

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2007

Present: Ald. Salvucci (Acting Chairman), Weisbuch, Albright, Gentile, Yates, Mansfield and Lappin

Absent: Ald. Schnipper

City personnel: Lou Taverna (City Engineer), David Koses (Transportation Planner) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

#26-07 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS requesting in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Ch. 40, Sec. 15, abandonment of a portion of a City sewer and drain easement in the rear of the property at 15 HARWICH ROAD, with conditions, as recommended in the Commissioner of Public Works' letter of January 30, 2007.[1-30-07@4:08PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Lou Taverna presented the item to the Committee. The City acquired a sewer and drain easement in September of 1956 in the rear of the property at 15 Harwich Road to construct a public sewer. The City constructed the sewer and it is functioning. The property owner is requesting that the City abandon a portion of the sewer and drain easement, which runs through the rear of the property at Harwich Road. The property owner would like to construct a new garage and a small part of the foundation would be within a portion of the existing easement. The portion of the easement to be abandoned is 10 to 12' wide and 90' long. The Commissioner of Public Works agrees that the portion of the easement can be abandoned, as it does not and will not have current or future service value to the City.

As City Engineer, Mr. Taverna agrees with the petitioner that the load of the garage will not impact the sewer. In addition, should there need to be work done on the sewer in the future it will not have an effect on the garage. The Commissioner has requested that the following conditions be met by the property owner before the abandonment of the portion of the easement.

1. The property owner shall prepare a survey with a land plan with bearings and distances.
2. The property owner shall clean and slip-line the existing sewer main (pipe) from sewer manhole to sewer manhole, at their expense.
3. The property owner shall construct the building so that the footings and foundations do not place load on the existing sewer pipe.
4. The City Engineer will supervise the excavation of the trench and determine the method of backfill and compaction.

Mr. Fineberg, the property owner, has agreed to all of the conditions.

Ald. Lappin asked if the current easement is oversized. Mr. Taverna responded that the typical easement is 20' wide and this easement is 45' in width at its widest point. Mr. Taverna reminded the Committee that the Board needs to set a minimum amount to be paid for the portion of the easement to be abandoned. Ald. Mansfield asked if the abandonment of a portion of the easement would increase the property value. Mr. Fineberg stated that there would be no financial gain, as the easement will still run through the property.

Ald. Lappin moved approval of the item with a set price of \$0, as the portion of the easement has no current or future value to the City. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

#152-06 PS&T COMMITTEE requesting discussion re Road Classification Design Types (as outlined by the Planning and Development Department) for future use as an overall management tool for the City.

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: David Koses presented the item to the Committee and provided the attached roadway classification guide and map. The roadways are being classified by design types, which consist of boulevards, parkways, scenic roads, village center roads, major business area roads, business park roads and standard roads. The classification recognizes that different roads go through different land pieces and have different characteristics. The road classification is part of the Comprehensive Plan and is an early action item. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee is looking for approval of the idea of having design types for the roadways from the Board.

The road classifications will be used as a design tool for the City. He used village center roads as an example to illustrate how useful the design classification could be during road reconstruction. He explained that classification could be used to determine the type of design for the village center roads by defining the types of sidewalks, size of sidewalks, crosswalks and materials to be used during that type of reconstruction to demonstrate that village centers are unique places with distinct characteristics. The classifications are based on what the Board wants to use it for and there are no specific design expectations at this point.

Ald. Yates questioned why the roadway classification is being proposed without the rest of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Koses responded that there are specific portions of the plan that are called out for early action. It seems that there are pieces of the plan that can be approved in advance of the whole plan being approved. The roadway classification piece is not contingent upon approval of the whole plan. Ald. Weisbuch asked if other communities were doing this type of roadway classification. Mr. Koses explained that every community has a functional road classification but the design classification is unique to Newton. However, there might be other communities that define their roads in different ways besides functional classification. Ald. Albright thought that the design classification is a great planning tool for the City. It can be used in road construction, sidewalk construction, street lighting, street design, etc...It would be a tool that can be used for determining the design of future road projects.

Ald. Mansfield felt that it was a good thing to have as a planning tool but he is a little nervous that as the City does not know exactly how it will be used and if it is adopted it needs to be carefully thought out. In particular, he is concerned about the village center roads portion. He feels that when classifying roads the City better be sure that the roads are homogeneous within their classification. He is not sure that the roads listed in the current guide meet those criteria. Mr. Koses stated that none of the roadway classifications are not written in stone and can be changed if there is a reason to change something from one category to another. It is his hope that the Committee can come to some sort of consensus that this is a good starting point. He is aware that some roadways may need to be added or changed. Ald. Lappin requested a map displaying the street names. Mr. Koses will post a map with zoom capability on the Planning Department's website. Ald. Yates likes the concept but is troubled by the classifications. He does not agree with all of the classifications and is not sure how it was determined which streets were village center roads and which were not. It appears that some roads that are categorized as village roads have large gaps between blocks. Mr. Koses explained that if a portion of street is located within a certain area of a village center that portion is classified as a village center road.

Ald. Albright asked if it is a problem that pieces of streets are classified as one thing and other portions as another. It seems that if you are going to use the classification to determine how the street is reconstructed it will create one look on one section of a roadway and another on a different portion. David Koses explained that the whole point is to protect the village centers and make them feel different. It is only meant to be a tool, which can be adjusted. Ald. Mansfield sat on the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and felt that one of the goals was to better define the village centers by defining the design characteristics of the streets. Ald. Mansfield felt that Aldermanic input on how streets are classified would be useful. Ald. Mansfield felt that the item should be held in order to allow Committee members to give input to Mr. Koses. Ald. Salvucci pointed out that any change to the streets would need to come before the Committee. Ald. Lappin suggested that the classification might be useful in defining certain areas of the City. Ald. Mansfield moved hold on the item, which carried unanimously.

#386-05 ALD. SAMUELSON requesting an ordinance to require Board of Aldermen approval through the Traffic Council of new crosswalk locations.
TRAFFIC COUNCIL APPROVED 4-0 ON 2-16-06; Committed to PS&T for review of draft crosswalk policy; PS&T APPROVED POLICY 6-0 (Linsky, Harney not voting) on 3/22/06; postponed on 4/3/06 to date certain of 5/1/06; postponed on 5/1/06 to 5/15/06; postponed on 5/15/06 to date certain of 6/19/06; postponed on 7/10/06 to date certain of 8/14/06; referred to Public Facilities Committee on 8/14/06.

ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED 7-0

NOTE: Candace Havens was present for the discussion of this item. The docket item was originally a request for an ordinance to require Board approval of crosswalk locations through the Traffic Council. However, during discussion in the Traffic Council it was decided that a formal policy for crosswalks would be more appropriate than an ordinance. The Public Safety & Transportation Committee approved the draft policy and the full Board referred the policy to Public Facilities. The Public Facilities discussed and held the item on November 8, 2006, (report attached) in order for the people involved with the draft policy to reach consensus on the

language contained in the policy. Commissioner Rooney previously submitted a memo dated January 30, 2007 (attached); reflecting changes made to the draft "Department Policy #06-01 Standards and Procedures Pertaining to the Installation and Maintenance of Crosswalks" dated November 30, 2006. The memo states that the changes highlighted within the draft attached to the memo have been reviewed by staff and the Chair of the Traffic Council and are acceptable (original draft policy attached). The Commissioner believes that the amended draft policy is appropriate and manageable. The Committee voted to approve the item as amended.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANS AND PUB. FAC. COMMITTEES

#250-06 ALD. YATES requesting a report on the effectiveness of the Fire Department's administration of the Street Light Program.

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0

NOTE: Ald. Yates moved no action necessary on the item, as the City would be replacing all of the streetlights, which should resolve the issue of non-functioning lights. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony J. Salvucci, Acting Chairman