

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2009

Present: Ald. Danberg, Jerome Grafe (Resident member), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Sgt. James Norcross (Police Department) and Nina Wang (Assistant Traffic Engineer)

Also present: Ald. Salvucci, Brandel and Mansfield

TC 7-09 DONALD STRANGE 38 Thurston Road, Newton requesting parking 2-hour parking restrictions on Thurston Road. (Ward 5)

ACTION: Approve as Amended (5-0). No parking 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m., south side of Thurston Road between Circuit Ave. and the property line of the elderly housing complex. No parking 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., north side of Thurston Road between Circuit Ave. and the property line of the elderly housing complex. This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, Wednesday July 15, 2009.

NOTE: Mr. Strange joined the Council for discussion on this item. He stated that Thurston Road is a narrow, steep, long road. He believes that parking is unrestricted and unregulated. The problem is worse in the winter months due to commuters parking on both sides of the road. Snowplows have difficulty removing the snow due to vehicles parked on both sides. Emergency vehicles and school buses have difficulty passing parked vehicles. Some vehicles heading toward one another are forced to back up the road. Since Circuit Avenue has been paved and new parking restrictions added, some commuters are now parking on Thurston Road. Mr. Strange requested a two-hour restriction in hopes that it would eliminate the commuters from parking on Thurston Road all day.

Ms. Wang presented the Council members with a PowerPoint presentation. She stated that Thurston Road does not currently have any parking restrictions except on the corners at Circuit Avenue. Cars park on both sides of the road between Circuit Avenue and Cottage Street. Since Circuit Avenue has new parking restrictions (west side – no parking and east side – no parking 8 am – 10 am), commuters now park on Thurston Road on the south side. The width of Thurston Road is 24 feet. Ms. Wang stated that residents have complained that emergency vehicles cannot pass parked vehicles. On weekdays, cars typically are parked on the south side up to Cottage Street. The Traffic Engineer concurred with Mr. Strange that in the winter months it is particularly difficult for emergency vehicles to pass because of the steep hill. Ms. Wang indicated that when the roadway has no snow on the ground, parking on one side of the street is manageable. During the winter months, cars are not able to park close to the curb; the roadway can be too narrow to carry two-way traffic.

Ms. Wang recommended parking restrictions at Thurston Road between Cottage Street and Circuit Avenue on the south side during the months of November through March. She believes

that if parking is restricted year round on both sides, speeding may occur. Chairman Koses opened the discussion to members of the public who were present. Many comments were offered.

Chairman Koses stated that Thurston Road residents could benefit if there was a program in place that would only allow Newton residents to park on this street (and certain other streets throughout the City). This would deter many commuters from parking in this and other neighborhoods. Mr. Koses has personally witnessed vehicles being blocked due to vehicles parked on both sides. He believes that most Green Line commuters should be parking at Woodland or Riverside Stations, not on Thurston Road, and a restriction should be put on Thurston Road that would also minimize inconvenience to guests and residents of the street. Sgt. Norcross stated that he is not in favor of any two-hour street restriction because it is labor intensive to enforce.

Ald. Danberg made a motion to approve no parking between 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m on the south side of Thurston Road between Circuit Avenue and the property line of the elderly housing complex, and no parking between 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., north side of Thurston Road between Circuit Avenue and the property line of the elderly housing complex. The motion passed 5-0.

TC 10-09 ALD. SALVUCCI on behalf of Peter Harrington requesting no parking from 7 am to 9 am on the west side of Lowell Avenue. (From the north side of driveway at 157 Lowell Avenue, 65 feet north to eliminate obstructed view upon exiting driveway). (Ward 2)

ACTION: **Approve (5-0). Increase the no parking zone on the west side of Lowell Avenue 40 feet further to the north. This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, Wednesday July 15, 2009.**

NOTE: Ald. Salvucci and Mr. Harrington joined the Council for discussion on this item. Ald. Salvucci concurs with Mr. Harrington that it is impossible to exit Mr. Harrington's driveway because you can not see vehicles traveling on Lowell Avenue due to the parked vehicles. He indicated that the biggest problem is with vehicles speeding on Lowell Avenue to beat the light at the intersection of Washington Street.

Mr. Harrington provided the Council with photographs of his driveway on Lowell Avenue. He stated the biggest problem is exiting his driveway between 7 am to 9 am when there is heavy traffic between Watertown and Washington Streets.

Mr. Harrington indicated he is asking to eliminate the three existing parking spaces on Lowell Avenue in front of his home. The spaces are often used by the postal workers and are in high demand. He stated that on the opposite side of the street there is no parking and he is unclear as to why. Perhaps spaces could be added in front of the church.

Ms. Wang presented Council members with a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Wang stated that parking is currently restricted on the west side from Washington Street to about 15 feet north of the driveway. Ms. Wang concurs with Mr. Harrington and stated that it is very hazardous to exit his driveway, particularly if a SUV or truck is parked at the first spot of the 2-hour parking zone. Ms. Wang indicated parking is in high demand of the area. She made six field observations during the months of May and June 2009. No violations were observed for parking in the no parking zone. Cars generally park just north of the end of the no parking zone, where a 2-hour parking zone begins. Ms. Wang recommends extending the existing no parking zone from current 250 feet north of Washington Street to 290 feet.

Sgt. Norcross made the motion to increase the no parking zone on the west side of Lowell Avenue 40 feet further to the north. The motion passed 5-0.

TC 17-09 ANNE L. LI, 53 Beverly Road, Newton requesting parking restrictions on Duncklee Street and Beverly Road. (Ward 6)

ACTION: Approve (5-0). No parking 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. 7 days/week including holidays, west side of Beverly Road between Ipswich Road and Duncklee Street. No parking 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., 7 days/week including holidays, south side of Duncklee Street between Beverly Road and Manchester Road, including the area adjacent to the gate and entrance to Cold Spring Park. Additional parking restrictions, to be completed administratively, include no parking on the inner “elbow” of Duncklee Street/Beverly Road, on both sides of Terrace Avenue from Duncklee Street continuing up to 75 feet south, and on the south side of Ipswich Road between Beverly Road and continuing up to 75 feet west toward Cold Spring Park. This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, Wednesday July 15, 2009.

NOTE: Anne Li stated Beverly Road at Duncklee Street intersection is the rear entrance to Cold Spring Park. Since November, parking has become more congested at Beverly Road and Duncklee Street. Cars are parking at and near the intersection of Beverly Road and Duncklee Street, on both sides of the both streets. Drivers are parking diagonal to the curb, parallel to the curb and in the wrong direction. Parking on both sides prevents the passage of trucks and blocks driveways. She also stated that the volume of traffic has increased in recent months because of the off-leash dog pilot program. Drivers who are unfamiliar with the neighborhood are making U-turns in driveways and are unaware of small children playing in the neighborhood. Ms. Li expects these parking, traffic and safety issues to continue even if the off-leash pilot program is cancelled. Ms. Li said that publicity about the dog park has been widespread.

Ms. Wang presented Council members with a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Wang stated that she made nine daytime field visits to this location in the months of May and June 2009 and observed three to seven cars parking on the north side of Duncklee Street, one to three cars parked on Beverly Road and zero to two cars parked near the gate at the entrance to the park. In general, the two streets are quiet, residential streets and carry little cut through traffic. There

have been no accidents in the past three years. She stated that if more vehicles park at the end of Duncklee Street near the park gate, it will be difficult for them to turn around. Ms. Wang suggested restricting parking on south side of Duncklee Street between Terrace Avenue and the dead end and west side of Beverly Road from Duncklee Road to Ipswich Road.

Mr. Koses stated neighbors have met and made the suggestion of no parking on one side of Beverly Street, Duncklee Street, Manchester Road and Terrace Avenue. He stated that this might be a parking solution for this neighborhood, but that Traffic Council cannot implement a parking restriction on Manchester Road or Terrace Avenue until a Traffic Council petition is received for these streets. He recommended that somebody docket a new item to cover Manchester Road and Terrace Avenue so that action could be taken on these streets. Chairman Koses opened the discussion to members of the public who were present.

Ald. Mansfield stated this probably is one of the most sudden changes in parking situations affecting public safety that he has seen in twenty-five years. He indicated that residents have tried to make recommendations to solve this problem. There are times when there is a problem with vehicles parking anywhere they like. There could be a problem if an ambulance needed to respond to an emergency. Ald. Mansfield urged that public safety be considered.

Ald. Danberg noted that she has been involved with this issue since the beginning. It was decided to keep the item as originally docketed and then to look into the possibility of having a summertime meeting to address other streets, if necessary. She felt strongly that better signage is needed. She agreed that restrictions will probably be needed in other locations. Sgt. Norcross wanted residents to understand that parking restrictions would also apply to them.

Ald. Danberg made a motion to approve No Parking 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. 7 days/week including holidays, west side of Beverly Road between Ipswich Road and Duncklee Street. No parking 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., 7 days/week including holidays, south side of Duncklee Street between Beverly Road and Manchester Road, including the area adjacent to the gate and entrance to Cold Spring Park. Additional parking restrictions, to be completed administratively, include no parking on the inner “elbow” of Duncklee Street/Beverly Road, on both sides of Terrace Avenue from Duncklee Street continuing up to 75 feet south, and on the south side of Ipswich Road between Beverly Road and continuing up to 75 feet west toward Cold Spring Park.

TC 12-09 SANDRA LENETEN, 56 Manemet Road Newton Centre requesting stop sign on Fenno Road @ Manemet. (Ward 6)

ACTION: **NAN (5-0). Engineering Department to add lane markings, to be completed administratively.**

NOTE: Ms. Leneten was present for this discussion. She said that both Fenno and Manemet are used as a cut through streets. Cars that come up Fenno and down Manemet often turn into the wrong side of the street.

Ms. Wang reported that there were no accidents over the past three years and that traffic is very light at this location. The intersection is much wider than the average size of the intersections in the City. She recommended painting a traffic island under the guidelines of the City Traffic Engineer.

A resident asked about adding a raised island. Chairman Koses explained that type of request would have to be referred to the Public Facilities Committee. Jerome Grafe wanted to be sure that lane markings would be facilitated. David Koses said that it is up to the discretion of the Traffic Engineer to set up or not to set up a meeting with both Aldermen and residents before any decision is made regarding painting lines or islands in and near the intersection.

The Council voted no action necessary 5-0. Engineering Department to add lane markings, to be completed administratively.

TC 20-09 ALD. SCHNIPPER proposing two stop signs at the intersection of Jackson and Daniels Streets. (Ward 6)

ACTION: Denial (3-0-2, Grafe and Danberg abstained). This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, Wednesday July 15, 2009.

NOTE: Nina Wang reported that there were no accidents at this location over the past three years. Site lines are adequate and traffic volume is light during peak hours. The right-of-way is clearly defined with a stop sign at Daniel Street, and the stop sign compliance rate is very high. Vehicular volume entering the intersection from Jackson Street is below the minimum 300 vehicles warranted for multiple stop signs at an intersection. Her recommendation was to keep the existing single stop sign on Daniel at Jackson Street, and not to add additional stop signs.

David Koses asked Traffic Council for a straw poll before debating whether a stop sign trial should be considered at this intersection. Sgt. Norcross noted that nothing has changed appreciably in the past five years as this area does not meet state warrants and there is not a history of accidents. He would not support stop signs or temporary stop signs at this location. Nina Wang said a trial could end up being very dangerous. She explained when motorists are used to one thing and then there is a change, a serious accident could occur. Members of Traffic Council were unwilling to entertain a stop sign trial due to safety concerns, but that discussion should focus on whether or not to add permanent stop signs.

Chairman Koses opened the discussion to members of the public who were present. Some residents believe that the bumpout trial, currently in place, is unsafe. Mr. Koses explained that the Public Facilities Committee handles the design and placement of bumpout and the focus of this discussion is on stop signs.

Sgt. Norcross said, after listening to the Traffic Engineer, that no matter how this location would be reconfigured, warrants would not be met to install stop signs. Sgt. Norcross said that this intersection does not come close to warrant or accident requirement to consider additional stop signs. The Council has to remain consistent in their decision and be fair to everyone who comes before the Council. In order to make good, sound decisions we rely on our Traffic experts to help guide our decisions. He said he does not believe in installing stop signs where they are not warranted.

Jerome Grafe agreed with Sgt. Norcross that the Council endeavors to be consistent in decisions. Since Mr. Grafe joined as a citizen member, he has tried to be fair to all citizens, look at warrants and guidelines, and use his best professional judgment. None of the situations presented have been ideal. Mr. Grafe felt there should be consideration of the neck down with a stop sign proposal. In his opinion, stop signs are not the best speed control and would rather see the bump out solution.

David Koses said the Council puts a lot of trust in our Traffic Engineer's professional opinion, and that Nina Wang's and two other traffic engineers did not recommend stop signs at this location.

In response to a question from the public, Ald. Mansfield said that a Traffic Consultant who examined the intersection did not recommend raised crosswalks. This recommendation was done a few years ago and perhaps now the opinions would be different.

Sgt. Norcross made a motion to deny the stop signs. Ald. Danberg said she would like to abstain in order to have the option, depending on what recommendations come from the Public Facilities Committee. The Council voted denial 3-0-2 Grafe and Danberg abstained.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Chairman