



City of Beacon Parking and Traffic Safety Committee

Agenda

February 22, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.
1 Municipal Plaza, Beacon, NY 12508
Lower-Level Classroom

➤ **Old Business**

1. Intersections of Verplanck Ave. and Mattewan Rd & Main St and Route 52
2. Light at 9D and Main St.
3. Henry St. Double Yellow Lines
4. 9D and Beekman Street

➤ **New Business**

1. Main Street U-Turns and Beekman Crossing Concerns

In attendance: Jill Reynolds, Claudia Bennett Glauda, Matt Dubetsky, Michael Manzi, Chief Tom Lucchesi, and Lt. Jason Walden

Old Business

1. Intersections of Verplanck Ave. and Mattewan Rd & Main St. and Route 52

To the City Council: My wife and I frequently take walks throughout Beacon, often pushing a stroller. We've noticed several dangerous intersections, particularly Verplanck Ave and Mattewan Rd, Main St and Route 52, and the crossing on Route 52 between Ron's Ice Cream and Memorial Park. I strongly urge the Traffic Safety Committee to assess or reassess these intersections, especially with Beacon's population boom the last few years.

However, of all these intersections, I believe 9D and Route 52 (also known as Wolcott and Teller which is on the border of Wards 2 and 4) pose the greatest risk! The presence of a crosswalk here is astonishing given the evident danger. The owners of the brick house on the corner of Teller have informed me that their property was damaged on two occasions

due to cars speeding around the corner. This emphasizes the potential harm to pedestrians. Furthermore, the eastbound traffic on 9D, obscured by a bend and slope, is a serious concern. While the plans to take the bend away and replace it with a T turn is a good idea, I believe developing a sidewalk in front of 925 Wolcott Ave to move the crossing over to provide greater visibility and time for both drivers and pedestrians.



I initiated a petition the other day addressing this public safety issue and later discovered plans to overhaul Route 52

and this intersection. Even if the bid for the entire project is high, I strongly recommend proceeding with the construction, prioritizing 9D and Route 52. Alternatively, consider making it a standalone project to expedite its completion. People's safety should not be compromised because of the larger project's complexities. While a traffic light might be the ideal solution for safety, even an amber flashing light and a reflective pedestrian sign would significantly enhance caution for speeding vehicles.

To the Traffic Safety Committee (forwarding the above): I wanted to share with you the email I sent to the City Council several weeks ago to make sure you see it and that it gets put onto the public record and perhaps discussed in the upcoming meeting which I will try to attend! The bottom line is the intersection of route 52 and 9D needs an amber flashing light ideally with an electronic radar mph display as well.

September 28, 2023: The Committee discussed that the City is awaiting traffic study data for Verplanck Ave. and expecting to receive such in the near future. The Committee also discussed that the City is awaiting a re-scoped Fishkill/Teller Avenues rehabilitation project design in the coming weeks and expects to put said project out to bid in early 2024. Said project is expected to involve the intersection of 9D and Teller, as well as sidewalks along portions of the stretch of Fishkill/Teller Avenues.

At the next Committee meeting, members will discuss whether the traffic light at the intersection of Main St. and Teller Ave. can be reprogrammed to include lead-pedestrian intervals, or not.

October 26, 2023: The Committee noted that there seems to be a box at the stoplight in question, which may indicate that the light is programmable. The Committee will continue discussion on the topic at the next meeting with the Highway Superintendent present to verify if such is the case, and whether or not it could be used for Lead-Pedestrian Interval timing.

November 16, 2023: The Highway Department Superintendent will speak with the City's engineering vendor to see if any measures can be taken in the meantime (including pricing of a new computer board), but noted that new traffic lights will be installed as part of the upcoming Fishkill/Teller Rehabilitation Project. The Committee suggested noticing updates for this and other projects on the City website.

January 25, 2024: The Committee agreed to trail this item pending further information on final Fishkill/Teller Rehabilitation Project Plans and Bid posting.

February 22, 2024: This item will trail to a future meeting once final plans for the Fishkill-Teller Rehabilitation Project have been posted.

2. Light at 9D and Main Street (added at meeting)

During the meeting, a concern was raised that the light at 9D and Main Street is signaling right turns while also showing a crossing signal simultaneously.

November 16, 2023: The Committee noted that this is a NYS DOT light, but the Highway Superintendent agreed to reach out with the concern.

January 25, 2024: The City's Highway Superintendent did speak with DOT, who said that they would look into the concern. The Committee will check if it is still an issue prior to the next meeting.

3. Henry Street Double Yellow Lines (added at meeting)

During the meeting, a concern was raised regarding whether or not the double-yellow lines on Henry St. could be shifted to better balance lane widths?

November 16, 2023: The Highway Department will look into the issue further for the next meeting and measure how much space there is for the driving lane on the side with diagonal parking.

January 25, 2024: The Committee debated whether it was necessary to shift the double yellow line along Henry St. between Veterans and S. Chestnut, but the issue was not concluded. The Committee will

keep an eye on the parking along the same stretch for the next meeting to see if it warrants any further action.

February 22, 2024: Committee members reported having seen a sedan jutting out and a vehicle having to cross the double-yellow lines to go around such. The Committee also noted that the double yellow lines don't line up on either side of Veterans Place. The Highway Superintendent noted that the lanes had been measured to be proper widths as-is and that the snow likely exacerbates any issues that people have been seeing.

The Committee ultimately recommended moving the double-yellow lines between Veterans Place and S. Chestnut to line up properly with those between Veterans Place and Fishkill/Teller Avenue at a later date, and will monitor in the meantime.

4. 9D and Beekman Street

TO: Beacon City Council, Beacon Planning Board, Beacon Traffic and Safety Committee

RE: 45 Beekman Development Proposal

Development at 45 Beekman

Per the 12-12-2023 Planning Board meeting, I would like to address the proposal put forth by the Beekman Arts Center LLC. There is one area of impact that supersedes all others, congestion and traffic. At this time, I would only like to put forth comments and questions related to congestion and traffic (although I have other concerns with the proposal).

CONGESTION AND TRAFFIC IMPACTS

The board stated in the December meeting that the Beekman/9D intersection is “the worst in Beacon”, “must be solved”, and “cannot be made worse by development.”

I fully agree. The intersection is a long-standing issue, independent of any development discussion. More specifically: there is no police presence, and a multitude of traffic violations occur every day. They have, for some reason, been deemed acceptable (or those that can address the situation choose not to). The violations include but are not limited to:

- Running red lights
- Blocking the intersection
- Speeding
- Bypassing traffic by taking side streets (while speeding)
- Illegally using High Street as a bypass (left turn from Beekman)

Serious and broad safety issues exist now and should be dealt with before any development is considered at 45 Beekman.

It is misguided to allow a development to dictate or even recommend a traffic pattern solution as their interests and motivations are not those of the people of Beacon first. They (the group submitting plans for development) are attempting to solve a congestion problem so that their development can proceed.

A dedicated group of professionals that have experience in complex traffic management should be retained to determine a clear and long-term solution. At this stage, we are seeing random suggestions by both the developer and the planning board. These suggestions are being made without serious consideration and/or study of the actual impacts. (You will note that in the 600-page proposal submitted by the Beekman Arts Center LLC, 500 pages are dedicated to a traffic study and nowhere does it show the various violations that occur each day. Even at its length, it is an incomplete picture of the day-to-day issues facing the intersection.)

The Planning Board and the Beekman Arts Center comments include:

- Suggesting an additional stoplight
 - It is fully unclear how this would slow or alleviate traffic. It would create gaps *for* the Development but not for anyone else. It would encourage more illegal use of High Street as a bypass.
- Suggesting a round about
 - How would anyone walking navigate a roundabout?
- Suggesting changing the light timing
 - Again, this is for car movement not people movement. This would negatively impact the residents in Beacon that cross the street including school children at the bus stop. It is also specious to assume that mere light timing changes will solve this problem. It would likely add a new, different problem to the mix.
- Suggesting an additional right hand turn lane.
 - Adding a dedicated right hand turn lane (9D south at Beekman) would be a serious safety issue as cars would not slow or stop to make the turn, endangering anyone crossing the street on foot. Additionally, it would cause an already short light to be difficult to navigate on foot without running.

All of these suggestions have the same fatal flaw, they are about moving cars and not about moving people. These intersections are heavily walked and 9D is often crossed at both Beekman and Tomkins Avenue. These suggestions have little to do with them. The pedestrians and school bus stops are not being considered. Again, the suggestions are being floated without the agnostic perspective and expertise of traffic management professionals. Even if the matter were solely about moving vehicles, the suggestions above do not make matters any better. A long-term viable solution should come from those that have successfully dealt with similar situations.

Furthermore, the train traffic is by and large NOT Beacon residents. The traffic going North, East, and West are individuals leaving Beacon. Anyone that lives in Beacon knows better than to take Beekman to get home when they can travel south of the station and loop around to their destination. The Planning Board should first be considering the residents of Beacon and not the traffic leaving Beacon. The role of the Planning Board is not to make life better for the Developer or the commuter, the role is to make life better for the people of Beacon.

Again, **I do not feel that any development should be considered without a full assessment and long-term traffic plan to mitigate the immediate safety and congestion issues at Beekman and 9D.** Only then should development be considered as it will only cause additional stress in the problematic area. When a solution has been determined, the Planning Board should seriously consider the other aspects of the proposal that need significant clarification. (Environmental, Resource Demands, Wildlife, Affordability, Hight and Visual impacts, Setbacks, Parking, Aesthetic Concerns “In-Keeping”, etc.)

(To add a finer point on my perspective, I commuted into New York City for 15 years and in all of that time, I crossed the road at Beekman and 9D twice every week day. I was hit by a car once and nearly hit more times than I can count. I have a unique perspective on that particular intersection and living a block away makes my interest all the more great.)

January 25, 2024: The Committee noted the following points after reviewing the above letter:

- It is not illegal to use High Street, which is a public road.
- The Committee does not recommend doing adding a stoplight along Beekman, which would risk backing up traffic further during peak train arrivals.
- The lights along 9D are DOT-owned, but the Highway Superintendent will reach out to see if the light timing at Verplanck can be better calibrated.
- The Committee was not sure that a right-hand turn lane would be necessary, but did note that it should not be created by removing the left-hand turn lane, which helps to prevent traffic backing up.

Overall, the Committee found it difficult to make any specific recommendations or to weight potential solutions without having the data regarding traffic and pedestrian patterns being considered by the Planning Board. Before the next meeting, the City will gather Planning Board reports for the project at-issue, and from when Edgewater was approved (traffic study follow-up).

February 22, 2024: The Committee received an email noting the existence of a 'no left turn' sign onto High Street. The Committee acknowledged the existence of such, but noted that, given the lack of similar signage on Bank St., this is likely designed to prevent traffic backing up from traffic turning left.

The committee reviewed final approval resolutions from the Planning Board on two other projects in the area: 22 Edgewater Place and 16 West Main Street for off-site improvements being required. The Committee also received a copy of the traffic engineer report on 45 Beekman Street. While that project was never referred to the Committee, they will draft a memorandum reiterating their support for projects in the area to be required to provide solar-powered, flashing pedestrian-crossing signage at Beekman and West Main Street. They noted that this was required in the approval resolution on 16 West Main Street, but believe that the project is currently on hold.

New Business

1. Main Street U-Turns and Beekman Crossing Concerns

The Following e-mail was received:

1. We are concerned that people are continually making U-turns on Main Street, which is dangerous for both cars and pedestrians on such a busy street. We'd ask that "No U-turn" signs be installed along Main Street and perhaps even a speed limit of 15 to 20 miles an hour be put in place as often people will speed along, blowing through the crosswalks. We think there's lots of opportunity for the police to raise some additional funds for the City's coffers by fining offenders.

February 22, 2024: The Committee declined to recommend more signage on Main Street at this time, due to concerns of sign-blindness that has been discussed in prior Committee meetings. Further, the Committee believes that additional signage is unlikely to deter the behavior. Police Department will continue to enforce violations of this traffic law. Further the Committee recommends that the City consider posting regarding the relevant code sections on Facebook and/or the City website.

The Committee has previously discussed lowering the speed limit at various places in, including Main Street, the City and declines to recommend such at this time. This is a matter which the City Council would need to consider.

2. There is a crosswalk outside our building at 30 Beekman Street. Drivers rarely stop for pedestrians and just walking out means taking your life in your hands. We'd ask that flashing lights be installed which can be activated by a button when needed.

February 22, 2024: This matter has been previously discussed by the Committee as part of the 16 West Main Street Planning Board referral process in 2023. At that time, the Committee recommended flashing 'pedestrian crossing' signage to be required as part of the approval of said project. After reviewing the approval resolution from the Planning Board on said project, the Committee confirmed that this recommendation was formally required as an off-site improvement. The Committee also discussed sending a memorandum to the Planning Board asking them to consider requiring such of other projects in the area, such as 45 Beekman St., if 16 West Main Street is not moving forward with development.

Next meeting: April 25, 2024