

CITY OF NEWTON  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, JULY 28, 2011

Present: Allan Ciccone, Jr. (Alderman), James Danila (Transportation Engineer), Jerome Grafe (Resident Member), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Captain Howard Mintz (Police Department) and Danielle Delaney (Committee Clerk)

Also Present: Ald. Fischman, Lappin, Rice and Sangiolo

Jim Danila provided a PowerPoint presentation on these items, attached to this report.

HP1-11        DONNA DRISCOLL, 468 Watertown Street, requesting a handicap parking space in front of her residence. (Ward 1) [06/14/11 @ 4:07 PM]

**(The Newton Disability Commission voted 7-0-0 on 06/13/11, to recommend that the request for handicap parking be approved. Members also recommended that the Traffic Council consider designating an HP space at the top of Barrieau Court instead of in front of Ms. Driscoll's residence so that she could access this space year round.**

**Alternatively, the Commission recommended that the Traffic Council consider options to "exempt" this space from the overnight parking ban issued by the City from November to April).**

**ACTION:    APPROVE handicap parking space in front of 468 Watertown Street (4-0-1, Danila Abstaining). This parking space is not exempt from the overnight parking ban.**

**NOTE:**        Ms. Driscoll was not present this evening for discussion. She provided the Committee Clerk with a current handicap placard expiring on June 15, 2013, attached to this report.

Mr. Danila said that Ms. Driscoll's address is not handicap accessible. The Newton Disability Commission recommends Traffic Council consider placing a handicap space on Barrieau Court, or consider options to "exempt" space from overnight parking ban. Section 19-174 of the City Ordinance prohibits vehicles from parking for more than one hour on any street open to the public from 2-6:00 a.m. between November 15 & April 15. Traffic Council does not have the authority to override this ordinance. He then said that Barrieau Court is a private way open to public travel. The building's owner could place resident parking only adjacent to their property without Traffic Council's approval.

Mr. Koses stated Ms. Driscoll's request meets the requirements for a handicap parking space. Mr. Danila indicated this section of Watertown Street does not have many parked cars. Ald. Ciccone made the motion to approve this request for a handicap parking space in front of 468 Watertown Street. Council members agreed 4-0-1, Mr. Danila abstaining.

TC30-10 NANCY BRAUDIS, 57 Theodore Road, requesting a pedestrian warning beacon with a crosswalk at Theodore Road and Parker Street. (Ward 8) [08/30/10 @ 11:45 AM]

**HELD (4-1, Grafe) on 12/16/10 until additional counts can be taken during warmer weather.**

**ACTION: DENIED (5-0). This may be appealed through August 17, 2011.**

**NOTE:** Mr. Danila reviewed with Council members the Department Public Works crosswalk policy, data on Parker Street including average daily traffic counts, vehicle speeds and pedestrian counts.

Criteria for New Crosswalks must meet the following Guidelines: 85th percentile speed less than 40 mph, greater than 20 pedestrians crossing per hour during two peak hours per day, more than 3,000 vehicles per day on road, less than 9,000 vehicles per day on road. If more than, 9,000 vehicles per day, additional special treatments are required. Greater than 300' from existing crosswalks and adequate stopping sight distance is required. He then said that the Board of Aldermen adopted the Crosswalk Policy in 2007.

Parker Street Data proved the following:

Average Daily Traffic: 13,800 vehicles per day, 1% Trucks. Speed Limit is 30 mph, the mean speed is 33 mph. and 85th Percentile Speed is 39 mph.

Pedestrian Counts proved the following in December 2010 and May 2011- (On a school day)

Parker Street at Wheeler Road-December: 0 Adults and 10 students; May: 2 adults and 30 students

Theodore Road crossing Parker Street-December: 6 adults and 3 students; May: 4 adults and 13 students

Parker Street at Hagen Road-December: 0 adults and 4 students; May: 1 adult and 3 students

Conclusions:

Parker Street volume exceeds maximum for the installation of simple crosswalk setup (paint and signage). Parker Street speeds at maximum for installation of any crosswalk. Pedestrian volumes do not meet minimum requirements for crosswalk installation. The Department of Public Works will not install a crosswalk at this location because it does not meet the minimum requirement of twenty pedestrians per hour.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment.

Nancy Braudis provided Council members with a survey from Countryside School, notes of concerns crossing Parker Street from Oak Hill Middle, Brown Middle and Countryside Elementary Schools, attached to this report. She feels the pedestrian counts appear very low. 98% of survey respondents had concerns about crossing Parker Street. If there were a safer way to cross Parker Street, more families would walk. A crosswalk is necessary due to the high volumes and speed. Another resident agreed.

Ald. Lappin said that data proves 17 people cross Parker Street; re-consideration is necessary for the installation of the crosswalk to meet the 20 people guideline. She then asked Mr. Danila for suggestions on how Traffic Council could proceed.

Mr. Grafe said that he did not support a hold in December because action was necessary. He then said that he would not support a vote of no action necessary or denial because the area is too dangerous and safer crossing is necessary. He believes additional pedestrians would use the crosswalk if they were installed and safer crossing is necessary in this area and he would support the installation of a crosswalk with a pedestrian warning beacon. He suggested narrowing Parker Street.

Mr. Koses reviewed locations in the City that have pedestrian warning beacons. The City has not been very satisfied with the results because compliance has not been met and observations prove that many cars do not stop. Ald. Ciccone agreed and suggested the crosswalk to be installed at Wheeler Road where the guidelines would be met.

Ald. Fischman provided Council members with photos depicting Parker Street as straight where speeding is evident, attached to this report. He said that the area is dangerous and agreed that re-consideration is necessary. He suggested that Traffic Council consider Hagen and Wheeler Roads for crosswalk locations, remove the "Right Turn on Red" sign at Wheeler Road and install additional signage at Hagen Road.

Mr. Koses said that Traffic Council does not have the authority to fund a flashing yellow beacon. He feels that additional discussion is necessary with the Board of Aldermen regarding the criteria approved by the Board. Ald. Lappin suggested that Traffic Council approve the crosswalk and pedestrian beacon and forward the recommendation to the Board of Aldermen for funding.

Ald. Fischman said that he would not support with a denial vote because it is imperative to make the area safe. He suggested holding this item until additional counts and issues could be provided. Mr. Koses asked Mr. Danila whether, if the item was denied, the Transportation Division would be able to provide additional information and pedestrian counts for the Public Safety & Transportation Committee's review. Mr. Danila agreed that this additional information could be provided.

Ald. Ciccone made the motion to hold this item pending additional information as requested. The motion failed to carry 1-4 (Grafe, Koses, Danila, Mintz opposed). Mr. Danila made a motion to deny this item. If appealed, a Board of Aldermen Committee would review. Council members agreed 5-0. This item may be appealed through August 17, 2011. Mr. Koses briefly described the appeals process.

TC9-11      WARD 8 ALDERMEN, requesting a review of traffic and pedestrian safety in the area of Memorial-Spaulling School, including parking, traffic signals, street markings, blue zones, student walking routes and any other considerations relevant to safety and traffic flow. (Ward 8) [03/15/11 @ 9:40 AM]

**ACTION:**    **No parking Brookline Street, South Side, from 50' south of Spaulding Lane to 261 Brookline Street, 8AM-4PM School Days (5-0). This may be appealed through August 17, 2011. Remove existing Blue Zone located on the south side of Brookline Street, east of Oak Hill Street (5-0). This may be appealed through August 17, 2011. Add a Blue Zone on the south side of Brookline Street, west of Oak Hill Street (5-0). This may be appealed through August 17, 2011.**

**NOTE:** Lisa McManus, Memorial Spaulding Elementary School Principal, said that she is concerned with student pick-up/drop-offs. A committee has been formed reviewing the location, and make recommendations. She is hopeful that with improvements, more students would walk to school. She also requests the following safety measures: Install a “No U-Turn” sign on the odd number side of Brookline Street; Create a No Parking Zone on the corner of # 261 Brookline Street during school hours; Traffic Study to determine if traffic signals on Brookline and Oak Hill Streets should be re-timed; Remove Blue Zone on south side of Brookline Street east of Oak Hill Street; and a Patrol Officer be assigned to direct traffic at Hartman Road, Spaulding Lane and Brookline Street in hopes of alleviating congestion. Captain Mintz said that her request for a Patrol Officer would be discussed further.

Mr. Danila reviewed the current parking restrictions with Council members as well as a Department of Public Works to-do-list, which includes: repairing sidewalks in front of the school, posting additional No U-Turn signage to match Traffic Parking Regulations, re-painting Blue Zones, evaluating/adjusting timing of traffic signal at Brookline and Oak Hill Streets scheduled for fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Ald. Fischman said that he recalls asking whether students could be dropped-off/pick-up areas in the school parking lot. He suggests that in the future, perhaps the lot could be widened and reconfigured to allow off-street drop-off and pick-up. Ms. McManus feels this may be an unsafe recommendation because the parking lot is not monitored. Mr. Koses asked if a separate bus drop off zone could be created on the north side of Brookline Street hoping to avoid cars backing up. Mr. Danila said that a survey would be necessary to determine this possibility. Margie Ross Decter, School Committee member, said that she is concerned with children’s safety and suggested moving the flashing School Zone sign to the opposite side of Hartman Road because it does not provide ample warning to drivers. Mr. Danila said that legally the sign could not be moved because the installation is already positioned at its maximum distance from the school. He suggested the installation of additional signs informing drivers they are approaching a school. Ms. Decter suggested that parents could be encouraged to use Clifton Road as drop-off/pick-up areas. She said that drivers have the tendency to speed on Brookline Street, use Hartman Road to make “U-Turns” and use Brookline Street as a cut-through. She feels that if the Oak Hill and Dedham Street intersection were made easier and safer to cross, there would be additional walkers, which would perhaps help to alleviate congestion. Ms. Decter supports the assignment of a Patrol Officer to direct traffic at Hartman Road, Spaulding Lane and Brookline Street intersection. Mr. Koses asked what options could be taken to improve pedestrian safety at Oak Hill and Dedham Streets. Captain Mintz said that the department has received many complaints regarding the intersection of Brookline and Dedham Streets towards Nahanton Street that also has a high percentage of accidents. It appears directed patrols has helped. Mr. Koses said that he would review school zone signs, and the Dedham Street/Oak Hill area to ensure that there is safe pedestrian access. Members of the Transportation Team would examine the possibility of buses being re-located.

Mr. Koses made a motion to approve No Parking Brookline Street, south side, from 50’ south of Spaulding Lane to 261 Brookline Street, 8AM-4PM School Days. Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Danila made a motion to approve removal of existing Blue Zone located on the south side of Brookline Street, east of Oak Hill Street. Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Danila made a

motion to approve adding a Blue Zone on the south side of Brookline Street, west of Oak Hill Street. Council members agreed 5-0. These items may be appealed through August 17, 2011.

TC10-11 ALDERMAN SHAPIRO on behalf of the Newton South High School Principal and School Council, requesting parking restrictions between approximately 131 Brandeis Road and the Newton South High School parking lot. (Ward 8)  
[03/17/11 @ 12:00 PM]

**ACTION: APPROVE (4-1, Ciccone opposed). This may be appealed through August 17, 2011.**

**NOTE:** Mr. Danila said that Brandeis Road is 28' wide, adequate to support parking on one side. He described the various parking restrictions in the area. This request is to remove twelve parking spaces between approximately 131 Brandeis Road and the Newton South High School. He then said that Newton South charges students a parking fee, and that this fee is likely to be reduced to encourage student parking.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. A resident of 131 Brandeis Road said that in the past he asked that parking be eliminated on Brandeis Road, rather the City installed two hour parking restrictions. Students park all-day regularly blocking his driveway, making it difficult for him to enter and exit. Winter months parking and travel are especially difficult because the road is narrowed by snow banks. He agreed a parking restriction is necessary because it is also a safety concern. The school parking lot is underutilized, and he feels that students will continue to park as a cheaper alternative, even if the twelve spaces are eliminated.

Mr. Koses said that the School Council is concerned about the visibility of entering/exiting the parking lot. He is concerned about eliminating these spaces because students would only park further down on Brandeis Road. Captain Mintz said that a temporary parking restriction was placed during the winter because of visibility issues and safety issues.

Mr. Danila made the motion to create a No Parking Zone between approximately 131 Brandeis Road and the Newton South High School parking lot and requests Newton South High School maximize usage of the parking lot by re-examining their fee structure. Council members agreed 4-1, Ald. Ciccone opposed because he would like additional information from Newton South School. This item may be appealed through August 17, 2011.

TC4-11 CATE BURRELL, on behalf of the Hills & Falls Nursery School, 258 Concord Street, requesting a) extend time signs to run the length of the east side of Concord to Hager Streets, b) extend time on signs to include 11:30am - 12:15pm c) requesting to reserve eight parking spaces for staff on the west side of Concord Street and d) requesting painted designations where vehicles should park.  
(Ward 4) [02/07/11@ 12:02 PM]

**ACTION: APPROVE TRIAL OF THE FOLLOWING: 15 minute parking 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM, Monday-Friday, in the current 15 minute parking zone fronting 258 Concord Street (4-0-1, Mintz Abstaining). Trial to be implemented by September 1, 2011.**

**NOTE:** Cate Burrell, Director of Hills & Falls Nursery School, said she docketed this item to request an extension of time from the current 15-minute limit 7-9:30am, Monday thru Friday to include 11:30am-12:15pm that would allow for safe pick-ups. The school is open during 9am-12pm; the extended day program is not an issue. Parents have begun to car-pool, lessening the number of parked vehicles which also causes concerns related to the children's safety crossing the street without a crosswalk, and having children exit vehicles on the street side. Drivers have the tendency to speed, using Hagar Street as a turnaround. Nearby business employees and commuters tend to ignore the current parking limits.

Mr. Danila described the various parking restrictions in the area. The Charles River side of Concord Street has no restrictions. Mr. Koses suggested extending meter times on Washington Street to allow for additional all-day employee parking. Mr. Danila said that two-hour meters allow turnover.

Mr. Koses asked how the school uses off-street parking, including the circle in front of the church. Ms. Burrell said she was informed that they are allowed to use the circle in emergencies only due to the Fire Department codes.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. A parent suggested extending the areas with parking limits towards Hagar Street where there are approximately 15 spaces without any parking restrictions. A parent suggested permit parking for school employees.

Mr. Koses said Traffic Council does not have the authority as requested to reserve eight parking spaces for staff. A new City Ordinance would have to be created by the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Danila said the school would not qualify for permit parking.

Mr. Danila made the motion to approve a trial, hoping to discourage commuters from long-term parking in the existing restricted area. The area further up Concord Street would remain unrestricted to provide for all-day employee parking. Council members agreed 4-0-1. Capt. Mintz abstained due to a conflict of interest. The trial is to be implemented by September 1, 2011.

TC26-11 ALD. RICE, requesting a "Do Not Enter" Sign at the intersection of Beethoven Avenue and Beacon Street on School Days during the hours of 8:30 am to 9:30 am and 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm. (Ward 5) [05/11/11 @ 10:31 AM]

**ACTION:** **APPROVE TRIAL OF THE FOLLOWING: Do Not Enter Beethoven Road from Beacon Street and from Evelyn Road, 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM, School Days (4-1, Danila opposed).**

**NOTE:** The four e-mails received on this item are attached to this report.

Ald. Rice requests that this item be amended to read from 8 am to 9 am and 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm. He said that in the past, a request was made requesting that Beethoven Avenue be changed to a one-way street. After discussions with abutting neighbors on Beethoven Avenue and residents in the Zervas School area, this possible solution was docketed, without inconveniencing residents for an entire day. The Police Department is unable to enforce the area on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Danila provided turning movements and described the various parking restrictions in the area. No Parking 8-4 School Days, a marked Blue Zone and a legal Blue Zone (not marked). He then said that the Department of Public Works would re-paint this legal Blue Zone. Beethoven Avenue is 24' wide allowing parking on both sides of the road. He then described alternative routes into the neighborhood: An additional  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to get to Beethoven Avenue and Puritan Road. Furthermore, the afternoon school bus currently travels to Zervas School via Beacon Street and Beethoven Road to the school parking lot. Other options would include re-painting a full Blue Zone to match current Traffic Parking Regulations, extending the No Parking 8-4 on the west side to match entire length of legal Blue Zone, encouraging drop-off further from the school and increasing enforcement to prevent double-parking.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. A resident said that the area is very dangerous, cars typically back up in the Blue Zone and winter months make it even more unsafe for pedestrians. Drivers use driveways as a turn-around, and children have to bicycle on the sidewalks. A few residents said that they support this item even though they would be inconvenienced.

Mr. Danila asked whether lengthening the zone would be helpful. Ald. Rice said that traffic jams occur in front of the school while parents are waiting in the Blue Zone due to the two-way traffic.

Mr. Grafe made the motion to approve a trial. Council members agreed 4-1, Mr. Danila opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair