

EDITORIAL

Reinventing the Wheel

A decade or so ago, selectmen appointed several citizens to a Barnstable Traffic Commission. Its chairman, Eugene Burman, and its members met regularly, every two weeks, for more than a year. Both Town Engineer Frank Lambert and Highway Surveyor Robert Klimm attended most meetings.

After months of study, hours of time, lots of work, innumerable discussions, suggestions, plans and re-drawn plans, an improvement was made at Centerville's Route 28-Phinney's Lane intersection.

Other plans for improvement remained on the drawing board; even though some did get as far as publication in the paper, nothing happened. Nothing happened at Iyanough Road and Willow Street; nothing happened at Park Square; nothing happened at West Main and Pine Streets.

Commission members found the experience informative. They learned about Topics (a state traffic plan) and its six phases; they learned the state has its own timetable, budget and criteria for setting priorities; they learned that fire and

police officials worry about traffic, too, especially about emergency vehicles getting through summer traffic jams.

Minutes of the Traffic Commission meetings were kept carefully, typed up, and reproduced for distribution to members and selectmen. Presumably, those minutes are filed somewhere in Town Hall.

Now there is a brand new Parking and Traffic Commission. Anthony Viola, acting chairman, and several members are starting to take another look at Barnstable's traffic problems. Many hours of their time might be saved if they were to read the minutes of and review the plans drawn for the previous traffic commission.

Apparently, however, Mr. Viola and his commissioners don't even know there ever was a previous commission. It's little wonder people who serve on such boards, as volunteers, grow discouraged and become cynical, even apathetic. **MUST** we keep re-inventing the wheel?