Present: Ed DeWitt, Alison Leschen, Ralph Herbst, Chris McGuire, Paul Dreyer.
Absent: Paul Grunden

1. Using the Zoom application, Mr. DeWitt called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and read a prepared statement about the Governor’s order regarding remote meetings and procedures.

2. The minutes of the February 25, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously by roll call vote as drafted. The minutes of Joint Meeting with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee on March 11, 2021 were approved by roll call vote as drafted with Mr. Dreyer abstaining.

3. The Committee considered a referral from the Traffic Advisory Committee to post Crane Street and Cowdry Road “No trucks 10 PM to 5:30 AM” or something similar to establish quiet hours for the surrounding residential neighborhood. The discussion panel was made up of the Transportation Management Committee members in attendance, Nat Trumbull, the proponent before the Traffic Advisory Committee, Robert Davis, General Manager of the Steamship Authority (SSA), Kathryn Wilson, Falmouth Representative to the SSA, Steven Sayers General Counsel for the SSA and Select Board member and liaison to the Committee Doug Brown.

Mr. Trumbull made a presentation about the problem of early morning noise associated with truck traffic and its negative impact on nearby residents. He noted that Crane Street and Cowdry Road are town roads subject to town regulation. He suggested that the posting of no trucks from 10 PM to 5:30 AM would significantly improve the overall situation for residents. Mr. Trumbull outlined a long and well documented history of complaints and documentation of the problem with supporting data.

Mr. Davis noted that there is a problem but disagreed with the proposed solution. He noted mitigation actions including limiting the size of trucks on the 5:30 am departure, posting electronic signage (acknowledging that he was unsure if it was still operational) and limiting the 5:30 am departure to only part of the year. A brief discussion of adequate service (the term used in the Enabling Act) and essential service (the term used by Mr. Davis) followed. Mr. Davis found the terms interchangeable.

Attorney Sayers noted that the SSA has established 2 study groups to look at the noise, traffic and other operational planning – a long range planning working group and a traffic and noise advisory committee. Mr. Sayers reported that Falmouth Select Board member Brown and the Town Manager were on the long-range group and Select Board member Jones and Mr. Trumbull were on the traffic and noise group. Mr. Sayers acknowledged that no one from or associated with New Bedford was a member of either group. Mr. Sayers requested that the Committee take some
time to review various SSA studies and reports that have addressed the issue before the Committee takes any action.

Ms. Wilson expressed her understanding over the various challenges associated with early morning freight boats. She pointed out some steps she had attempted to take specifically related to the 5:30 am departure but was out voted by the SSA board. She noted her own frustration related to the apparent ill-defined “adequate service”. She suggested that the SSA is simply meeting demand and neither providing essential or adequate service.

After a brief discussion the Committee agreed by consensus to continue the matter to April 22, 2021 meeting to allow it to review the reports noted by Mr. Sayers and to allow Mr. Trumbull to offer additional comments and suggestions to some of the potential consequences of the no truck hours – e.g. where do the trucks go if they cannot travel on the SSA approach streets

4. Mr. DeWitt provided an overview of his meetings representing the TMC with the SSA noise and traffic mitigation working group and long-range planning advisory group. He presented the TMC’s preliminary report on SSA freight operations to both groups at the invitation of the SSA. There was a brief discussion with Mr. Brown over the explanation why the TMC report was shelved without action or feedback.

5. Ms. Leschen provided an overview of the downtown parking and access survey. With assistance from Mr. McGuire, she will prepare a report to be considered at the April 8th meeting. The TMC will forward the survey report to the Select Board to reiterate the Committee’s recommendations for 2021. The committee agreed the survey should be closed after a brief period to allow an outreach effort to restaurant owners to proceed.

6. The Committee briefly discussed the joint meeting with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. The committee agreed by consensus to allow the chairs of the two committees to prepare a brief report for the Select Board outlining the needed changes to the Complete Streets Policy identified during the meeting.

7. Mr. Dreyer expressed his disagreement with the Committee’s one-year report examining implementation of the Complete Streets Policy. He noted his submissions to the Committee of 2/6/2021 and 2/27/2021. He suggested that much more had been accomplished and a more positive tone was in order. He further suggested an update but declined the opportunity to draft the update. Mr. DeWitt will prepare a short update for consideration at the next meeting.

8. Mr. DeWitt presented an overview of the nationally award winning pavement management program in Lexington, MA. Peter McConarty’s pavement management email to the Committee outlined a program similar to Lexington but noted implementation costs as the primary constraint. Mr. Brown thought a TMC examination including the cost of implementing such a program would be worthwhile to investigate.
Mr. McGuire expressed the need for good data especially on cost. The Committee agreed to begin to assemble information and prepare for public meetings in May on pavement management.

9. The next TMC meeting will be April 8, 2021 at 7 PM. Meeting adjourned at 8:58 PM with a unanimous roll call vote.

Recorder: Edward DeWitt