



TOWN OF WINCHESTER  
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT  
71 MT. VERNON STREET, WINCHESTER, MA  
PHONE 781-721-7120 / FAX 781-721-7166

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**TO:** Beth Rudolph, PE, Town Manager  
**FROM:** Matt Shuman, PE, Town Engineer  
**DATE:** July 27, 2023  
**RE:** Dennett Road—Blind Corner and Children at Play Signage Request

### **Background**

On May 29, 2020, the Town Manager’s office received a letter signed by residents of Hollywood Road and Dennett Road requesting the installation of “Slow – Children” signage, as well as the installation of street mirrors at two locations on Dennett Road. The letter noted that Dennett Road is a horseshoe shape, which creates several blind spots for drivers; that both streets have either limited or no sidewalks; and that there has been a tremendous increase in recent years in truck deliveries. The letter notes that there are many young families, children, and teenagers in the neighborhood who routinely walk or ride their bicycles along the two roads.

The Traffic Review Committee (TRC) discussed the request at its June 30, 2020, meeting and was in favor of placing the proposed signage noting the blind corner and children at play, however, it was not in favor of installing street mirrors, which is not a standard recommended traffic device in the public way.

A letter was sent to Mr. Horacio Facca of 14 Dennett Road, on September 20, 2020, conveying TRC’s recommendations and noting that a public hearing would be scheduled to discuss the request.

Due to a miscommunication, the DPW placed the signage at various locations on Dennett Road in June 2022, prior to a hearing being scheduled. After the signs were installed, the Town received additional feedback from some neighbors expressing concerns related to the need for and location of the signage.

### **Update**

The Engineering Department collected speed and volume data on Dennett Road between July 12 and July 20, 2023. Key information is summarized below:

- On average, about 40 vehicles were counted per day, and two to three per day were classified as "trucks" based on vehicle length. For this purpose, trucks include delivery trucks. It is possible that some vehicles counted as cars were also performing deliveries.

- The average speed was about 19 miles per hour (mph). The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was 23 mph. This means 85% of all vehicles on the street were driving at or below 23 mph during the period that data were collected.
- In 2019, the Town adopted a 25 mph speed limit for all unposted, Town-controlled roads.

Furthermore, the Police Department reviewed their crash database, and no crashes have been reported on Dennett Road in the last five years.

The data suggests that excessive speed is not a major concern on Dennett Road.

With regards to posting “slow children” or “children at play” signage, the following was noted:

- This type of signage is not included in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which is the federal document that provides guidance and standards on how to use traffic signs.
- Nevertheless, the Town often installs this type of sign in residential neighborhoods as a warning sign as a measure to increase driver awareness.
- As a warning sign, the sign does not provide any additional enforcement mechanism to the Police, beyond the Town’s 25-mph speed limit regulation noted above.
- When DPW inadvertently posted the signs, they posted them at locations that were appropriate for the street.

Based on this discussion, TRC notes to the Select Board that the signs are not required to be posted. However, should the Select Board choose to vote to install the signs, they will be installed at the same locations they were previously installed.

cc: Robert LaBossiere, DPW Director  
Daniel O’Connell, Police Chief  
Sgt. Frank Batchelor, Safety Officer

## Public Hearing for Dennett Rd signage Attn: Patty

John Hamilton <john.b.hamilton01@gmail.com>

Tue 7/25/2023 11:28 AM

To:Town Manager <tmanager@winchester.us>

July 24, 2023

Select Board  
c/o Town Manager  
7 1 Mt. Vernon St  
Winchester, MA 01890

Dear Board Members,

I am writing today to strongly oppose the installation of "traffic related warning signage on Dennett Road" as per the public hearing notice.

My wife and I were born and raised in Winchester, members of the Winchester High School class of 1992. We are therefore intimately familiar with the town and carefully chose our neighborhood when purchasing our current home on Dennett Road. For those of you unfamiliar, Dennett Road is a horseshoe shaped residential street that begins and ends on Hollywood Road at either end. Our home (23 Dennett), is a corner lot situated on the end of the eastern most intersection of Hollywood Road. The entire neighborhood is essentially a dead end as there is no through traffic with the dead ending of Hollywood Road. Our street contains only 11 homes and as such there is virtually no vehicle traffic beyond the normal routines of the homeowners.

The issue before you today was brought about by the 2020 pandemic and subsequent lock-down. As we all became somewhat reliant on home deliveries and internet shopping (each home to various degrees) the number of delivery vehicles greatly increased. Those vehicles appeared to routinely exceed the speed limit and drove at speed we found to be concerning and annoying. Specifically, because the children were out of school and were routinely playing outside and *on* the streets (Hollywood and Dennett.)

In response, a petition was started by Mr. Horacio Facca (14 Dennett) to have the town install signage. When approached, declined to sign and was met with veiled hostility and the implied threat of getting other neighbors involved who were lawyers. My feeling then and has proven out, was that the situation was:

- 1.) temporary
- 2.) a matter for the police i.e. excess speeding

- 3.) a waste of time and resources( as signs of this nature would not and do not impact driving behaviors of delivery drivers on tight schedules as a practical matter)
- 4.) large yellow signs would be an unnecessary and unsightly blight on the street
- 5.) the primary complaint for the children's safety was somewhat disingenuous as Winchester has a bylaw that specifically prohibits playing in the streets
- 6.) Dennett Road has a small little known park (Dennett Park) for outdoor play

As the pandemic has ended, traffic routines have returned to normal for the area. Vehicle traffic has decreased to an almost non-existent state. As I work from home, I am in a unique position to watch "traffic" on Hollywood and Dennett from my corner lot. It simply does not exist. Sadly, with return to school and extracurricular activities, the neighborhood children have seemingly returned indoors and are rarely seen playing outdoors once again. Further negating the need for signage. As a practical matter I will admit the two drivers of UPS and FedEx (Amazon seems to not be a problem) race thru the neighborhood two or three times a week each (probably totaling less than ten minutes a week) and suggest a better police presence would slow it down quickly. During the school year I would add the school bus driver to that list of nefarious drivers.

My final thought on this matter, is that as the only owners of a corner lot with a Dennett Road address ( the other three homes are all Hollywood Road addresses) some of the requested signage would invariably end up on my lot or adjacent to it. We therefore would strenuously object to the installation of signage on Dennett Road or Hollywood Road for the detracting eyesore alone. The neighborhood simply does not need the signage, we successfully raised three children in our home without them. Let us not create a solution in search of a problem here.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John & Ellen Hamilton  
23 Dennett Road  
Winchester MA 01890

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe]

## Dennett Road

Darlene Nagle <dcnagle@comcast.net>

Tue 7/25/2023 1:06 PM

To:Town Manager <tmanager@winchester.us>

I am a long time resident on Hollywood Rd.  
My property shares the corner of Dennett Rd.

I am unable to attend the public hearing on July 31 but would like to share my input.

As stated in a prior email to the Town of Winchester regarding signage on (6/20/22), I am opposed to any signage on my property.

When I originally signed the petition I was unaware of the scope of the project and never agreed to signage on my property, however I am not opposed to signage elsewhere on Dennett Rd.

Thank you for your consideration,

Darlene & Garrett Nagle

Sent from my iPad

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe]

**From:** Darlene Nagle <dcnagle@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 20, 2022 4:11 PM  
**To:** Town Manager <tmanager@winchester.us>  
**Subject:** New signs in neighborhood

Hi,

My name is Darlene Nagle and I have lived on Hollywood Rd for 25 years. I was asked if I would be opposed to "slow children" signs being installed in our neighborhood and asked if I would sign a petition supporting them. I signed the petition.

As phase one of the installation has begun it has come to my attention that there was a (pre drawn plan)that was submitted along with the signatures that includes a large number of signs - some on poles on the front yards of neighboring homes.

My signature has been misrepresented as I was unaware of any proposal of a plan and I am opposed of the number of signs on this plan. I will oppose any signs being installed in front of my property.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,  
Darlene Nagle  
781-266-8087

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**From:** [Cafarella, Jennifer](#)  
**To:** [Mihelich, Patricia](#); [Rudolph, Beth](#)  
**Cc:** [Gill, James](#); [Wise, Mike](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Slow Down Sign  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 21, 2022 8:26:28 AM

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**From:** google1812 [mailto:ssdwang@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 20, 2022 10:49 PM  
**To:** Gill, James <jgill@winchester.us>  
**Cc:** Cafarella, Jennifer <jcafarella@winchester.us>; Wise, Mike <mwise@winchester.us>  
**Subject:** Slow Down Sign

Signage.

Dear Mr. Gill

Last week three new “Slow Down” signs were installed along Hollywood Rd and Dennett Rd, two of them (one on the front, one on the side) were directly in front of our house at 19 Hollywood Rd, where we have lived for 30 years. DPW crew stated that there was a petition two years ago by someone in the neighborhood requesting signs to slow down because there are children playing. I happened to sign that petition since the issue was with kids playing down Dennett Rd near the field. There was no specific plan for placement of signs with that signature sheet which many of the neighbors also signed. I have confirmed with many that they signed a single sheet of paper with no details offered as to what these signs would say or where they would be installed.

Hollywood Rd/Dennett Road is essentially a no-outlet streets. There are very few cars going down Hollywood then Dennett. Traffic going down these two streets is primarily residents and their guests. I do not think that residents and their guests require signs to know that they should slow down. This neighborhood was developed in the 1960’s and multiple generations of families have resided here with no need for signs to slow down. Landscapers and delivery trucks are a concern of the petitioner, but there are landscapers and delivery vehicles everywhere in town. This logic would lead to “slow down children at play” signs every 100 feet on almost every street in Winchester. I agree that delivery vehicles should be aware that kids are in the neighborhood, but this is actually a given; this is a family neighborhood.

The signs in front of our house are imposing. Some neighbors have asked us if we have requested them because they are so invasive to our property. We have no children playing here other than grandchildren, and we would not allow them to play in the street. We all have yards and driveway and that is the safest place for kids to play. Furthermore, we have Dennett Park at the bottom of the Dennett Road, right across from the petition originator’s house (#14 Dennett). I have not noticed any children who live on Hollywood Rd play on the street.

We have put a lot of money and labor into maintaining our yard and the town property adjacent to it. We have been very careful to maintain visibility around the corner from Hollywood to Dennett. There is no reason to have the sign on Hollywood Rd. The signs in front of our house are badly placed eyesores that ruin our curb appeal and will invite kids to play on the street. An additional pole also invites more dogs to relieve themselves; as stated,

our patio is located on the Dennett Road side and we have problems with flies and odors due to dog excrement.

After going to DPW and the office of the Town Manager, we saw the petition with exhibits that show where the signs were requested to be placed by the petitioner. First, the signs are not placed where they were proposed, and second, no one in the neighborhood saw that exhibit to know how many signs there would be and where they would be placed. When someone comes around petitioning for signs and states that he wants Dennett Road to be safe, one does not expect that signs will be placed anywhere other than near that resident's home.

WE REQUEST THAT THE SIGNS IN FRONT OF OUR HOUSE BE REMOVED and that this issue be revisited to allow input by homeowners where signs should be, since we had no knowledge at all about their placement.

### **Points to consider:**

1. Relatively speaking the traffic on Dennett Road is much less than any other street in Winchester. The so-called blind spots on the bottom of the loop are caused by overgrown bushes and trees, some of which is on town property. Remove all bushes and trees on town property at the bottom corners of Dennett Road and trim back the trees that are grown over on town property will open up the blind spots.
2. To set up permanent signs in the middle of landscaping not only ruins neighborhoods' curb appeal and also creates trouble for landscaping maintenance by constantly reseeding brown spots caused by dogs and blocking lawn mower passage.
3. Residents were not aware of the scope of signage when they signed the petition since the exhibit was not provided when the signatures were solicited. Neighbors signed the petition based on principle. The proposal presented by the originator was not what neighbors thought they were signing.
4. Neighbors should have had a chance to review the final plan for the number of signs, their location and their message.

### **Petition Recommendation:**

To avoid future misunderstanding, I recommend the following:

1. The town should confirm that petitions presented to the town are the same as what is presented to neighbors for signature.
2. The final petition and exhibits that are submitted to the town should also be provided to all those who signed the petition by mail.

There are many ways to achieve the above; but I would think the best way is to let the originator distribute the final package to each signed resident and ask them to mail in the petition directly to the town office to tally signatures.

Regards and thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sam