

CITY OF NEWTON
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2011

Present: Allan Ciccone, Jr. (Alderman), Jim Danila (Traffic Engineer), Jerome Grafe (Resident member), David Koses (Transportation Planner) and Sgt. James Norcross (Police Department)
Also Present: Danielle Delaney (Clerk), Ald. Fischman, Harney and Merrill

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

TC8-11 ALD. FREEDMAN, on behalf of David Sands, 37 Baldpate Hill Road, to examine traffic and pedestrian safety at the intersection of Dudley Road and Baldpate Hill Road including stop sign location and pavement markings.
(Ward 8) [03/15/11 @ 9:18 AM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 3-1 (Danila opposed, Ciccone not voting) Painting stop lines at existing stop signs can be done administratively once line painting activity resumes.**

NOTE: Mr. Danila provided Council members with existing conditions. Drivers are legally required to stop twice on Dudley Road and once on Baldpate Hill Road. There are no stops required on the cut-through section connecting Dudley and Baldpate Hill Roads. Mr. Danila recommends eliminating the first stop sign at Dudley Road and the installation of two additional stop signs on the cut-through section.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. David Sands, 37 Baldpate Hill Road, said that the intersection is very dangerous. People have the tendency to ignore the first stop sign on Dudley Road because it is difficult to see and suggests road line painting reminding drivers that there are two stop signs. Matthew Wosk, 32 Baldpate Hill Road, said that the second stop sign on Dudley Road is necessary and agrees the roads should be painted. Glen Baris, 8 Baldpate Hill Road, said that people ignore the first stop sign and recommends signage improvements to notify drivers' that stop signs are ahead.

Mr. Danila said that double stop signs on a road are confusing. He feels that drivers would have a false sense of security if only the road is painted. Stop signs should only be installed on the minor approach of an intersection. He then suggested adding additional road painting at the intersection of Baldpate Hill and Dudley Roads allowing drivers to pull further out allowing better visibility. Ald. Fischman asked if the stop sign could be moved on Dudley Road and then he asked if streetlights would be beneficial. Mr. Danila said the stop sign is posted in the best visible section of the road. He will look into the addition of streetlights. Mr. Grafe recommends relocating the stop signs to avoid confusion.

Mr. Danila said road painting could be completed in the spring when road painting resumes and suggested installing the stop sign at that time.

Sgt. Norcross made the motion for no action necessary. Council members agreed on the above action.

TC60-11 ALD. SANGIOLO, GENTILE & HARNEY, requesting installation of speed tables on Concord Street. (Ward 4) [10/25/11 @ 8:44 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0. Up to four raised devices on Concord Street.**
This item may be appealed through the close of business December 7, 2011.

NOTE: The four emails received on this item are attached to this report.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with data collected during April 2011 including the minimum traffic calming thresholds. On Concord Street, the median speed is 37 mph and the 85% speed is 43 mph. This is considered high because Concord Street is a minor collector road. He then reviewed the requirements and costs of several traffic calming devices such as speed humps/speed table, raised crosswalk, mini roundabouts and chicanes.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Ald. Harney suggested that Norman Seaman of the Lower Falls Improvement Association speak on this item. Mr. Seaman stated that there is approximately \$35,000 remaining in the Traffic Mitigation Fund. Some of what the association was working with came out of working with the City's Engineering Division. The Engineering Division came up with sketches for the speed tables placing them approximately 650' feet apart. Mr. Seaman researched further traffic calming measures and used information from Portland, Oregon, which has done some of the most extensive work on traffic calming. He said that speed tables should not be used for slowing vehicles. Recent changes on Concord Street have made the Association concentrate on the western half of the street. The Lower Falls Improvement Association recommends the installation of three 22' speed table devices spaced 650' apart, if possible, between St. Mary's Street and Pine Grove. He estimates that each speed table would slow emergency vehicles approximately 10 seconds per table. Mr. Seaman said that it has to be determined if the Town of Weston uses Concord Street for emergency vehicle access and, if so, they should be notified of any changes. The speed tables are built gradually not inhibiting bicyclists and noise should not be a problem. He suggests notifying residents if speed tables are approved with exact locations. Bill Renke, President Lower Falls Improvement Association, said that raised crosswalks do not meet the warrants at this location. He said that some neighbors support the installation of speed tables but ask that exact locations be located. Residents spoke stressing their concerns. Suggestions include the following:

Concerns: A resident said if a crosswalk were installed, drivers would have the tendency to speed between the speed tables to make up lost time. A resident said that he opposes speed tables because they are noisy. Some residents said that speed tables would force some traffic into other neighborhoods as cut through traffic.

Suggestions: Some residents said speed tables are necessary and are hopeful they would deter speeding.

Mr. Koses said that Traffic Council would either approve or deny the request of installing speed tables on Concord Street. Ald. Harney said that the original board order approving installation of traffic islands would have to be amended to include speed tables.

Mr. Danila agreed that speed tables would benefit this location and suggested adding a raised crosswalk if funding is available. Mr. Danila made the motion to approve three raised devices on Concord Street. Mr. Grafe made a friendly amendment to approve up to four raised devices on Concord Street. Mr. Danila amended the motion to approve up to four raised devices on Concord Street. Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Koses said that this item may be appealed through December 7.

TC28-11 JAMES AND KARIN RIZZA, 19 Cornell Street, requesting that during soccer and baseball seasons parking be allowed only on one side of Cornell Street. (Ward 4) [05/13/11 @ 8:57 AM]

ACTION: **HELD FOR TRIAL 4-0-1 (Grafe abstained) No parking Saturdays, April 15-November 30, residential side of Cornell Street between Grove Street and Pine Grove Avenue.**

NOTE: The nine emails received on this item are attached to this report.

Karen Rizza, 19 Cornell Street, said that she docketed this item because Cornell Street is narrow, thereby making it difficult to park; emergency vehicle access is a problem. She is concerned about children crossing between parked cars.

Mr. Danila said that Cornell Street is 24' wide. Chief Proia has informed him that 24' wide road allows access for emergency vehicles. Mr. Koses said if a road is more than 24' wide, it generally would allow vehicles to park on both sides, if a road is less than 24" wide, a parking restriction perhaps should be implemented.

Ald. Harney said at a neighborhood meeting, neighbors have expressed their difficulty traveling on Cornell Street during these seasons, especially on the weekends. It is unsafe for children to cross Cornell Street due to site distance.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Scott Lanciloti, 18 Baker Place, agreed that travel is difficult and is concerned about emergency vehicle access. Bill Renke, President Lower Falls Improvement Association, said that neighbors feel that this parking restriction is necessary. He suggested the approval of a trial that would restrict parking on the resident side of Cornell Street on Saturdays 9am-5 pm from April to November. Ald. Harney suggested a 90-day trial be implemented on Saturdays from April 15 to November 30, 9 am-5pm no parking on the residential side of Cornell Street between Grove Street and Pine Grove Avenue. It is his intention to docket an item to include Pine Grove Avenue. Mr. Koses said signs would be installed at this location indicating a trial prior to April 15.

Mr. Danila made the motion to approve a trial. Council members agreed on the above action.

TC38-11 SALLY RIZZO, 52 Playstead Road, requesting Playstead Road be changed to a one-way street. (Ward 1) [06/29/11 @ 8:43 AM]

ACTION: **DENIED 4-0-1 (Ciccone abstained)**
This item may be appealed through the close of business December 7, 2011.

NOTE: Sally Rizzo, 52 Playstead Road, said that she docketed this item because of speeding vehicles, children's safety and the road is used as a cut through street. Parking is allowed on one side of the street, however; winter months make it difficult to travel especially for emergency vehicles. She suggested additional police presence, effective snow plowing, tree trimming and perhaps the installation of speed bumps to resolve existing problems.

Mr. Danila said that Playstead Road is 24' wide, with no parking permitted on the even side Monday to Friday. In early November, the automatic traffic recorder data showed an average weekday daily traffic count of 115 vehicles per day. Typically, there are less than 25 cars from 7:00 am – 9:00 am, and 65% of traffic travels west. The 85th percentile speed is 20 mph. On November 15, a manual turning movement count was performed and data showed that between 7:00 am – 9:00 am, 57 vehicles entered Whittemore and Playstead Roads. There have been zero reported crashes between 2005 and 2009.

Mr. Koses summarized the eleven emails received on this item, attached to this report and opened the discussion for public comment. Approximately ten residents spoke expressing their concerns and suggestions that include the following:

Concerns: Residents expressed their concerns regarding difficulties for emergency vehicle access, children's safety, speeding, commuter parking and cars that block driveways. Some residents violate the current parking restrictions. Visibility is difficult when cars park on the corner of Tremont Street. Some residents said that it would be an inconvenience and unnecessary to convert Playstead Road to a one-way street.

Suggestions: Residents offered their suggestions and said that enforcement and additional police presence is necessary to enforce the current parking restrictions and to deter commuters from parking. Some residents suggested lowering the speed limit, installing speed bumps, posting the speed limit, and adding children signs. They also suggested additional parking restrictions to include weekends and the removal of parking spaces at the corner of Tremont Street.

Mr. Danila said that the state reviews and approves speed limit reductions. The City cannot change speed limits without their approval. Speed limits are based on the 85% median speed. The state determines the request based on specific data. He feels that Playstead Road would qualify because of data collected and said that an item would have to be docketed requesting a speed reduction. Mr. Danila said that children signs have been removed throughout the City because they are not effective traffic calming devices. Drivers tend to ignore these types of signs. Mr. Koses said that a request for current parking restrictions would have to be docketed. Mr. Danila stated that the City would administratively remove parking spaces at the corner of Tremont Street allowing better visibility. Ald. Ciccone noted he would docket an item requesting a speed reduction. Mr. Koses said that parking and traffic deters speeding. Sgt. Norcross said that he would request additional police presence at this location.

Sgt. Norcross made the motion to deny this item. Council members agreed 4-0-1, Ald. Ciccone abstaining. Mr. Koses briefly described the appeals process.

TC24 -11 ALD. CICCONE, requesting parking restrictions on vehicles parking in Hargrave Circle Cul-de-sac. (Ward 6) [05/04/11 @ 11:09 AM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0**

NOTE: Items TC24-11 and TC25-11 were discussed together. See TC25-11 summary below.

TC25-11 ALD. CICCONE, requesting parking restrictions on vehicles parking in Wilson Circle Cul-de-sac. (Ward 6) [05/04/11 @ 11:09 AM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-1 (Ciccone opposed)**

NOTE: Ald. Ciccone informed Council members that he docketed these items because residents expressed their concerns and agreed that a parking restriction is necessary because commuters are parking on these streets especially during the warmer months. He agreed with the residents on Wilson Circle, noticing out-of-state vehicles. He did not observe this behavior on Hargrave Circle.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with the current parking restrictions on Beaconwood Road. On several site visits, he observed an average of three cars parked on Hargrave Circle. Wilson Circle had an average of one car parked.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Loretta Schiavone, 24 Wilson Circle, said that it is difficult for trash and street sweepers to access Wilson Circle when vehicles are parked in the street.

Hargrave Circle

Without discussion, Ald. Ciccone made the motion for no action necessary on item TC24-11. Council members agreed 5-0.

Wilson Circle

Ald. Ciccone said that he was hopeful that a parking restriction would be implemented to deter commuter parking. Mr. Koses said that he and Mr. Danila did not observe many vehicles parking on Wilson Circle. Mr. Grafe suggested that Ms. Schiavone speak with the neighbors when trash and street sweepers are scheduled. He then suggested her contacting DPW requesting a street sweeper schedule. Ald. Ciccone said he would docket a discussion item regarding a schedule be published on street sweeper schedules.

Mr. Grafe made the motion for no action necessary on TC25-11. Council members agreed 4-1, Ald. Ciccone opposed.

TC36-11 MARSHA CANICK, 11 Duncklee Street, requesting several parking spaces on Walnut Street be removed from the corners on each side of Duncklee Street.
(Ward 6) [06/15/11 @ 10:51 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0 No parking, any day, any time, along frontage of 1057, 1065 and 1073 Walnut Street.**

NOTE: Marsha Canick, 11 Duncklee Street, said that she docketed this item because of visibility issues when exiting her driveway especially when large SUV's park on Walnut Street.

Mr. Danila reviewed with Council members current parking restrictions on Duncklee and Walnut Streets. He said that the DPW has posted no parking here to corner signs on the corners of Duncklee Street. He suggests removing parking spaces along the frontage of #1057, 1065 and 1073 Walnut Street, hoping to deter commuters.

Mr. Koses opened the discussion for public comment. Jack Canick, 11 Duncklee Street agreed with Mr. Danila's proposed suggestion.

Mr. Danila made the motion to approve the removal of these parking spaces. Council members agreed 5-0. Mr. Koses said that there is a 20-day appeal period.

HP3-11 N. ROBERT NUNBERG, 41 West Street, requesting a handicap parking space in front of #38 or #42 West Street. (Ward 1) [10/04/11 @ 2:51 PM]

The Newton Commission on Disability voted on 10/17/11, to recommend to the Traffic Council that a HP space be designated in front of 42 West Street.

**ACTION: DENIED 3-1-1 (Ciccone opposed, Grafe abstained)
Item not eligible for appeal. Item may be re-docketed after November 17, 2012 or within one year if new information is provided.**

NOTE: Mr. N. Robert Nunberg did not attend tonight's meeting.

Mr. Danila provided Council members with the current parking restrictions on West Street. There is a restriction of no parking on the odd side of the street. The even side has a two- hour limit, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Saturday. A 36' long handicap-parking space is located in front of 30 West Street, which could potentially be divided into two handicap spaces.

Mr. Danila asked if the petition specified why he is requesting a handicap parking space when he has both a driveway and garage. Mr. Koses said that the pitch of his driveway makes it difficult for him to park and walk.

Council members considered the off-street parking available, the high demand for parking on the street, the fact that some homes on the street do not have driveways and the location of a large handicap parking space two houses up from the requested location, at 30 West Street.

Mr. Danila made the motion to deny this handicap parking space request. Council members agreed on the above action. Mr. Koses said that this item is not eligible for an appeal. Item may be re-docketed after November 17, 2012 or within one year if new information is provided.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair