasing parking availability. Perhaps those needing longer-term parking could park in the angle parking up on N. Pleasant St. rather than in the highly-coveted spots in front of the post office. People riding the ACTR bus – whether mobility-challenged, vulnerable population, or those trying to lower their carbon footprint – deserve the same good access to the downtown for their shopping, going to work, going to appointments, etc.

Keith Grier noted that CSAC is considering the downtown access needs of both its clients, several of whom depend on the bus, and its employees at its Main St location who vie for convenient parking.

It was clarified that PHS is not the place to discuss where ACTR bus stops should go or continue, but where safety issues related to their location and use are addressed and where parking enforcement is also addressed. Bill Kernan will work with Bill Cunningham to monitor the Post Office stops via camera and take next steps. Chief

Hanley noted that a parking enforcement officer will train in April and start official work in May. He also felt parking meters could make it easier to enforce. Laura summarized that town meeting poll results showed lack of support, and perhaps lack of understanding, for metered parking or reduced time limits to one hour from two hours to turn over coveted spots along Main St. She proposed a separate public meeting to vet the effectiveness of downtown parking availability solutions, including a higher parking ticket fee from \$5 to \$25 for the first offense. She noted consensus on the need for more parking enforcement.

Next Meeting. Monday, April 16, 4 pm at MPD.

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

Respectfully Submitted, Laura Asermily
Public Health and Safety Committee Chair