

HIGHLIGHT

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The Newsletter of the High Street Hill Association

October 2011



Last spring nearly 200 Pill Hill residents signed a petition requesting the Town to reduce the 30 mph speed limit on High Street to 25 mph after it became apparent The Pond Avenue and High Street Safety Improvement Plan would not solve all of High Street's traffic issues. As a result, it was announced at April's Transportation Board (TB) meeting that the Town would pursue a speed limit reduction for High Street. Currently the Town can only legally reduce the speed limit with state approval since Massachusetts law, in order to prevent towns from creating "speed traps," requires them to submit traffic data that support a lower speed limit.

Town Transportation Administrator Todd Kirrane stated that his department would gather new traffic speed data after the new High Street safety improvements were in place. To be successful, the town must demonstrate that the majority of traffic

travels closer to 25 mph than 30 mph. A 2009 study found that that High Street's mean speed was 28 mph with over 2000 cars a day exceeding 30 mph, roughly a third of the daily traffic.

An alternative way to change High Street's speed limit would be available if pending legislation at the State House becomes law. "An Act Relative to Speed Limits" (HB4728) would allow creation of an "urban district" with 25 mph as the top speed limit, a designation High Street would qualify for if this bill is passed. The TB, the State Highway Commissioner and the cities of Boston, Cambridge and Somerville and WalkBoston have all endorsed the bill.

Why lower the prevailing speed limit in urbanized areas from 30 mph to 25 mph?

- At 30 mph, almost half (45%) of pedestrians struck by an automobile are killed; 50% are injured.
- Lower speeds encourage yielding to pedestrians, watching for bicyclists, and increase the reaction time for drivers to respond to road conditions.
- With a 10 mph reduction in speed from 30 to 20 mph pedestrian-automobile accident fatalities drop from 45% to 5%.

Residents wishing to support Bill 4728 may call or write to: Chairman Vincent Pedone, House Committee on Bills in Third Reading, Room 20, State House, Boston, MA 02133, (617) 722-2410.

Calling All Tradesmen!

A longstanding HSHA service needs a refresh, and you can help. The list of recommended tradesmen on our website has been in place for many years. Some of these jacks of all trades are still actively at work. But others have moved on, or perhaps no longer deserve their endorsement. So we're putting out a call to build a new list. Please share your recommendations of tried-and-true painters, carpenters, landscapers, dog walkers, tutors, or anyone else you think your neighbors might find handy for hire. If you see someone on the current list who deserves to be removed, we want to know that as well. Without a current recommendation, no one stays on the list.

Send your recommendations to Bill Weber at bweber8@hotmail.com. Be sure to provide the person's trade, name, phone number(s), and address (if you have it). If the person has a specialty or exceptional skill, please tell us that as well. Stay tuned to the *Highlight* for a notice of when the new list goes online. And thanks for your suggestions!

Neighborhood News....

Muddy River Advocacy

FYI: On Sept 28, the HSHA and its associate organization, the Friends of Leverett Pond, wrote a letter to the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization in support of funding for the Carleton Street Footbridge Restoration Project, a crucial link required by the State for the completion of the historic, environmental and flood control project that will revitalize the Muddy River up to Willow Pond. Although support is widespread in Brookline continuing lobbying efforts are necessary to help push the project to the top of the funding list. For thirty years members of the HSHA have been involved in the restoration of the Emerald Necklace and we will continue to be strong advocates.

Are We Having Fun Yet?

The HSHA's Fun Event Committee is thinking of having a holiday party in December. Want to help out? *Contact Betsy Shure Gross at 617-731-1448.*

Support Your Schools

Buy a ticket for the Brookline Educational Foundation's Win-A-Mini Raffle. 1st Prize: 2012 Mini Cooper or \$12,000; 2nd Prize: Apple iPad; and three 3rd prizes: \$100 iTunes gift cards. Tickets are \$50 each and no more than 1200 will be sold. *Contact David Knight, 5 Maple St, at 646-879-3091 or djknight1@gmail.com.*

Instead of Playing Chicken

Anyone who bikes or walks the paths in the Emerald Necklace knows that crossing Route 9 is a major problem. Now the Town has some federal money to convene a study group and pay for a preliminary design for a crossing and a path extending from Olmsted Park along Riverway Park to Netherlands Road. The study committee, appointed by the Selectmen, will include Rob Daves to represent the HSHA. *The first meeting will be held at Town Hall at 6PM on October 3 and will be open to all.*

Alisa Weilerstein Wins MacArthur Fellowship

Last week the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation named 22 recipients of their prestigious 2011 fellowship awards or "Genius Grants." Among the list of extraordinary individuals is cellist Alisa Weilerstein, daughter of neighbors Don and Vivian who live on Irving Street. Alisa is a world-renowned musician and she comes from an extraordinary family. Her dad, founder of the Cleveland Quartet, teaches violin at Juilliard and the New England Conservatory and her mom, an acclaimed concert pianist, also teaches at NEC. Together Don, Vivian and Alisa perform around the world as the Weilerstein Trio. [And last month, little brother Josh was appointed the Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic]. *Catch the Weilerstein Trio in a free concert at Jordan Hall at 8PM on October 30. This will be Alisa's only Boston appearance this year.*

Save the Dates

Neighborhood Yard Sale!

Neighbors Maureen Coffey on Hawthorne Street and Benna Kushlefsky on High Street are planning to have yard sales at their homes next Saturday, October 1. They want to invite other neighbors to hold yard sales on that date, too. Are you interested? The idea is that families would hold their own sale at their own home but everyone could promote each other's sales with a neighborhood map. This is your chance to get rid of that fondue pot. *To join in please contact Benna at bennak@rcn.com.*

Scary Fun

The Friends of the Old Burying Ground on Walnut Street will host its annual Halloween/ All Souls Day Scavenger Hunt. Shovels not required. *3-5PM Sunday, October 30.*

Muddy River Restoration Project Walking Tour

Muddy River Restoration Project Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee (MMOC) will conduct a 1-mile, 1-hour walking tour of the project's Phase 1 areas to be restored starting in 2011. Highlights include a variety of footbridges in the Back Bay Fens and Riverway Park. *1PM-2PM Monday, October 10. Meet at Fenway & Evans Street, Boston.*

Watershed Walk Tour

The Brookline GreenSpace Alliance will lead a 1-1/2 mile walk in Olmsted Park, following the Muddy River to its source at Wards Pond. The role of the watershed and stormwater management will be explained, along with a historical perspective on Frederick Law Olmsted's dual purpose waterpark. *1-2PM Friday, November 11. Meet at parking lot opposite Brook House on Pond Avenue. RSVP 617-232-6083.*