

BUTLER PTA General Meeting February 15th, 2017

Minutes taken by Parul Garg, Recording Secretary

Topic: Health & Safety

Attending: Rola Baghdady, Danielle Betancourt, Kate Weinstein, Katie Auffinger, Parul Garg, Azra Nelson, Cindy Barr, Jay Peck, Zhijaan Zhang, Liaojun Fu, Lane Seiger, James Maclsaac and Lisa Harteveltdt

Welcome and Opening remarks to the community and PTA board by Rola Baghdady

Introduction by: Assistant Police Chief James Maclsaac and School nurse Ms. Lisa Harteveltdt

HEALTH

Ms. Lisa Harteveltdt, Butler elementary school nurse discussed the health policy for the school under these broad categories:

- Healthcare Policy- Illness/Medication
- Pediculious/Head Lice- Detection/treatment and policy
- Healthy Snack options

Health Care Policy

Please see attached handout page 1, Ms. Lisa gave for details.

Head Lice/ Pediculious

Please see attached document pages 2 & 3 for detailed information. Ms Lisa also showed samples of lice looks like and spoke about it being a very common problem in school aged children and although it is very irritation and bothersome, it's not dangerous. She suggested proper care and treatment can easily resolve the issue. The easiest way to get rid of them is combing the hair with special comb either at home or at head lice removal salon services (nitwits, nit pickers etc). She also educated everyone present to, try to keep the kids who have lice not to share bed, towels, caps and clothes with other kids and family members. Also keeping the head distant from everyone else prevents it from spreading.

Healthy Snack

Ms. Lisa talked about food allergies in school and they could be with anything. The most common ones are Nuts. Soy, Gluten & eggs. She suggested that even though a kid can bring lunch containing any of the allergens but since snack is in the classroom, they are required to bring allergy free snack. Kids who have allergies in the classroom are also sent a note home so parents know what to pack or not. She also gave a handout (also attached, pages 4 & 5) for various healthy snack options. She also organizes a colorful healthy snack week in October containing fruits and vegetable to encourage kid's healthy eating habits.

In the end Ms. Lisa asked the parents to make sure to call either her or Ms. Carol in the office if the kid is out sick and let them know the reason for sickness. She mentioned that she tracks the statistics which helps her formulate healthy policies around school and keep other parents and staff informed of any widespread or upcoming seasonal illness.

She also told all the parents to feel free to call/email her anytime to discuss any health concerns at all.

SAFETY AROUND THE SCHOOL

Assistant Police Chief James MacIsaac, introduced himself and told everyone that he has been in the department for 18 years now and Assistant Police Chief since 2012. He also served as a police patrol man for 4 years.

He discussed little about the geography of Belmont town. Belmont is only 4 sq miles but has traffic pouring in from all 4 sides:

North- 4 exits from Rt 2

South -MA pike

East Cambridge & Boston (only 6 miles from Boston)

West - Trapelo road

Belmont has less area but much more population density than Malden and Everett.

Also 80% of the town's population is on Butler side of Trapelo road.

He said, on a given day usually minimum 4 police officers cover as crossing guards for school traffic.

He suggested with the exponential population growth police can't control the number of cars but they can and are education people to take safety measures. Police doesn't enforce sidewalk bylaws but gives safe route advice. He also reminded everyone not to park cars in front of school for drop in- drop offs.

As per statistics there are 2-3 road rage incidents/month. So even though there is a movement going on for promoting bike riding, it's hard to do in a town like Belmont with v scarce bike paths.

Questions & Answers:

Kate Weinstein asked, is there a bylaw about kids riding bikes on sidewalks?

Answer: 5 year olds are ok to ride bikes on sidewalk but there need to be careful when crossing driveways. Adults are not allowed to ride on sidewalks at all.

Azra Nelson asked, is there a rule to ride bike on the sidewalk given the scarcity of bike paths in Belmont?

Answer: Just use common sense, be careful and be aware. Know your surroundings.

Azra also asked, could we get raised platform on high traffic areas?

Answer: Mr. James MacIsaac said, currently there are 5 areas in Belmont who need raised platform roads but they need to go to Community development committee to request it. It's not an easy decision given the amount of people, funds, drainage considerations required. He said, he has himself looked in to the portable ones but they don't work well with snow plows in winter months.

Kate Weinstein asked, is there a training for crossing guards because many times they let the cars go instead of crossing the kids. Also they don't even come out of the cars sometimes.

Answer: Crossing guards are given some training by police from time to time. They are also provided with stop sign. But they are paid only minimum wage so it's hard to tell them what to do.

Someone asked, what are the obstacles police face in giving tickets for texting and driving?

Answer: Police tries to give tickets and warnings to people who they see texting while driving but they can't be everywhere. They are trying to educate the residents and even the young police offices about hazards of texting and driving.

Katie Auffinger asked, what is the police doing about the wrongly painted crosswalk on Beech and white street intersection?

Answer: The crosswalk will be corrected and repainted in early spring.

Someone asked, do police enforce clearing of sidewalks on snow days?

Answer: Police tries to do it but the complaint should go to Community Development committee.

Kate Weinstein asked, who should we talk to to putting up stop signs where required?

Answer: Talk to Traffic advisory committee

In the end Mr. James MacIsaac told everyone that the Belmont Light Department will be replacing the Flashing Speed Limit sign near Butler by spring. It will be a LED sign.

Rola thanked everyone for attending and Mr. James MacIsaac and Ms. Lisa Harteveltdt for giving the presentation and answering community questions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

