

TO: Nathan Poore, Town Manager
FROM: Randy Davis, Budget/Purchasing Director
DATE: May 24, 2010
RE: Street Light Reduction Program Report Addition

Since my first submitted Program Report on May 20, 2010, several more phone calls, appeal form submissions, and e-mails have been received. Below is a summary of the responses I have received since my last report. In some cases, due to the tardiness of the response or the lack of electronic mail, I have summarized the residents comments in my own words.

Here are some additional responses for street lights included in my first report.

George Feinburg 127 Hardy Road Pole # 60

The Pole 60 street light is needed for safety and security. It is at the end of a dark and unfamiliar road and the dead end is not obvious. Some people think that the road continues into Westbrook.

In addition, leaving the cul-de-sac dark will invite less than desirable activities such as teenagers “parking” and other things that benefit from lack of visibility. The homes here are sparse and make it attractive for people looking for a “quiet” location at the end of a road. Keeping the light will reduce the desirability of the location.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Waterman 127 Hardy Road Pole # 60

I would like to see pole 60 continue to in service. This street receives no ambient light due to its thick forest. I feel it is needed to keep individuals traveling on this road at night safe as well as individuals walking. People that are unfamiliar to this road often drive very fast. Without the definition the light provides, the potential for pedestrians, parked vehicles, and stationary objects getting hit will be increased.

Although we have only lived in this neighborhood, since 2003, I have experienced unidentified cars parked and cars highly exceeding the speed limit. We see many cars on this road that are just “exploring” the area. The first year that I lived on Hardy Rd. I was hit by an oncoming car and forced into a ditch. What I am saying is that, this road, for what ever reason, is an appealing place to drive/hang out at, go fast and explore by individuals that do not know the road. Given the forest and the design of the road, taking out that light at then end of the road creates unnecessary safety concerns for drivers as well as pedestrians.

Thanks for taking this into consideration.

McGuire Controls 27 Gray Road Pole # 9

“We think the light closest to the bridge should remain and the next light toward Portland (Pole # 20) should be removed, as lights from Southworth effectively illuminate that area.”

Charlotte O’Donovan 27 Phillips Road Pole # 7

Ms. O’Donovan called to keep at least the one in the middle of the street on for safety reasons.

The following are responses about street lights that were not included in my first report.

William E. Bonnvie 217 Longwoods Road Pole # 51

“In 1992 when we were about to build our home we requested and were granted a portion of the Harris Road. At that time we were asked if we would allow emergency vehicles & buses in Falmouth could turn around at the end of our driveway. We agreed. The light is needed:

- 1) We can tell who is at the end of driveway
- 2) Very dark area
- 3) We no longer have people hanging in the Harris Road. The light deters them.

Gene & Mickie Kucinkas Jr. 54 Pleasant Hill Road Pole # 11

“There have been several incidents, where folks have run into my neighbors bushes due to the tight corner. Folks speed down the hill frequently and my concern is that, without the light, there will be a significant accident.”

Jean Lee 57 Pleasant Hill Road Pole # 11 or 17

“There is a street light on our side of the road, just past my neighbor’s driveway, heading towards Middle Road, that is on the town’s list of lights to be turned off. We were surprised to see that it had been determined to be non-essential. Ours is an exceptionally busy road, especially during the morning and afternoon/evening commute. In the winter the hill is particularly tricky if there is snow or ice. We feel keeping the street well lit will be better for public safety. (If there is a number on the light itself, I don’t see it.)

Thank you.”

Meridith Farnum & Brian Leary 55 Pleasant Hill Road Pole # 11

“We live at the top of Pleasant Hill Rd. where the road takes a sharp curve to the left (as you come up the hill). Every year we get cars that don’t make the turn either into our arbivaeti trees or onto our lawn in front of the trees. You can see that the lawn in front of the trees is dirt because cars sometimes can’t make the turn. The trees over the years have

also become pretty mangled from the number of cars that have crashed into them. They are now filled with spaces where I have had to trim the broken branches off.

In the wintertime, going down the hill is a sharp curve to the right and is also dangerous.

The streetlight definitely illuminates this area But if you eliminate the light, I am afraid drivers will not see the curve and it will create more accidents!

Thank you for reconsidering this streetlight.”

David M. Valente 19 Roberts Street Pole # 6

“For Security Safety. For kids on Earl St. riding their bikes. Me snow blowing in the winter. I could go on and on.”

James & Heidi DiPhilippo 384 Blackstrap Road Pole # 108

“This light is in front of our house. It is definitely a safety issue first. There are also many elderly in our area. A very busy deer crossing with a history of accidents out front. Our home has been burgularized in the past + our car was broken into last year during the evening.”

Annette Palanda 381 Blackstrap Road Pole # 108

“108 is between the signs that indicate this area as a deer run. We have had several deer and occasional moose cross in front of the properties adjacent and in front of pole 108, that have been involved in car accidents. I believe that removal of this light would prevent the ability for travelers on this road to see animals crossing at night. I work evenings at MMC and my car lights are not enough to see any animals crossing, the road curves just at the area this light covers. I realize we need to cut back on costs for the town, I have lived here in Falmouth since a child and remember when they stopped lighting the area I lived in on Payson Rd, it was not a safety issue, this area on Blackstrap due to animals is. Thank you for your consideration.”

Frances M. Tucker 11 Merrill Road Pole # 3

“Security + safety”

Jay Hugo 120 Brook Road Pole # 74, 76
Lucy Giobbi 119 Brook Road Pole # 74, 76

“Please reconsider shutting off lights #76 & 74 on Brook Rd. During the last few years, mine as well as my guests cars have been rifled through. Our mailboxes have been vandalized more than once, the last time resulting in a police report given by resident Lucy Giobbi of 119 Brook Rd. A daily habit among myself and my neighbors is the constant picking up of trash and bottles in the front of our homes. I know of at least two of my neighbors pets have been killed by careless or unaware drivers.

While I don't think these lights make a complete deterrent, I do think shutting them off would extend an invitation for more vandalism and mayhem.

Thank you for considering keeping our neighborhood safer and not shutting off the lights."

Keith Parsons (5 Heather Lane) Middle Road Pole # 163, 167

"My name is Keith Parsons and I have lived at 5 Heather Lane for the past 24 years.

I am not able to be at the meeting tonight, however I would like to have reconsideration of lights 163 and 167 on Middle Road at the Presumpscot River.

These 2 lights illuminate the approaches to the Middle Road bridge crossing over the Presumpscot River. The approach to the bridge from the north and the south are both down hill and around a curve. Both of these lights are important for the safety of pedestrians and motorists. During the long dark winter nights the visibility can be very limited with or without inclement weather.

In the summer months the bridge is always used by walkers, joggers, cyclists and fishermen at all hours. There are also a couple of parking spaces both the north and south ends of the bridge that are lighted by these 2 lights. I believe you refer to these as "pedestrian amenities" in your information. Without these 2 lights pedestrian safety for use of this bridge will be severely diminished! Please reconsider keeping both Lights 163 and 167 turned on!!! Thank you for your consideration."

James R. Phillips 181 Brook Road Pole # 53

"Thank you for the discussion this morning concerning the program to eliminate the street light opposite the house of Esther Phillips (class of 1938) at 181 Brook Road, the last house before the Westbrook City line.

I, James Phillips (class of 1967) and Esther's son, am a Falmouth resident living at that address.

We are of belief that the above light on Pole 53 contributes to the safety of the public:

- The light illuminates directly an unofficial turnaround that has been used by the Town police and the public for well over 50 years. Those turning have their views of oncoming traffic restricted by a barn to the east and a guardrail to the west and this street light helps alert this oncoming traffic to the potential danger.

- The street light contributes to the safety of pedestrian traffic on a straight stretch of road where excess speed can be an issue.

- On a more personal note, Esther, who is ninety years old, believes the light acts as a crime deterrent as it discourages the use of that turnaround for parking.

Thank you for considering these points in making of the decision.”

Peter Baker 20 Knight Street Pole # 8

“I would like the town to consider **not** eliminating street light # 8 on Knight Street. This street light sits at the end of a dead end street. My primary concern is related to safety of our neighborhood residents. We several young kids, and single elderly folks living at the end of the street. Having the street light is a deterrent to crime. Falmouth has a growing occurrence of night time car and home break ins. Having at least one light on the street, at the dead end, will continue to discourage would be criminals from targeting our street. Also, the street lacks an adequate turnaround and vehicles struggle to know where to turnaround. The street light helps illuminate the small turnaround zone and helps keep vehicles from turning around in our driveways where our children are often out playing. I support the overall goal of taking some lights off line including the other two proposed for Knight street. Please consider keeping #8 Knight on.”

Thora Johnston 24 Payson Road All Flats Area Lights

“To keep neighborhood safe. This is a dog neighborhood, many people walk with dogs early morning or late evening. Flashlight batteries freeze when it is cold. Also, many children live in the neighborhood. Recent publicity of this issue may prompt robbers or murderers or rapists into our neighborhood. Today 3 men are on the loose who randomly killed a man. Also, another man considered armed and dangerous is out and about.”

Paula Watson 7 Hammond Road Pole # 2, 5, 7

Ms. Watson called to express her concerns about child safety, vehicle safety from black ice, and crime prevention and would like all of the lights on Hammond Road left on.

Danielle Tracy 19 Hammond Road Pole # 2, 5, 7

Ms. Tracy called to express her concerns about child safety, bike and pedestrian safety, and crime prevention and would like all of the lights on Hammond Road left on.

Anna Dodds 11 Hammond Road Pole # 2, 5, 7

Ms. Dodds called to express her concerns about safety and would like all the lights on Hammond Road left on.

Linda Rathbun & Roy Cobean 20 Hammond Road Pole # 2, 5, 7

“We live at 20 Hammond Road and own/rent 22 Hammond. We support the town's plan to eliminate street lights and have heard more neighbors speak for than against it. We suspect, however, that human nature will attract more opponents than supporters to the public hearing. We're writing, therefore, to prepare you for some dissenting neighborhood opinions and to share our responses to them.

- Walkers & Joggers will get hurt - There's enough daylight to walk & run in winter. Flashlights and LED headlights are inexpensive and effective. There are enough dark areas between street lights and under those that are cycled off that dark stretches are unavoidable even currently. Lights won't eliminate the ice, snow, and sand that topple people in broad daylight.
- Home & auto invasion will increase - neighborhood break-ins used as examples weren't prevented by street lights. Some homes already use motion-activated lighting. Data speaks louder than fear; track crime rates before and after instituting the new policy. Lock our cars.
- Lights enable after-dark basketball, ping-pong, frisbee, and bicycling - Bikes should have lights and reflectors after dark, just like cars. Basketball and ping-pong should probably move into somebody's driveway at night anyway. We have a LED-lit frisbee for night use.
- It's unfair that Falmouth's older neighborhoods are being targeted preferentially for street light removal - I've gotta agree with this one but for different reasons. No neighborhood should be exempt because of recent construction, sidewalks, or any other reason. If this is good for the community and environment then more will be better.

Please consider replacing the lights on Shoreline Drive with dimmer, downward-directed lamps; the current lights project too brightly in all directions.

People don't like change, even change they'll later praise and defend. Rather than let the initiative fail under public opposition, consider timers to shut lights off at a specified hour. Please don't stop here. If it works then keep going to more neighborhoods and more lights.”

Paul Crowley and Dielia Pooler 24 Carmichael Avenue Pole # 10

Mr. Crowley called to express his concerns about safety on a dead end street. They would like to see at least one of the lights on the street be left on and would prefer it to be the light on Pole # 10.

Sandy Utterstorm West Circle Drive Pole # 8

Ms. Utterstorm called to express her concerns about winter maintenance and would like the street light on Pole # 8 left on.

Dorothy Ryan

154 Foreside Road

Pole # 189

Ms. Ryan called to express her concerns about safety and would like the street light on Pole # 189 left on.

Glen Brand and Annie Finch

19 Johnson Road

Pole # J7

Remove this street light.

“Not needed for safety; unnecessary light pollution.”

Richard Weare

31 Harding Avenue

Pole # 4

“My neighbors and myself are not in favor of removing the street light at the end of our street on Harding Avenue. All street lights on this street are scheduled to be removed and we feel that the one at the end of the street should remain.

I am sure that the Town wants to reduce power costs from these street lights. I would like to suggest that the Town look into the use of solar power street lights. These type of lights have been used for awhile now in the US and Europe, and have enough battery power reserved to last for more then one night. I would suggest that a energy grant from the DEP, EPA or the power company could be obtained to help fund their installation.”

John W. MacGregor

All Lights

“Dear Manager Poore:

Your plan to balance the budget by eliminating street lights I believe is short sighted policy. Especially in the cold and dark months these lights offer safety for the many pedestrians who exercise on these streets, as well as illuminate the way for many school age children. Year round the lights afford a degree of property security.

I wrote to you back in 2006 pointing out the non-working but installed lights in our neighborhood. As I recall, there was a public warning to all of us at the time regarding car break-ins, and I merely suggested putting the lights back on might go a way to helping with the break-ins. And as I recall, after the lights were re-illuminated, the break-ins subsided?

None of us can predict what may happen should you prevail in turning the lights off; however, property loss and personal injury costs will probably increase to the residents effected. Perhaps that’s the way it should be, but I believe adequate public safety lighting should be a town government obligation.

If you would, please enter this letter into the record.”