

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2006

Present: Ald. Schnipper (Chair), Weisbuch, Albright, Salvucci, Gentile, Yates and Mansfield

Absent: Ald. Lappin

Also present: Ald. Baker, Johnson, Linsky, Lipof and Parker

City personnel: John Daghlian (Associate City Engineer), Nick Parnell (Commissioner of Public Buildings) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

**Item Recommended by the Board on September 18, 2006**

#225-06      BOSTON EDISON COMPANY d/b/a NSTAR ELECTRIC GAS petitioning for a grant of location to install one pole (229/9X) in LANGLEY ROAD on the northerly side of the road at Beacon Street.

**ACTION**      **APPROVED 6-0 (Weisbuch not voting)**

**NOTE:**      Maureen Carroll, NStar Permit Representative, was present for discussion of this petition. The petition was recommitted at the Board meeting of September 18, 2006 for further discussion. Ald. Mansfield met with representatives of NStar at the site of the grant of location two weeks ago. He stated that he understood the necessity of the pole. However, the Langley Road/Beacon Street area is full of double poles. Ald. Salvucci suggested sending a letter to the State regarding double pole violations. The Chair thought that it may be an avenue the Committee wished to pursue but wanted to focus on the petition before the Committee.

Ald. Mansfield asked if the Engineering Department reviewed the placement of double poles. He believes that one of the double poles on Beacon Street is blocking wheelchair access on the sidewalk. John Daghlian explained that the City does not review double pole placement, as the company already has a grant of location for the pole. He explained a complaint can be filed with the City and it will be determined if there is the required 36' clearance on the sidewalk for wheelchair access. If there is not enough clearance, a complaint will be filed with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. The Chair asked the Committee Clerk to follow up with the Commissioner of Public Works regarding the double pole blocking the sidewalk.

Ald. Gentile moved approval of the pole, as the pole is necessary. The Committee voted in favor of the motion.

#328-06      ALD. LINSKY, ALBRIGHT & JOHNSON, BAKER & SCHNIPPER requesting that the Design Review Committee periodically update the Board during the design phase of the Newton North High School project.

**ACTION:**      **HELD 7-0**

**NOTE:** Commissioner Parnell, Ald. Linsky and Ald. Baker joined the Committee for discussion of this item. The Commissioner sees no problem with the request to have the Design Review Committee provide updates to the Board throughout the design phase of the Newton North High School project. Ald. Albright asked if there was any way to fill in the gap in communication between the Board and the Design Review Committee. Commissioner Parnell responded that he believes that the Design Review Committee will provide an update in approximately a month. The Commissioner has been providing the Design Review Committee with information regarding the Board's discussions and they will be reviewing the Board Order and will begin to work on the conditions.

Ald. Gentile asked if there was a date for the next Design Review Committee meeting. Commissioner Parnell is trying to set up a meeting on October 19 at the Newton North Library. At this point, the Board is more up to date on the project than the Design Review Committee and the meeting will focus on getting them up to speed. The Design Review Committee will most likely form breakout groups determined by each member's discipline to focus on the various aspects of the design of the building and site. The Commissioner will provide the meeting date to the Board, as soon as the meeting is set.

Ald. Linsky asked if there was any progress on getting a dedicated web site with all information on the high school. The Commissioner stated that almost all of the information is available on the City web site under the Newton North High School Project. Ald. Linsky stated that the project manager should be handling the web site. Commissioner Parnell agreed to investigate that possibility. Ald. Albright moved hold on the item, which carried unanimously.

#224-06(2) ALD. LINSKY, ALBRIGHT & JOHNSON, BAKER & SCHNIPPER requesting further deliberation on the conditions set forth in the Site Plan Approval Board Order relating to the Newton North High School project, considering possible expansion and modification of the conditions.

**ACTION:** **HELD 7-0**

**NOTE:** The Chair met with the Ward Two Aldermen and she has expressed her personal willingness to look at the four streets that envelope the site in terms of traffic, access, safety, usage and drop-offs. Her personal sense is that what came out of Design Review is that these issues surrounding the streets are not resolved and the Board Order that was approved states that these issues are not resolved. Her feeling is that the Board has close to two years between now and when the building is to be open to work out the issues. She is willing to have everything back on the table in terms of that. Obviously, anything that was to change would require discussion with the abutters and neighbors on all four streets. One of the intentions is to make sure that there are traffic-calming measures on Trowbridge Avenue including signage preventing Trowbridge Avenue becoming a through street. Many things that were talked about as possibilities warrant discussions but until the Board knows what is happening with the referendum petition it is premature to have the discussions. Ald. Gentile stated that he does not believe it is just a matter of the next couple of years in terms of working out the traffic. The City will need to see what types of traffic patterns occur when the school is open and react quickly to

any issues. The Committee was in agreement and Ald. Salvucci moved hold on the item, which carried.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FAC., FINANCE AND PROG. & SERV. COMMITTEES**

#247-06 ALD. PARKER, LINSKY, SANGIOLO, VANCE, MANSFIELD, DANBERG, & HARNEY proposing placement of a question on the November 2006 state election ballot in Newton that would ask voters whether they wish to finance the construction of the proposed new Newton North High School project through debt exclusion. Said question would be written as a binding debt exclusion in accordance with the provision of Proposition 2 ½.

**Programs & Services Approved 2 in favor (Sangiolo & Parker) 1 opposed, (Baker) 3 abstaining (Merrill, Johnson, Hess-Mahan) on 6/21/06**

**ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0**

**NOTE:** Ald. Parker and Linsky joined the Committee for discussion of this item. The item is a request to put a question on the ballot, however, the State's deadline for questions for the November election has passed. Ald. Parker and several other Aldermen filed the item to stimulate discussion regarding the finances for the high school. It is his belief that the City will need a debt exclusion or an operating override to pay for the new high school. He does not think there is any other way the City can afford to build the school. He felt that the Committee could amend the item or create a (2) to not include the November date. The Chair pointed out that there is the option of filing a new docket item. Ald. Parker asked the Committee to consider the option of creating a parents two in order to have the ongoing discussion.

Ald. Gentile moved no action necessary because everything is up in the air due to the referendum petition, therefore this might become a non-issue. If things continue to go forward, the item can be refiled. Ald. Mansfield is one of the docketors of the item and he felt that it would be appropriate to docket a new item. The Committee voted the item no action necessary.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FAC., PS&T, FINANCE AND PROG. & SERV. COMMITTEES**

#246-06 ALD. LINSKY, PARKER AND DANBERG requesting discussion of placement of debt exclusion questions on the November 2006 state election ballot in Newton that would ask voters whether they wish to finance repairs, renovations and improvements to Newton Fire Stations as well as other high-priority capital and infrastructure needs through debt exclusions. Said questions would be written as binding debt exclusion in accordance with the provisions of Proposition 2 ½.

**Programs & Services Approved 2 in favor (Sangiolo & Parker) 1 opposed, (Baker) 3 abstaining (Merrill, Johnson, Hess-Mahan) on 6/21/06**

**ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 7-0**

**NOTE:** Ald. Linsky and Parker joined the Committee for discussion of this item. This item is a request for a ballot question for the November election. The State's deadline for questions for the ballot has passed. The Chair also stated that she cannot support anything that does not contain more specific language than as well as other high-priority capital and infrastructure needs. The language for a ballot question needs to be clear and concise. Ald.

Yates pointed out that he believes that the docketors' intent in including that language was for discussion purposes. Ald. Parker stated that Ald. Yates was correct. Ald. Salvucci moved no action necessary, which carried unanimously.

**REFERRED TO PS&T AND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEES**

#478-04 ALD. SAMUELSON and CANDACE HAVENS, along with ALDS. JOHNSON, LENNON, HESS-MAHAN, LINSKY, ALBRIGHT, HARNEY, SCHNIPPER, YATES, DANBERG AND LIPOF proposing creation of a new Ordinance to allow for installation of raised crosswalks, where deemed necessary, as a traffic calming measure.

**PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANS. NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0 ON 7/12/06**

**ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY SUBJECT TO SECOND CALL 7-0**

**NOTE:** The Public Safety and Transportation Committee approved an item to develop a traffic management policy to be used as one of the tools for prioritizing the use of traffic calming measures at specific locations in the City. Therefore, the Public Safety and Transportation Committee voted the item no action necessary in July, as the item is no longer pertinent. Ald. Mansfield asked if the City needed an Ordinance for raised crosswalks. The Ordinance already contains a definition of crosswalks.

Ald. Albright pointed out that Mill Street residents have been desperate to find a way to reduce speed on the street. Ald. Mansfield stated that there are traffic mitigation funds as part of the Hebrew College Board Order to apply traffic mitigation to Herrick Road in Newton Centre. The funds need to be used by this fall and there have been meetings with the Department of Public Works, where raised crosswalks and speed tables have been discussed. Ald. Mansfield would like to be sure that an ordinance is not required to install raised crosswalks. Ald. Salvucci stated that any roadway modification comes before the Board anyway.

Ald. Johnson joined the Committee for the discussion of this item. Ald. Johnson has been working with the residents of Mill Street to come up with a solution to the speeding problem on that street. The Board does not have many tools in its toolbox to deal with traffic issues. Ald. Lipof spoke on the item. When he was Chair of Public Safety and Transportation, the Committee reviewed all of the different traffic calming measures and they chose a few to test out on Brandeis Road. The Committee proceeded to ask the Mayor for funding of the equipment to perform the test and the Mayor said that the funding was not available. Unfortunately, all of the work of the Committee disappeared. Currently, there is money available in traffic mitigation funds. Ald. Parker stated that there are three different locations in Ward Six that are interested in installing raised crosswalks and have been waiting for this ordinance to be created. Many Committee members felt that there was a need for a specific ordinance for raised crosswalks, as there is one for review of roadway modifications.

The Chair would support a motion of No Action Necessary; however, she would like an opinion from both the Commissioner of Public Works and the Law Department stating that an ordinance is not required to install raised crosswalks. If an ordinance is required, the item can be sent back to Committee on the floor of the Board.

Ald. Salvucci asked if there was any funding for raised crosswalks on Mill Street. Ald. Schnipper pointed out that funding is not related to whether there needs to be an ordinance to install the raised crosswalk. Ald. Mansfield stated that the reason a speed hump ordinance was passed for Tyler Terrace and Clark Street was to force funding for speed humps. Ald. Schnipper responded that the speed hump ordinance addressed specific streets. Ald. Yates felt that if raised crosswalks were installed on streets with traffic mitigation funds it would demonstrate the feasibility of raised crosswalks and give pressure for raised crosswalks on Mill Street. Ald. Parker was supportive of Ald. Yates's suggestion, as it would give an example.

Ald. Johnson asked what the procedure would be to pursue getting some traffic calming on Mill Street. Ald. Gentile responded that the Mayor's Office would need to be convinced to find funding for it. Ald. Salvucci moved no action necessary subject to second call in order to get a response from Public Works and the Law Department, which carried unanimously.

All other items were held.

Respectfully submitted,

Sydra Schnipper, Chairman