

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2011

Present: Ald. Ciccone (Chairman), Johnson, Swiston, Yates, Shapiro, Fuller and Freedman

Absent: Ald. Harney

Also Present: Ald. Albright and Sangiolo,

City Staff: Captain Edward Boudreau, Captain Howard Mintz and Officer Rocco Marini, Newton Police Department; Stephanie Gilman, Commissioner Public Buildings; Josh Morse, Facilities and Operations Supervisor, Public Buildings Department; Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer; Jim Danila, Transportation Engineer; David Koses, Transportation Planner and Candace Havens, Interim Director Planning & Development Department

Others Present: Bob Kelly, Veterans Taxi and resident Annette Kaplan

REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#364-10 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate and expend the sum of one hundred eighteen thousand five hundred dollars (\$118,500) from the Reserve for Debt Funded Projects for the purpose of creating a secure entrance in the Police Department lobby. [11/29/10 @ 3:23 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0-1, Ald. Freedman abstaining, Ald. Yates not voting**

NOTE: Captain Boudreau and Josh Morse joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Captain Boudreau said Chief Cummings and Mayor Warren have spoken with the three Unions (Superior Officers, Patrolman and Dispatch) who expressed their concerns on the lack of security and employee safety in the Police Department lobby. This appropriation would allow the creation of a secure entrance. The most important renovation would include the construction of a customer service counter with bulletproof teller glass enhancing the safety and security of visitors and employees. The construction project would also prevent people from walking throughout the building by installing doorway locks allowing people to be buzzed in.

Ald. Fuller asked if this item was brought before the Board in 2002. Mr. Morse answered he did not believe the past administration approved it for Board referral. Ald. Fuller then asked if the new estimate was an appropriate increase. Mr. Morse said the approximate original cost in 2002 was \$50,000; the estimated cost is now \$118,500 feeling the cost is appropriate due to inflation and some specialized building details including construction to address safety issues.

Ald. Shapiro made the motion to approve this appropriation. Committee members agreed 5-0-1, Ald. Freedman abstained because he did not attend the entire discussion. Ald. Yates was not present during voting.

#371-10 ALD. CICCONE on behalf of Annette Kaplan, 2 Washington Street, Newton Corner, requesting amendment to Section 19-309, *Requirements as to vehicles generally*, of the City of Newton Revised Ordinances to require taxi companies to display the company name, telephone number, and medallion number in all vehicles, visible from the back seat. [12/13/10 @ 4:10 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 7-0**

NOTE: Officer Marini, Annette Kaplan and Bob Kelly joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Chairman Ciccone said he feels this item is a great idea enhancing public safety. He then said in New York City this type of information is visible in their taxis.

Ms. Kaplan said she asked Ald. Ciccone to docket this item in order for taxis to become safer for passengers. She said she has spoken with Boston and Cambridge and it is not currently their requirement. Ald. Swiston asked if cities were objecting to her idea or the taxi companies objected. Ms. Kaplan said the Cities are objecting right now. Boston informed her they will eventually "get to it". Mr. Kelly also feels this is a great idea. He presented a sample of a sign Waltham requires which the Police Department issues for displaying on their dashboards during the last inspection of the year. Ald. Swiston asked that these signs be displayed in the backseat, rather than the dashboard.

Ald. Freedman also agreed it was a great idea. He asked that the Ordinance wording be provided from Waltham and Cambridge to be used as a model for the City of Newton's Law Department. Officer Marini said he would inquire with Waltham and Cambridge as to their ordinance language and requirements for the Law Department.

Ald. Fuller asked if the drivers' name was also important for the sign. Ms. Kaplan said she felt this information was sufficient. Ald. Fuller then asked Mr. Kelly if he knew of other towns that require or have an ordinance for these signs. He did not know.

Officer Marini said he would be able to issue these signs during his next inspection in April 2011. He said once this item is approved signs could be easily implemented, issuing them each year's end when taxi companies receive their medallions. Officer Marini asked if this request is only for taxis. Chairman Ciccone and Ms. Kaplan felt taxis are sufficient, and did not feel it was necessary with public autos.

Ald. Swiston made the motion to hold this item pending draft language from the City's Law Department. Council members agreed 7-0.

#22-11 JIM DANILA, TRAFFIC COUNCIL CHAIR, providing the 2010 Annual Report on the work of the Traffic Council during 2010. [12/16/10 @ 9:57 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 7-0**

NOTE: Jim Danila and David Koses joined the Committee for discussion on this item. Mr. Danila reviewed with Committee members the work of Traffic Council in 2010, this material

was attached to the agenda. He said there are approximately nineteen items currently on the agenda with a three month back load. Some items are six to twelve months old which is due to the necessary items being discussed prior to the opening of the Newton North High School. Ald. Fuller asked if Traffic Council would consider different techniques preventing backlogs in the future. Mr. Danila said if Traffic related items are passed in the Public Facilities Committee perhaps it would provide some relief for Traffic Council allowing them to set standards on what items could be placed on the agenda, perhaps cutting down the backlog.

Mr. Koses said in the past, Traffic Council was allowed to hold daytime meetings to clear the agenda reducing backlog of in-house items. This year, the Executive Department requested the elimination of daytime meetings. Ald. Swiston thought this idea should be re-considered perhaps making meeting times public friendly. Chairman Ciccone said the majority of residents and the Board of Aldermen work daytime hours.

Ald. Freedman made the motion to approve this item to accept Mr. Danila's report as it is a requirement of the Board. Council members agreed 7-0.

REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

#363-10 ALD. ALBRIGHT & DANBERG, proposing a trial of parking meter free Saturdays between Thanksgiving and New Year for the shopping areas to support shopping at local businesses in Newton. [11/15/10 @ 6:30 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 5-0, Ald. Yates and Swiston not voting**

NOTE: Ald. Albright, David Koses, Jim Danila, Captain Mintz and Candace Havens joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Ald. Albright said this item was docketed to support local businesses in Newton's shopping districts. She said this proposal would allow free parking on four Saturdays encouraging customers to shop in Newton. She then said she has spoken with Ms. Havens who said the Planning Department could perform a study to research if this was in fact a good idea and report to the Committee with their study and recommendations. Ald. Albright then said she spoke with the Chamber of Commerce who also agree it is a great idea. She understands there are both negative and positive sides to this proposal. Newton Centre shops expressed their concerns but the Nonantum businesses thought it was a great idea and would perhaps promote business. Ald. Yates suggested she also contact the EDC.

Ald. Johnson said she is concerned with people and employees parking at free meters because it does not allow turnover. Ald. Swiston asked how free parking could be enforced, allowing turnover. Mr. Danila advised this program should be conducted with a time limit on the meter. He then asked how patrons would be made aware of the program. He said bagging meters would be very expensive for the Department Public Works because their crew would have to work overtime bagging the meters each weekend. He suggested perhaps an easier alternative, asking businesses to pay the City beforehand for the meters, the City would not lose revenue and the patron would receive free parking. Ald. Fuller encourages the study to include lost revenue during this proposed time and to compare profit increases to the businesses because of the extra

number of patrons shopping due to free parking. Ald. Freedman asked if Boston had a change in traffic when implementing their free parking on Saturdays.

Ms. Havens agreed the Planning Department could perform a study on this proposal. She said her experience has been “if you give something free it is harder to take back”. She suggested a merchant program where the merchants pay for parking, therefore, the City would not lose revenue. She said promotions help businesses and patrons. She agreed time limits would have to be enforced allowing turnover. Mr. Koses asked how the meters would be enforced. Captain Mintz said enforcement would be very difficult. Ald. Fuller asked if the license recognition program could assist the Parking Control Clerks with enforcement. Captain Mintz said due to software problems, the Police Department has not received the program but is hopeful to have it by fall. He said he would research the possibility because he was not sure if the programming would have to be changed on the weekends.

Ald. Johnson made the motion to hold this item allowing the Planning Department to perform a study allowing private merchants to join with the City to pay meters on Saturdays during the holiday season and other techniques on how to improve businesses during the holiday season. Council members agreed 5-0, Ald. Yates and Swiston not voting.

#11-10 ALD. ALBRIGHT requesting a discussion relative to providing parking during a snow emergency for residents who live in housing without on-site parking.
[12/21/09 @ 1:15 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 5-0, Ald. Swiston and Yates not voting**

NOTE: Ald. Albright joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Chairman Ciccone said the Executive Department has conducted research on this request. They are concerned with the City and private entities entering an agreement because the City can be held liable if there is damage to vehicles in private lots. Aaron Goldman, Citizen Assistance Officer has related that the Sheraton Hotel in Newton Corner is willing to work with residents but it would have to be agreed upon between the resident and facility, not the City.

Ald. Johnson suggested a “park at your own risk” sign be installed. She recommends the Law Department be asked to attend the next meeting to explain the liability concerns. Therefore, she made the motion to hold this item for clarification from the City Law and Executive Departments. Council members agreed 5-0, Ald. Swiston and Yates not voting.

#135-10 The WARD 4 ALDERMEN appealing denial of Traffic Council Decision TC42-09 voted on April 29, 2010: ALD, HARNEY, SANGIOLO AND GENTILE requesting **a)** a study for possible traffic calming measures to regulate speed on the following streets: West Pine Street and Melrose Avenue near the Auburndale Cove playground and parking lot and **b)** request turning restrictions from Lexington Street onto Staniford Street during rush hour or any other means to reduce cut-through commuter traffic on the surrounding streets – Staniford, West Pine and Melrose Streets. (Ward 4) (Appeal filed on 04/30/10 @ 11:46 AM)

HELD 6-0, Approved a 60-day trial on 06/09/10, No Right Turn, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, Lexington Street onto Staniford Street.

ACTION:

A) NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0, Ald. Yates not voting

B) TRIAL APPROVED 3-2-1, Ald. Fuller and Freedman opposed, Ald. Shapiro abstaining, Ald. Yates not voting

NOTE:

Ald. Sangiolo, Jim Danila, David Koses and Captain Mintz joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Ald. Sangiolo asked the Committee to consider making the trial permanent or to hold the discussion until Ald. Harney could attend. She said she felt the majority of neighbors thought the trial has worked; a few were inconvenienced but most agreed to make the trial permanent. Chairman Ciccone said he understands that Ald. Harney requests to make the trial permanent. He said the Police Department successfully patrolled the area at various times. Captain Mintz said the department patrolled the area over four 4 days, issuing 15-20 tickets including some residents in the neighborhood.

Jim Danila said on December 18, 2010 Traffic Council discussed two items docketed by the Public Safety & Transportation Committee. The first item was a request for a 3-way Stop sign at Melrose Street at Ware Road. This item was approved as amended to install a stop sign to the Ware Road approach, only because it did not meet the warrants for a 3-way stop sign. The second item was a request for a study of a Stop sign and/or other measures at Melrose Street, Commonwealth Avenue and the Carriage Lane to create a safer intersection. This item was voted no action necessary because it did not meet the warrants.

Ald. Fuller asked if current counts or data was available. Mr. Danila provided Committee members with current data of peak hour counts on the number of vehicles per hour, attached to this report. Data proved that the following number of vehicles turned right onto Staniford Street from Lexington Street: May 2010 (Prior to trial) proved 35 vehicles; October 2010 (Pre-Enforcement) proved 39 vehicles and January 5, 2011 (Post-Enforcement) proved 9 vehicles. Mr. Danila said he felt enforcement obviously has helped the trial. If enforcement can continue it will probably keep the number of vehicles consistent and low.

Ald. Freedman asked if data was available on the number of speeding vehicles on Staniford Street. Mr. Danila said speeding issues were focused on Melrose Street. Data collected proved 85% speed is 28 mph, 2 miles below the speed limit. Ald. Freedman then asked if this trial Improved safety and asked what is Mr. Danila's opinion. Mr. Danila said he is not in favor of cutting traffic from neighborhoods. Mr. Koses agreed and said precedence should not be set. Ald. Fuller asked if enforcement could continue. Captain Mintz answered it would be difficult because it is at the same time, the Parking Control Officers are working as school crossing guards. He is hopeful the area could be patrolled occasionally.

Ald. Johnson made the following two motions on this item: A) No action necessary, Committee members agreed 6-0; Ald. Yates not voting and B) Approve the trial, Committee members agreed 3-2-1, Ald. Fuller and Freedman opposed, Ald. Shapiro abstaining, Ald. Yates not voting.

Mr. Koses said this item would be returned to Traffic Council to change their vote. He asked

that an item be docketed to change this requirement in the future. Ald. Fuller asked Mr. Danila and Mr. Koses if their opinion or vote would change with new data available. They answered their vote would remain the same as their opinions have not changed.

At approximately 9:35 pm, Ald. Swiston made the motion to adjourn. Committee members agreed 6-0, Ald. Yates not voting.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Ciccone, Jr., Chairman

Before/After Morning Peak Hour

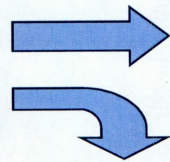
Count Data

Count = peak hour

1511

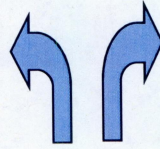
35 692 - May, 2010
 (39) (721) - October 2010
 [9] [690] January 2011

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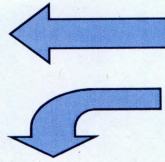


Lexington St.

Staniford St.



25 (39) [34]
 11 (16) [6]



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 (16) (524)
 [5] [546]

Turning Movement Volumes

Prior to Trial: May, 2010
 (Pre-Enforcement): October, 2010
 [Post-Enforcement]: January, 2011

#135-10

3-2-1