

**CITY OF NEWTON**  
**BOARD OF ALDERMEN**  
**TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2009**

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

Also present: Ald. Harney, Lennon, Sangiolo.

TC60-08 ALD. SANGIOLO, HARNEY, GENTILE requesting two-hour parking restrictions along Hancock Street near the corner of Grove Street up to Williston Road and two-hour parking restrictions on both sides of Williston Road near the intersection of Hancock Street. (Ward 4)

**ACTION: HELD 4-0 (Danberg not voting). 60-day trial. No parking, west side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street, and no parking 8:00 am – 10:00 am, Mon-Fri, east side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street. Item will be heard again in September or later.**

**NOTE:** Ald. Sangiolo addressed the Committee and explained that there has been a great deal of effort to try to find a good traffic pattern for Hancock Street. The “Do Not Enter” at the end of Woodland Road has helped to restrict commuter traffic and has allowed residents to continue to use Hancock Street as a two-way street. However, the section of Hancock Street adjacent to the Walker Center is so narrow that it is impossible to maintain two-way traffic.

Ald. Harney said that more commuters have started to park along Hancock Street after the MBTA raised the parking fee at Riverside MBTA station, as this is the closest location for free all-day commuter parking.

In her presentation, Nina Wang, Assistant Traffic Engineer, stated that she observed 13-18 cars parked along the east side of Hancock Street on weekdays (2/3 of them from commuters near the Grove Street end and 1/3 are school related). These commuters park all day. She mentioned that any new parking restrictions might push commuters to park on nearby streets.

Ms Wang recommended that Traffic Council add morning parking restrictions to deter all-day commuter parking. Sgt. Norcross said that if parking restrictions were added, cars would simply move elsewhere. From the point of view of the Police Department, a two-hour restriction is a drain on manpower, and a specified time restriction is preferable.

Ms. Wang will be able to put in “No Parking Here to Corner” signs, which would address some concerns. Jerome Grafe agreed with the Traffic Engineer that there should be no parking on the east side of Hancock Street between Williston and Grove Street. Chairman Koses recommended a 30-day trial of no parking from 8 am to 10 am, to monitor the impact

and determine whether adjustments are necessary. Ms. Wang pointed out that a 60-day trial would be more appropriate.

The Committee voted a 60-day trial of no parking, west side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street, and no parking 8:00 am – 10:00 am, Mon-Fri, east side of Hancock Street between Williston Road and Grove Street.

This Item will be heard again in September or later.

TC61-08 ALD. SANGIOLO, HARNEY, GENTILE requesting traffic calming measures along Concord Street in Newton Lower Falls; either two center islands or alternatively a bike lane along Concord Street. (Ward 4)

**ACTION: NAN 3-1 (Grafe opposed; Danberg not voting)**

**NOTE:** Ald. Sangiolo said when the Jordan Marsh warehouse was renovated, a traffic study was conducted for Lower Falls and a number of traffic calming measures were recommended by the consultant, Rizzo and Associates. The recommendations included two traffic islands to be installed on Concord Street. Ald. Sangiolo said that she often sees bicycles on this road and notes it is unsafe because there is no striping.

Norm Seaman of Clearwater Road and a member of the Lower Falls Improvement Association said that this is a project that has been worked on for the past several years. He said that at one time there was only a centerline on Concord Street. He noted that the travel lanes on Concord Street could be narrower. Sgt. Norcross told the Committee that the Police Department conducted at least 200 directed patrols on Concord Street last year.

Jerome Grafe said that he was in favor of a bike lane. He was also in support of the islands. Ms. Wang stated that the road is not wide enough to allow adequate space to stripe a bike lane. David Koses said that traffic islands could cause problems with plows, bicycles, etc. and he would not support putting in an island.

Ald. Harney felt that this is a very dangerous situation and needs some creativity to solve the problems. Ald. Sangiolo mentioned that we should not impede residents from getting out of their driveways.

Ms. Wang reiterated that the street was too narrow for bike lanes, but mentioned that “Share the Road” signs could be used.

Chairman Koses made the following motion: Recommend that DPW consider the following during resurfacing: bicycle signage, reduced travel lanes, striped shoulders. Recommend that the Police Department continue aggressive enforcement of speed limit.

The Committee voted No Action Necessary 3-1.

#TC14-09 CAPTAIN MINTZ, Newton Police Department, requesting that six (6) parking spaces on the south side of Davis Street nearest Chestnut Street be designated

“Police Personnel Only, Mon through Fri, 7:00 am to 5:00 pm” to accommodate parking associated with a transfer of staff from police headquarters to the Chestnut Street annex. (Ward 3)

**ACTION: APPROVED 4-0 (Danberg not voting)**

**NOTE:** Captain Mintz said that currently there is an insufficient number of parking spaces for the Newton Police Annex. Presently there are 15 parking spaces plus 1 handicapped space. On a typical day, however, there 18 to 20 personal vehicles plus 13 city vehicles. If the item is approved, the problem will not be totally alleviated but will certainly be improved.

Nina Wang emphasized that parking is very tight in this area. Ms. Wang recommended that Traffic Council vote to reserve six parking spaces for police vehicles on the south side of Davis Street.

One letter was received from a resident of 17 Davis Street who is concerned that if six spots are reserved, traffic on the street will increase as people circle the block looking for parking. This letter suggested a change to the parking restrictions on Chestnut Street but not Davis Street.

Sgt. Norcross said the parking on site is extremely limited and it is also important to try to keep some parking open for visitors on Chestnut Street.

The Committee voted 4-0 in favor of this petition.

TC16-09 ALD. LENNON on behalf of Eveanne Andrews, 17 Murphy Court, requesting a handicapped parking space in front of 17 Murphy Court. (Ward 1)

**ACTION: DENIED 3-0-1 (Grafe abstaining; Danberg not voting).**

**NOTE:** Ald. Lennon explained that Mrs. Andrews was not able to be present. The petitioners do have a driveway but feel that a spot in front of the house would be more helpful.

Ms. Wang noted that parking is prohibited on the south side of Murphy Court which is a one-way street. There are no parking restrictions on the north side except at the corner 50 feet from Adams Street. During Ms. Wang’s field visits she did not observe any cars with handicapped placards parked in the area. Since the space between driveways in front of 17 Murphy Court was only about 20 feet, Ms. Wang felt that a handicapped parking space at this location would violate the city ordinance, which restricts parking within 5 feet of a driveway.

Sgt. Norcross said that if approved, the Council would be creating an illegal parking spot.

TC4-09 ALD. LENNON on behalf of Patricia Walsh Greene, 39 Jefferson Street and other residents of Nonantum Place requesting parking restrictions on Nonantum Place to discourage commuter parking. (Ward 1)

**ACTION: HELD 4-0 (Danberg not voting). 60-day trial. Change permit-parking restriction on the east side of Nonantum Place from 7:00 am – 9:00 am to 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. The item will be heard again in September or later.**

**NOTE:** Ald. Lennon said that the residents of Nonantum Place have been dealing with encroachment from commuter parking, business parking, etc.

In her presentation, Ms. Wang said that parking is currently prohibited on the west side of Nonantum Place. The street is 20 feet wide. Commuters typically use Nonantum Place for free parking, and subsequently using the nearby long-term parking meters once Nonantum Place fills up. Ms. Wang's recommendation is to extend the permit parking from existing 7-9 am to 7-10 am to discourage commuter parking.

Ms. Walsh, a Jefferson Street resident, stated that there is a safety issue as cars try to park on Nonantum Place. Cars come down Jefferson Street and make a U-turn to secure their parking spot. The school bus had to change their route due to cars parking.

Chairman Koses said that Nonantum Place is a public street, and the goal should be to provide parking opportunities, but to ensure that residents are able to park on the street as well. CDBG funds are being used to improve the Nonantum Place park, which should be open to anybody who wants to use it. Mr. Koses suggested a midday parking restriction, which would discourage all-day commuter parking, but would allow access to the park during the morning and afternoon. The Council agreed to hold this item for a 60-day trial. The trial would be to change the permit parking restrictions on the east side of Nonantum Place from 7:00 am – 9:00 am to 11:00 am - 1:00 pm. The item will be heard again in September or later.

TC3-09 ALD. LENNON, on behalf of Surnetta Spinivasan, 559 Centre Street requesting the implementation of one or two crosswalks on Centre Street between Church Street and Cabot Street. (Ward 1)

**ACTION: NAN 4-0 Danberg not voting). Do not recommend a simple crosswalk to the Commissioner of Public Works. Recommend that a pedestrian activated signal be considered for a location along this corridor.**

**NOTE:** Sgt. Norcross explained that the Traffic Council cannot approve the installation of a crosswalk. Traffic Council can discuss and make recommendations, but the Commissioner of Public Works makes the final decision.

Ms. Wang said that pedestrian crossing is controlled with a full traffic signal at the Centre/Church intersection and the Centre/Cabot intersection. Ms. Wang is mainly concerned that site line are inadequate to create a safe crosswalk location between these two intersections. Ms. Wang's recommendation is not to add a new crosswalk on Centre Street between about Cabot Street and Church Street. There are seven criteria that need to be met and this area does not meet those requirements.

Some site analysis was done by the petitioner, Ms. Spinivasan. She told the Committee that during the winter, walking to Underwood and Bigelow without sidewalks is very dangerous. She noted this area is densely settled, and that the MBTA has bus stops on both sides of Centre Street near Newtonville Avenue.

Jerome Grafe reiterated that the decision for crosswalks cannot be made by the Traffic Council. Sgt. Norcross said that pedestrians often disregard a 2000-pound car, assuming that the car will stop at marked crosswalks, which is not always the case.

Chairman Koses explained that it appears that Traffic Council would not recommend a new crosswalk to the Commissioner of Public Works, but that Traffic Council may support a crosswalk in combination with a pedestrian activated signal, which would be safer as vehicles are more likely to stop when they see a flashing pedestrian-activated signal.

The Committee voted NAN 4-0 on this issue with a recommendation that a pedestrian activated signal be considered for a location along this corridor.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Chairman