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**Don Johnson**

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**From:** Frank Widmayer  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 22, 2006 9:52 AM  
**To:** John Murray  
**Cc:** Don Johnson  
**Subject:** RE: Consolidation of precincts for voting

There was no plan to address nighttime traffic due to the fact that it was believed that once school was done for the day that the traffic problems would not be an issue. As a result the light towers were removed and detail officers were let go in an effort to save money. The light towers were locked in the Highway Department and it took us an hour to get a key and open it up to re-deploy the light towers. At that time officers were reassigned to the traffic posts. While this was going on there was an accident at Charter and Rt. 111 that exacerbated the situation.

Overall the day went well and if we had kept the details in place I feel it would have been much better at night as well. Although keep in mind it is very busy at that time of night in that area. Some of our suggestions regarding traffic flow are in the previous memo I sent.

Frank J. Widmayer III  
Chief of Police  
(978) 263-2911

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**From:** John Murray  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2006 9:19 AM  
**To:** Frank Widmayer  
**Cc:** Don Johnson  
**Subject:** FW: Consolidation of precincts for voting

In addition to your report on the evening traffic, please address this letter

John

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**From:** Leeds, Marilyn [mailto:Marilyn.Leeds@umassmed.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 17, 2006 9:09 AM  
**To:** Board of Selectmen  
**Subject:** Consolidation of precincts for voting

To the Board of Selectmen (and women)

I did not initially voice my displeasure at the consolidation of polling places to the Junior High School because I assumed hundreds of others - in fact nearly unanimously - would complain. I was therefore surprised to find that people actually reacted positively to this change. I found this to be one of the worst decisions that this town has ever made.

Much to my surprise, I found it relatively easy to park and vote at 7:45 am on my way to work, but I understand how many others trying to vote during the morning and evening rush hours did not have the same pleasant experience. My complaint focuses on the horrible traffic congestion during the peak hours. It took me nearly 20 minutes to cross route 27 on route 11

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(east to west) because the police officer was only letting cars go North-South on 27 and then from 111 to turn onto 27 but not drive straight across. The situation was outrageous and traffic was backed up onto Route 2. Fortunately there were no emergency vehicles trying to get through but it appears that this level of congestion persisted for nearly two hours. This was absolutely absurd.

I understand the concerns of the elementary schools as polling places, but the safety of students is not compromised any more at Conant than at RJ Grey by allowing voters to access the building. And I don't understand the objections to voting at Nagog Woods. If student safety is really a legitimate concern, then Acton should do what other towns (e.g. Lexington) do and close schools on election day and remain open on Veterans Day.

Marilyn Leeds  
Bromfield Road  
Acton.

**Acton Police Department  
Intra-Departmental Communication**

To: Chief Widmayer  
From: Lieutenant Palma  
Subject: Election Coverage Summary  
Date: November 15, 2006

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Chief,

As per your order I have summarized events concerning elections held at the Junior High School.

Ten officers were assigned specific traffic posts beginning at 0630. Buses were directed to specific areas for student drop off freeing up roadway and parking for the elections. Vehicles were not permitted to gain access to the High School from the Junior High School for the peak times (ending at about 0730). Once all buses had dropped at the Junior High School, traffic posts were collapsed and normal day to day traffic was allowed to proceed. Traffic posts on Massachusetts Avenue at Charter Road and the school driveway remained for a short time after this. The police detail was then reduced to five officers. In prior meetings we felt that after the conclusion of the school day, with the reduction of faculty and student traffic, that traffic officers would not be needed on Massachusetts Avenue. Given this, we secured light towers and removed them from the area.

At approximately 1730 hrs. the officer in charge of the detail felt that traffic was becoming an issue and assigned an officer to a traffic post on Massachusetts Avenue at Charter Road. A minor motor vehicle accident occurred in the east bound lane of Massachusetts Avenue and the vehicles pulled into Baker-Whitney lot for paperwork exchange. Only a minor delay occurred immediately following the accident, and was caused by operator error, not the officer directing traffic. Obviously the traffic flow through the intersection was increased due to voting, however people that do not normally travel the road at that time of day possibly felt voting was the reason for the large volume of traffic.

It is my opinion that the event went with little issue. I am aware of only three or four verbal complaints at the election site, and have received an equal number of positive responses. Officers working the detail have also offered several suggestions:

- Explore the possibility of moving elections to the field house at the High School
  - Sufficient parking
  - Sufficient room for voting with minimal distraction to school operations
  - Professional day for students and staff on election day, minimizing disruption to school activities

If the elections cannot be moved then the following changes should be considered:

- Right turn only out of “Superintendent’s entrance”
- Allow traffic down Charter Road from Junior High to High School
  - Use same traffic pattern for High school
    - All vehicles other than buses leaving High School must exit on to Hayward Road
    - Professional Day for students and staff minimizing disruption to school and decreasing traffic flow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lieutenant Donald Palma

**Maryjane Kenney**

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**From:** Tom Wolf [tom.wolf@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 18, 2006 12:55 PM  
**To:** Board of Selectmen  
**Subject:** Voting Frustrations

Dear Selectmen,

I am writing to express my frustration with my voting experience in this past election. As a resident of North Acton I found it very inconvenient to drive several miles only to wait in congested traffic for a parking space at the Junior High school. And I voted in the evening around 5:30 PM. I used to be able to walk to my polling place on Nonset Path. Now voting is chore and a hassle.

To their credit, once I got inside the school, the poll workers moved the voting process along efficiently. That was the only positive point in an otherwise irritating experience.

Has anyone analyzed the participation rates among all the precincts? Perhaps you will find that Precinct 1 turned out at a lower rate the others whose polling place had not moved miles across town.

I have heard the arguments for moving the polling place from of the Conant school. But I have not heard the arguments for moving the polling place out of Nagog Woods. Why would you pick one of the most congested areas of town with buses and school traffic during peak voting times. There are other town building that could be used - the Library, town Hall, The Public Safety building, and Fire stations -- that could be used to distribute the polling places around town and make voting a more convenient experience.

Tom Wolf  
118 Nonset Path