

HIGH STREET HILL ASSOCIATION

SERVING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SINCE 1958

June 20, 2004

To: Robert Allen, *Chair, Board of Selectmen*
A. Thomas DeMaio, *Commissioner, Department of Public Works*
Fred Levitan and Michael Sandman, *Co-Chairs, Transportation Board*
Peter Ditto, *Director, Engineering and Transportation Division*
David M. Friend, *Assistant Director for Transportation*

Dear Sirs:

It has been several years since the reconstruction of Walnut Street yet we who live in the vicinity feel that the project has never been satisfactorily completed. Important issues concerning the safety, aesthetics and effectiveness of the modifications have not been resolved despite numerous attempts by concerned residents and Town meeting Members to communicate with Town representatives. We feel it is time to have our collective comments recognized and have our questions answered without obfuscation or delay.

We feel the signage along Walnut Street is excessive and unnecessary. There are 116 signs and 34 posts in the 0.4 miles of Walnut Street between High and Cypress Streets (the speed bumps on Winchester Street are marked with fewer signs and on Clark Street off Route 9 in Newton six speed bumps have no warning signs whatsoever). What are the exact state and federal statutes that mandate the placement of each sign along Walnut Street including parking signs? Has a written legal opinion has been obtained to justify the signage? Why isn't sign placement consistent town-wide?

We feel the unwarranted signage, aggressive curb bump-outs and jumbled sidewalk design have disfigured a historic street in a Local Historic District. For homes in the area, the Preservation Commission requires that changes in grades and driveways be subjected to review. What level of streetscape protection is offered by Preservation guidelines? What involvement did the Preservation Commission have in the design process of the Walnut Street project?

An assessment of the effectiveness of the traffic calming has yet to be done. A review of data for traffic volume, noise, and especially vehicular and pedestrian safety needs to be performed before any other traffic calming projects in town are initiated. We request that a neighborhood input hearing be held as part of the review and reporting process.

We in this neighborhood have been frustrated by the lack of a coherent response over these issues but we look forward to working with the Town in a spirit of cooperation to satisfactorily complete this unfinished business.

Respectfully submitted,
See attached signatories