

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2010

Present: Jim Danila, Transportation Engineer; David Koses, Transportation Planner; Captain Howard Mintz, Newton Police Department; Jerome Grafe, Resident Member and Ald. Ciccone
Also present: Ald. Danberg and Rice

HP1-10 MARY ELLEN BOWERS on behalf of Fredson Bowers, requesting one handicapped parking space at 30 Circuit Avenue, Newton Highlands. (Ward 5) [12/28/09 @ 2:21 PM]
(Approved by Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities on 01/11/10)

ACTION: **No Action Necessary (4-0, Grafe not present).**

NOTE: Mr. Danila said the petitioner withdrew her request on February 25, 2010.

Without discussion, Mr. Koses moved no action necessary. Council members agreed 4-0, Grafe not present.

TC38-09 JANET WERTHEIMER, 11 Manitoba Road, Waban requesting parking restrictions on Manitoba Road. (Ward 5)

ACTION: **Approve as amended (5-0). No Parking 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., west side of Manitoba Road.**

NOTE: Mr. Danila said this item was held on January 21, 2010 to establish a 60-day trial, no parking from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Manitoba Road, west side.

Janet Wertheimer, 11 Manitoba Road, said Manitoba Road is very close to the Angier Elementary School. She said the street is being parked up end to end even during summer months. It appears commuters are parking in this area making it difficult for children walking to school because you can not see vehicles traveling with so many parked cars. She is very pleased with the trial and feels Manitoba Road is much safer. She asks that this trial become permanent.

Mr. Danila said since the trial has been place he has been out to visit Manitoba Road eight to ten times and agrees with Ms. Wertheimer that the temporary restrictions which were put in place appear to be working. He would not be opposed to making this trial permanent.

Mr. Koses made the motion to make this trial permanent. The motion passed 5-0.

TC53-09 ANN L. WOLF, 133 Waban Avenue, requesting 2 hour parking, 7 am – 6 pm, both sides of Waban Avenue between Annawan Road and Nehoiden Road. (Ward 5) [12/20/09 @ 10:47 AM]

ACTION: **Hold (4-1, Grafe). Establish a 60-day trial. 2-Hour Limit, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., south side of Waban Avenue, from 54 Waban Avenue to Annawan Road.**

NOTE: Ann Wolf, 133 Waban Avenue, said this block is extremely congested with parking vehicles. It appears commuters are parking there. She said it is quite dangerous and neighbors cannot exit their driveways. Emergency vehicles have difficulty traveling on Waban Avenue and trash has not been picked up because of the difficulty accessing the street when vehicles are parked on both sides.

Mr. Danila said Waban Avenue is 30' wide. The minimum guideline for allowing parking on both sides of a two way street is 24', exceeding this guideline. This guideline allows emergency vehicles and school buses access to the street with vehicles parked on both sides. Typically five to ten cars are parked on Waban Avenue during the day. Parking restrictions vary in the area, a part of Waban Avenue has no restrictions.

Mr. Danila said he received an email from Robin and Joseph Healey opposing this request, they do not want to change parking restrictions in front of their home.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

Robin Healey, 62 Waban Avenue, said she does not oppose parking restrictions further down Waban Avenue. She values using the street for parking. It would be difficult for her to have parking restrictions in front of her home and is hopeful parking restrictions will not be enforced in front of her home. Alan Beck, 46 Waban Avenue, said it is very difficult to enter and exit his driveway. It is very dangerous when school buses have to back down Waban Avenue because they can not get through the street. In the past it was never a problem with vehicles parking for the day on Waban Avenue. Douglas Jones, 81 Waban Avenue, said he is concerned if a regulation is put in place because it will push vehicles to park further down the street. People are now parking in front of his home. Another resident and commuter said when the "T" raised their fees she noticed more commuters parking in this area, including herself. Dinah Bodkin, 39 Waban Avenue, agreed with Mr. Beck.

Mr. Koses said in the past he suggested the City offer a sticker program for residents allowing them the ability to override parking restrictions in certain areas in order to park their vehicles to use the commuter rail spreading out the burden throughout the City. Mr. Koses briefly described the commercial permit parking program and suggested that perhaps this program could be expanded to allow for a sticker program. Mr. Koses said once restrictions are put in neighborhoods it is nearly impossible to have them removed.

Mr. Danila said one problem is due to the "T" raising their parking fees and commuters now avoid parking there. Another problem is because of a parking restriction that was instilled on Manitoba Road which has forced commuters to park on Waban Avenue. Ald. Ciccone said the commercial permit trial parking program is currently before the Public Safety & Transportation Committee who are working with the City Law Department to make this trial a permanent program. He suggested the 5' distance within a driveway area should be enforced and a parking restriction on one side of the street be implemented allowing emergency vehicles access. Mr. Grafe agreed. Captain Mintz said vehicles could be towed if overlapping into driveways. Mr. Koses said if a parking restriction is instituted it should be on one side only because if no parking is allowed on a 30' wide street vehicles have the tendency to speed.

Captain Mintz said if the Board of Aldermen passes the requested appropriation allowing the Police Department to purchase the Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) system it will allow Parking Control Officers the ability to enforce vehicles in violation. Ald. Danberg and Ciccone agree this system will allow for easier enforcement. Captain Mintz said a trial of no parking from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. would prevent commuters from parking all day.

Ald. Ciccone made the motion to establish a 60-day trial. 2-Hour Limit, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., south side of Waban Avenue, from 54 Waban Avenue to Annawan Road. Council members agreed to hold a 60-day trial, 4-1, Grafe opposed.

TC49-09 ALD. DANBERG on behalf of Susan Kormis requesting additional parking restrictions on Langley Road between Elgin and Warren on the North Side of Street. Commuter parking is forcing traffic to cross center line at this location. (Ward 6) [11/16/09 @ 11:53 PM]

ACTION: No Action Necessary (5-0).

NOTE: Ald. Danberg said she spoke with Ms. Kormis who informed her that this problem has been resolved administratively by the re-installation of signs which were removed prior to the bridge construction. She requests this item be voted no action necessary.

Ald. Ciccone moved no action necessary. Council members agreed 5-0.

TC2-10 ALD. DANBERG requesting a discussion of traffic calming on Langley Road in the vicinity of Glen Road. (Ward 7) [02/11/10 @ 4:36 PM]

ACTION: No Action Necessary (5-0).

NOTE: Ald. Danberg said she docketed this item because vehicles have the tendency to speed in this area with the down grade of the hill. In the past, when the MBTA parked their vehicles in the vicinity of Elgin Street it appears they calmed traffic issues.

Mr. Danila said traffic data proves there are approximately 5,500 vehicles per day, 2% is trucks. The speed limit is 30 mph. Data collected shows the mean speed is 29 mph and the 85% speed is 34 mph, which is only 4 mph above the speed limit. Currently, there are two restrictions; no parking and a 2 hour parking limit 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Captain Mintz said over the past twelve months there have been two accidents in the vicinity of Langley and Glen Roads one in December 2009 and one in January 2010. One accident was due to wet roads and the other was due to a vehicle crossing the yellow line on dry roads. Captain Mintz said there have been many directed patrols in this vicinity. He said the highest speed clocked on radar was 42-43 mph.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

Mr. Gomez, 190 Langley Road, said he is concerned with speeding. People have driven on his property during the snow. He does not park in front of his home because he is afraid of being hit due to the lack of visibility, the hill and bend in the road. He feels walking on Langley Road is dangerous and pedestrians are at high risk. He suggested a cross walk be added on Langley Road.

Mr. Grafe asked why there is a two hour limit restriction in this area. Mr. Danila said to deter commuters. Ald. Danberg said if there was no restriction, commuters would park the length of Langley Road to avoid paying for parking. Mr. Grafe asked if speeding became an issue once the restriction went into place. Ald. Danberg answered when vehicles are allowed to park on the street it tends to slow traffic down. Mr. Grafe asked if there is an 11' travel lane. Ald. Danberg suggested a bicycle lane be striped in this area perhaps constricting traffic to one lane. Mr. Danila said vehicles would have to be restricted from parking on one side if a bicycle lane was striped. Mr. Gomez said when Langley Road was repaved the shoulder stripes were painted.

Mr. Grafe asked if the width of the travel lane could be changed. Mr. Danila answered it would only help to add a shoulder when there wasn't one previously. Changing the width of a travel lane would not be beneficial.

Ald. Danberg asked if Department of Public Works could put down more salt and if there could be more directed patrols in the area during slippery conditions or winter months. Captain Mintz said directed patrols could possibly cause accidents. He suggested a speed monitor box be put in this area notifying vehicles of their speed. Mr. Gomez asked if signs could be installed warning drivers of road conditions. Mr. Danila answered he would check with the City's guidelines. Mr. Grafe asked if an additional or increased parking restriction would be beneficial in this area, also discouraging commuters.

Mr. Koses moved for no action necessary with the knowledge of perhaps having additional directed patrols and the addition of signs. Council members agreed 5-0.

TC56-09 ALD. SALVUCCI, LENNON AND CICCONE on behalf of Edward Asaley, 29 Fordham Road, Newton requesting a discussion about possibly implementing a four-way stop sign at the intersection of Annapolis and Fordham Roads. (Ward 3) [01/12/10 @ 10:44 AM]

ACTION: **No Action Necessary (4-1, Grafe).**

NOTE: Mr. Danila said the petitioner is requesting a two-way not a four-way stop sign.

Mr. Danila said traffic data proves that during the evening peak hour the count is 40 entering vehicles, approximately 400 vehicles per day. There have been no reported crashes since 2005. Mr. Danila said this area does not meet the volume warrant for installing multi-way stops.

Mr. Danila cited the following facts:

The Guidelines for Installing Two-Way stops when they should be used:

- Yield or Stop signs should be used if one of more of the following conditions exist:
- An intersection of less important road with a main road where application of the normal right-of-way rule would not be expected to provide reasonable compliance with the law;
- A street entering a designated through highway or street; or
- An unsignalized intersection in a signalized area.

The Guidelines for Installing Two-Way Stops when they should be considered:

- Yield or Stop signs should be considered if one or more of the following conditions exist:
- The combined vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian volume exceeds 2,000 units per day;
- The ability to see a conflicting traffic on an approach is not sufficient to allow a user to stop or yield in compliance with the normal right-of-way rule if stopping or yielding is necessary; or
- Crash records indicate that five or more crashes that involve the failure to yield have been reported within a 3-year period, or that three or more crashes have been reported within a 2-year period.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

Edward Asaley, 29 Fordham Road, said he believes all neighbors agree a stop sign is necessary. People use Annapolis Road as a cut through street. Drivers tend to pick up speed on the hill and visibility is a problem when exiting Fordham Road onto Annapolis Road. Vehicles only slow down when they see the front of a vehicle. It is a difficult area for pedestrians and children. Linda Farina, 32 Annapolis Road, said when drivers use Annapolis Road as a cut through they bottom out and drivers tend to speed. She agreed with Mr. Asaley it is a difficult area for pedestrians and children. Mr. Danila said he received an email from Aili and Rusty Lewis, 9 Fordham Road concurring with the residents that a stop sign is necessary.

Mr. Danila said a stop sign should not be used as a speed control device or as a deterrent for cut through traffic. The intention of a stop sign is to assign the right of way where it is not clear. If stop signs are installed where they are not warranted they likely increase accidents. Mr. Koses said a stop sign needs to be installed on Fordham Road. Mr. Danila disagreed and feels if a stop sign is considered it should be placed on Annapolis Road. Ald. Ciccone agreed with Mr. Danila.

Ms. Farina asked if there are other alternatives. She believes there has been an accident since 2005. Mr. Danila said for an accident to be reported it has to be over \$1,000 worth of damage. He answered he could perform a speed study on Annapolis Road and perhaps some traffic calming devices.

Ald. Ciccone made the motion for a stop sign on Annapolis Road because of the sight line.

Mr. Grafe asked for clarification from the MUTCD criteria regarding who has the right of way. Mr. Danila said a stop or yield sign should only be considered because of the sight issue. Mr. Grafe suggested bumping out the curb forcing Annapolis Road drivers to slow down and asked if some type of traffic calming device could be implemented. Mr. Danila said based on City's funds this road does not meet any warrants or volume. Captain Mintz said installing a stop sign may increase accidents because people tend to roll through a stop sign. Mr. Koses suggested installing a one-way or a yield sign. Captain Mintz suggested a motorcycle officer could do directed patrols and possibly install a temporary speed box perhaps improving the situation. Mr. Danila said he would prefer a portion of the road becoming a one-way. He suggested for Council members to hold this item until a later date. Mr. Asaley disagreed making a portion of the road a one-way. Ms. Farina suggested a sign, "cars entering from right". Mr. Danila said this type of sign would be ignored and a yield sign on Annapolis Road would not serve any purpose because the sight distance on Fordham Road is limited.

Ald. Ciccone withdrew his motion for a stop sign on Annapolis Road and moved no action necessary. Council members agreed 4-1, Grafe opposed.

TC54-09 HELEN RITTENBERG, 497 Chestnut Street, requesting truck exclusion, speed limit reduction, and traffic calming measures on Moffat Road. (Ward 5)
[12/28/09 @ 1:06 PM]

ACTION: **No Action Necessary (4-0, Ciccone not present).**

NOTE: A resident of 18 Moffat Road said the road is in terrible condition and is dangerous. He said he has difficulty walking to school because it is unsafe without sidewalks and drivers have the tendency to speed. He suggested a speed limit reduction, pot holes being repaired and the installation of sidewalks.

Mr. Danila said traffic data on a Monday and Tuesday in March 2010 proved that daily volumes are 450 vehicles per day, 3% are trucks. The speed limit is 30 mph. The mean speed is 21 mph and 85 percentile speed is 29 mph. There have been three reported crashes without injuries between 2005-2008. Two single vehicle crashes in the snow and one angle crash at the intersection of Moffat and Lawmarissa Roads.

Mr. Danila said there are specific statewide guidelines the City must follow to set speed limits and traffic exclusions. He cited the following facts:

- Establishment of Legal Speed Zones:
Must apply to Highway Division of MassDOT
Speed limit based on recorded 85 percentile speeds
- Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion:
Must apply to Highway Division of MassDOT
Existing trucks 5-8% of total volume

Mr. Danila said the truck exclusion is for three or more axle style trucks.

Mr. Danila opened the discussion for public comment.

Joe Amorosino, 141 Moffat Road, expressed his concerns. He said there is a sharp bend with a blind curve on Moffat Road which does not have sidewalks. He suggests signs be installed informing drivers of a sharp bend in the curve. He asked the City for their support to help neighbors reduce the 30 mph speed limit. He said there is a baseball park with a lot of activity and asks for traffic calming measures in front of the park, ideally a cross walk making one safe location for pedestrians with a mid pavement sign to slow drivers down. He feels drivers on Montclair Road and Winter Road have the right of way onto Moffat Road because there is no stop sign. He suggested a study be performed on Montclair Road at this intersection for a stop sign. He also said he is concerned that the road is getting wider due to no curbs and erosion appears to be happening. He suggested perhaps painting lines narrowing the road encouraging drivers to slow down. Mr. Amorosino also feels box style trucks and vans speed. He said one out of five cars speed on Moffat Road increasing the chance for a pedestrian being struck. He asked for any support the City could provide to the neighborhood to make it safer.

Mr. Danila said the state would not reduce the speed limit because they base the speed limit on the recorded 85 percentile speed which is 29 mph. A resident asked how Chestnut Street obtained a speed limit reduction. Mr. Danila said in the past regulatory speed limits of 20 mph were installed but the City is no longer allowed to install these types of signs. If the City were to ask the state about Chestnut Street, the state would perhaps have the City increase the speed limit. Mr. Danila said installing speed limit signs do not slow vehicles down.

Susan Thomas, 66 Moffat Road, said traffic calming measures, signs and crosswalks are necessary to make this area safe. Her main concern is that there is no continuous sidewalk on Moffat Road and pedestrians have to walk on the street. The winter months are worse. She said this should be a great concern to the City. John Herman, 129 Moffat Road, agrees sidewalks are necessary. He said twenty-three years ago he requested curbs be installed and hopes it will come to fruition. Ellen Schon, 111 Moffat Road, said the statistics are wrong; there was an accident on October 31, 2009. Exiting and entering driveways is difficult because of speeding drivers. She said the "Slow" sign recently installed was placed in the wrong place. She feels sharp curve signs should be installed on both sides of the road. Molly Owen-Kiritsy, 166 Moffat Road, said she supports everything being said. She would like to reiterate the danger of crossing to get to Lincoln Field. She supports a stop sign or anything the City can do to slow traffic down. James Treat, 134 Moffat Road, said the road has not been repaved for twenty-four years. He is surprised where the utility meters were installed and they have not been filled in until recently,

perhaps that is why the road is in rough shape. A resident of Chestnut Street said she agrees Moffat Road needs a sidewalk. Ald. Rice said he understands all the concerns regarding Moffat Road neighbors. He said he will try to facilitate for the neighbors and will speak with Department of Public Works (DPW) to repair the pot holes. A resident suggested conducting another traffic study during the summer months, when she believes there is much more traffic. Mr. Danila said when conducting a traffic study you try to pick up the traffic data on a typical day.

Mr. Danila said a stop sign should not be used as a speed control device or as a deterrent for cut through traffic. The intention of a stop sign is to assign the right of way where it is not clear. If stop signs are installed where they are not warranted they likely increase the crash rate.

Mr. Danila described Traffic Council's authority. He said Traffic Council does not have control over issues like crosswalks, sidewalks and curbs. He suggested neighbors contact customer service to repair the pot holes. He said he will ask DPW if Moffat Road is scheduled for repaving. Mr. Danila described the sidewalk betterment program. He said the betterment program is an unfunded program; this is why no curbs have been installed because funds are unavailable on the City's budget. Mr. Koses said there is a ten year list for installing sidewalks and curbs. Mr. Danila said he will look into curve signs to see if it would meet a warrant. Slow or children signs do not help in fact, they make scenarios less safe because drivers ignore them. Crosswalks also must meet specific guidelines and must include handicap ramps costing approximately \$5,000 each. Mr. Danila said he will check the guidelines to see if this area meets a warrant to install a crosswalk towards Montclair Road.

Mr. Danila asked the neighbors if they would prefer a stop sign. He said if so, a new item would have to be docketed for Traffic Council for Mr. Danila to perform a study if this is an appropriate location and notify neighbors again for another meeting. Mr. Koses said he would support a stop sign. Mr. Grafe said there is an obvious need for sidewalks and roadway improvement. He suggested perhaps Traffic Council could concur and make recommendations to the betterment program and the DPW for a better road surface and the installation of sidewalks. Mr. Grafe asked Mr. Danila if Traffic Council could make this recommendation.

Mr. Koses made the suggestion to hold this item because the item included the wording "additional signage". Mr. Danila said he would rather another item be docketed specifying a stop sign request. Mr. Koses said sidewalks should be a priority because of the Safe Routes to School Program. Mr. Grafe asked if Brae Burn Country Club is aware of no sidewalks in the area. Residents said in the past curbs were in place and asked if DPW could make lines to make the road appear narrower.

Captain Mintz asked neighbors what speed they think vehicles are traveling. A resident answered approximately 35 mph. Captain Mintz said in thirteen years, the Traffic Bureau has never received a complaint of vehicles speeding on Moffat Road. He said a police report was not written regarding the October 31, 2009 accident. A resident will provide Captain Mintz with exact times and dates of vehicles speeding for further data.

Mr. Danila read into the record the following emails:
Steven Miller and Jan Bloom, 23 Moffat Road, concerned about speeding vehicles and ask for pot hole repairs. Joseph and Carol Whitehorn, 126 Moffat Road, notice no increase of traffic in recent months and see no reason to change speed limit or exclude trucks. Risa Schneider-Fine and Gerald Fine, 60 Moffat Road, request no speed limitations, truck exclusions or traffic calming measures.

Mr. Koses said Moffat Road has its own method of traffic calming due to the bend in the road. He suggested because of the discontinuous sidewalks and ball field to hold this item to review if a stop sign and a crosswalk meet the warrants on Montclair and Moffat Roads. Mr. Danila asked this item be re-docketed requesting a stop sign.

Mr. Koses moved for no action necessary. Council members agreed 4-0, Ciccone not present.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Danila, Traffic Council Chair