

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2009

Present: Ald. Danberg, Jerome Grafe (Resident member), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Rosalie Myers (Clerk), Jim Norcross (Police), Nina Wang (Assistant Traffic Engineer)

Also present: Ald. Brandel, Lennon, Linsky, Merrill

HP20-08 NOREEN KIMBALL requesting a handicapped parking space at 24-26 Dale Street. (Ward 2)

HELD ON 10-23-08 FOR 60-DAY TRIAL

ACTION: **APPROVED AS AMENDED 4-0 (Danberg not voting)** “No Parking” zone at 24-26 Dale Street

NOTE: Noreen Kimball was present and told the Committee this space has been a good solution. Mr. Koses noted that there has been no opposition to this petition. Sgt. Norcross agreed that this no parking zone has been positive for the petitioner.

The Council approved the item 4-0 (Danberg not voting)

TC36-08 ALD. LENNON & SALVUCCI on behalf of Esther Marchioni of 127 Linwood Avenue, requesting a discussion of parking restrictions on Linwood Avenue, specifically TPR-176, *Linwood Avenue* (1) Prohibited, all days: b) South side from Bridge Street to opposite Colonial Avenue. (Ward 1) [3-26-08 @10:53 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED AS AMENDED 5-0**

NOTE: This item had been discussed on 10-23-08 and held. Nina Wang made several visits to the site and found there was no strong parking demand.

Esther Marchioni told the Committee she would like the no parking zone to extend to Adams Street to alleviate the problem of cars parking in front of her house. Ald. Merrill felt it would be reasonable to extend the parking.

Ald. Danberg noted that the public streets are open to everyone.

The Council voted to approve a “No Parking” zone, any time, on the north side of Linwood Avenue between Adams Street and Bridge Street, and to have no restrictions on the south side of Linwood Avenue between Adams Street and Bridge Street.

TC69-08 DUNN-GEHERIN’S requesting handicapped parking space at 344 Elliot Street. (Ward 5) (MCPD unanimously approved request.)

ACTION: **APPROVED 3-0-2 Grafe, Wang abstaining)** Handicapped space to be located at 344 Elliot street, to the west of Dunn-Gehrin's parking lot.

NOTE:

Assistant Traffic Engineer Nina Wang gave a PowerPoint presentation and noted that the original parking spot requested in the petitioned, in her opinion, was not a safe location. She felt that a handicapped space within the parking lot was much safer.

The Committee heard from Attorney Stephen Buchbinder as well as a representative of Dunn-Gehrin's and Jane Aronofsky. Mr. Buchbinder said that the original petition requested a handicapped parking space to be located just to the east of the Dunn-Geherin's parking lot, to be shared with patrons of a nearby salon. He felt that this request would be a positive for the community as it would offer a more convenient parking space for persons with disabilities who are currently forced to park further away and walk to Dunn-Geherin's. David Koses noted that a handicapped parking space is required to be constructed in the Dunn-Geherin's parking lot, as part of a recently approved Special Permit. The on-street space will offer patrons an alternative parking option.

Ald. Danberg wanted to be sure that the parking space is in a safe location. Sgt. Norcross said that he also felt that the spot recommended by Ms. Wang was safer, and that he also prefers that the handicapped space be located directly in front of 344 Elliot Street.

The Council agreed with Ms. Wang on locating the handicapped spot at 344 Elliot Street, to the west of the Dun-Geherin parking lot.

TC54-08 **JEANETTE PAOLETTI** of 58 Cook Street requesting a two-hour parking prohibition, 8 AM to 6 PM on the east (even) side of Cook Street. (Ward 1)

ACTION: **DENIED 5-0**

NOTE:

Ms. Paoletti said that there were parking problems because the street is narrow with cars parked from 7:30 am until 4:30 pm. Due to the narrow street, there are problems getting in and out of driveways.

A PowerPoint presentation was used to show that Cook Street is 24 feet wide. Ms. Wang noted that on her visits, every available space was used for parking. She noted the street has mostly multi-family dwellings with a limited amount of off-street parking. Some residents would be seriously impacted if parking changes were instituted.

David Koses summarized a letter that was received from residents at 14 Cook Street in protest to this request. There is no driveway at 14 Cook Street and residents must park on the street. A parking prohibition would impose added inconvenience and hardship, especially in the winter. Another letter from 45 and 43 Cook Street also registered their objection to the petition, as they do not find

any problem with the current situation and find the changes unnecessary. The change would create inconvenience and hardship, and they requested the Traffic Council deny the request.

Theresa Sauro of Cook Street told the Committee that vehicles are parked daily all day on the street.

David Koses said he understands that some residents experience a parking problem, and that the current situation is certainly not perfect. He mentioned that the on-street parking results in a lack of speeding, which benefits residents living on the street. Ald. Danberg reiterated that while residents observe the congested parking conditions, some are unaware that, due to the parking, there is no speeding problem on their street.

Jerome Grafe addressed neighborhood comments about why the parking problems seem more severe than they were in the past, referring to the increase in licensed drivers.

Ald. Lennon felt that both residents and business owners should meet to try to come up with some helpful changes. Ald. Lennon and Danberg mentioned that the recently-approved employee permit parking program may benefit Cook Street residents and nearby businesses by moving some employee parking to nearby public parking lots

The Council denied this petition.

TC55-08 ALD. LENNON requesting on behalf of RICHARD BELKIN of the Newton Corner Neighborhood Association a discussion re the potential installation of a stop sign at the MassTurnpike overpass, eastbound, in the vicinity of Thornton Street. (Ward 1)

ACTION: **NAN 5-0.**

NOTE: Ms. Wang said that a stop sign at this location would be very confusing. Ms. Wang said that the existing "Yield" sign is not located in the most visible location. It had been moved after having been repeatedly hit by motorists. Ms. Wang suggested that the yield sign be relocated, and an additional yield sign be added on the other side of the street.

Sgt. Norcross felt that the potential installation of a stop sign at this location would be very dangerous.

David Koses suggested that in addition to adding and moving the yield sign, the word "Yield" could be painted on the pavement just prior to the merge. Ms. Wang said she would consider it if there were money in the budget.

The Council agreed to an administrative modification to the "Yield" sign at the Washington Street eastbound merge onto the Turnpike overpass, south of Thornton Street.

The Committee voted no action necessary on this item.

TC56-08 ALD. LENNON requesting on behalf of ELIE GENTILE, 28 Lincoln Road a reduction of the speed limit to 25 MPH on Lincoln Road. (Ward 1)

ACTION: **DENIED 5-0**

NOTE: Elie Gentile said that speeding on Lincoln road is a problem. She said the street is often used as a cut-through.

Traffic Engineer Nina Wang reported on the results of a speed study, and said that the speed was not found to be very excessive. She would not recommend lowering the speed limit to anything below 30 mph. Ms. Gentile asked what time these speeds were checked and Ms. Wang explained both day and night for 24 hours. The study was done by a consultant and Ms. Wang was present. A wire was placed across the entire road, counting all cars. The location of the study was in close proximity to 28 Lincoln Road.

The City can only petition that the state approve a change to the speed limit on a street. MassHighway makes the final decision. Ms. Wang said that, in her experience, the state would not approve a speed change on this street. Generally the state follows the speed of the 85th percentile. Ms. Wang's study showed 85% of vehicles were found to be travelling 29 mph (in one direction) and 27 mph (in the other).

Mr. Koses said in the last five years he did not recall the state ever approving a speed limit on a Newton street.

Ald. Danberg questioned why there were no cars parked on the street, and suggested that on street parking would slow cars down.

Ms. Gentile asked about some directed patrols on this street, and. Sgt. Norcross agreed.

Ald. Danberg made a motion to deny with the caveat that the mobile speed unit be placed on that street and also encourage police presence.

TC57-08 ALD. LENNON requesting of behalf of Max Goldsmith of 3 Waverley Avenue the installation of stop signs, eastbound and westbound, at the intersection of Waverley Avenue and Washington Street. (Ward 1)

ACTION: **DENIED 5-0**

NOTE: Mr. Goldsmith was not present at this discussion.

Ms. Wang monitored this location several times. There is an existing stop sign at the northern end of Waverley Avenue, at the intersection of Washington Street. Ms. Wang's traffic count was done during a peak hour and showed an unbalanced distribution, with the majority of vehicles traveling westbound on Washington Street toward the Massachusetts Turnpike, and very few vehicles traveling eastbound. In Ms. Wang's opinion, the existing stop sign is working very well. Ms. Wang feels that traffic moves through this intersection in an orderly fashion. Stop signs on Washington Street may create a less safe intersection as motorists may not expect cars to travel westbound on Washington Street. Since there is no history of accidents at this location and there is good compliance at the existing stop sign, Ms. Wang does not recommend adding stop signs.

Sgt. Norcross said both a speed box and a speed trailer could be placed at that location.

Ald. Danberg moved denial and the Committee voted 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Chairman