

CITY OF NEWTON  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2009

Present: Jim Danila (Transportation Engineer), Victoria Danberg (Alderman), Danielle Delaney (Clerk), Jerome Grafe (Resident member), David Koses (Transportation Planner), and Jim Norcross (Police).

Also present: Ald. Baker, Harney, Lappin, and Sangiolo.

TC25-09      ALD. DANBERG on behalf of Rodney Barker requesting a handicap parking space opposite the handicap ramp at the Newton Highlands Congregational Church. The handicap space is to be placed on Lincoln Street to improve handicapped access to the church. (Ward 6)  
(Approved by Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities)

**ACTION:**      **Approve (5-0).**

**NOTE:**      Ald. Danberg stated that Mr. Barker indicated to her that it would be very helpful if there could be a handicap parking space on Lincoln Street near the Newton Highlands Congregational Church, benefiting himself and others.

Mr. Barker indicated that he is asking for a handicap parking space to be installed near the handicap ramp that leads to the church on Lincoln Street. He stated that there are currently no handicap parking spaces on Lincoln Street, which is the only entrance to the church. Space is available near the handicap ramp in front of the church to allow for a handicap parking space.

Mildred Hutchinson, 160 Lincoln Street, stated that she often helps Mr. Barker to attend church and is in favor of his request. Richard Hutchinson, 160 Lincoln Street, stated during the winter months it is very difficult for Mr. Barker to attend church due to lack of a handicap parking space. Allowing this parking space would be beneficial. Mr. Koses read an email from a resident from 72 Lincoln Street who is also in support of this handicap parking space request.

Sgt. Norcross asked if the catch basin would be an issue for the passenger to enter or exit the vehicle. Mr. Danila said the front bumper or wheel would be over the catch basin.

Ald. Danberg made the motion to approve this item. The motion passed 5-0.

HP1-09      MAYOR COHEN requesting two handicapped parking spaces (a) on 108 JFK Circle and (b) one (1) opposite 108 JFK Circle. (Ward 1)  
(Approved by Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities)

**ACTION:**      **No Action Necessary (5-0).**

**NOTE:**      Mr. Koses stated that this item was discussed at the Traffic Council meeting on September 24, 2009 pending additional information. As of this date, no additional information has been received and no one attended either Traffic Council meeting. Mr. Koses said that Bev

Droz, Human Services, contacted Ms. Panaggio who resides at 108 JFK Circle. Ms. Panaggio informed Ms. Droz that she holds a handicap placard, but does not know if there are other residents living nearby that also have handicap placards. She stated that there are two curb cuts on Kennedy Circle without handicap parking spaces, where Ms. Panaggio currently parks.

Mr. Danila stated that on September 24, 2009 the Traffic Council voted no parking along the outer ring within the middle section of the "Horseshoe" (between two existing telephone poles) to better facilitate emergency vehicles access. The new parking restrictions are in effect and he has not seen a large change in the demand for parking.

Ald. Danberg asked how many parking lots are at this location. Mr. Danila answered that there are two lots, with additional parking in the circle.

Sgt. Norcross stated that he does not see a need for handicap parking at this location. Mr. Grafe asked whether Ms. Panaggio could return to docket an additional item if she finds handicap parking necessary at this location. Mr. Koses responded that if residents were to provide additional information establishing the need for a handicap parking space, Traffic Council could reconsider the request at that time. Ald. Danberg made the motion no action necessary. The motion passed 5-0.

TC28-09      KURT AND TAKI HENSCH, 210 Nahanton Street #206, Newton Centre requesting (1) Traffic light be installed at the intersection of Nahanton Woods Road and Nahanton Street (2) "Signal Ahead" warning sign be placed on Nahanton Street for traffic from the west and east. (Ward 8)

**ACTION:**      **Denial (5-0).** The following can be done administratively: directed patrols, tree cleaning, and addition of signage. Recommend an item be docketed to allow for consideration of a traffic signal at the intersection of Winchester Street & Nahanton Street. This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, November 12, 2009.

**NOTE:**      Mr. Hensch said that he docketed this item because the intersection at Nahanton Woods is very dangerous especially during rush hours. Vehicles speed and you can not see them traveling on Nahanton Street until you are out on the street. He believes the solution could be resolved if a traffic signal were to be installed on Nahanton Street. Furthermore, trees hide speed limit signs and the trees should be cut back.

Mr. Danila said that sign obstruction is a problem and will ask the Parks and Recreation Department to trim the trees to improve the sight distance at the bend. Data collected has not shown any reported crashes at this intersection since 2005. The ADT for Nahanton Street showed that there are approximately 11,700 vehicles per day. 85% of vehicles passing was approximately 39 miles per hour, 9 miles above the posted speed limit in the area. Traffic counts indicate there are approximately 40 vehicles per hour turning out of Nahanton Woods, a low volume that does not meet traffic signal warrants. In order to meet the warrants, approximately 120 vehicles per hour would be needed for four hours during the day. Mr. Danila stated that there are eight traffic signal warrants used by engineers to decide if a traffic signal should be installed at a location. None of these warrants are met at this location. Even if a signal does meet a warrant, a traffic signal is not required to be installed as there may be other projects completed to address operational improvements.

Oscar Wasserman, 210 Nahanton Street # 514, said that perhaps another option could be considered if the traffic signal wasn't to be installed. He suggested that trees be cleared that are blocking the speed limit signs, install a sign indicating there is an access road ahead or a sign indicating there is a bus stop.

Theodore Korelitz, 210 Nahanton Street #303, re-iterated how dangerous the intersection is. He said the City has increased the speed limit from 25 to 30 miles per hour. He suggests a flashing light be installed on Nahanton Street only turning red when a vehicle is exiting from Nahanton Woods.

Ald. Lappin said she does not believe that the City increased the speed limit in this area. Signs were installed for 25 mph, but legally the City was not allowed to install these signs, and the state told the City that the signs had to be removed. She knows that in the past, a traffic light was requested at this area. She knows that visibility is an issue and asks if it meets one of the eight warrants. Mr. Danila stated visibility is not a traffic signal warrant. She said that this is a public safety issue regarding walkers and drivers and asked if there were any options or suggestions Traffic Council could make.

Mr. Koses stated the speed limit on Nahanton Street from Dedham Street traveling west bound toward the Needham town line is 30 mph for the first half mile and 35 mph for the second half mile. Mr. Danila indicated this location is within the 30 mph zone.

Ms. Kaitz, 210 Nahanton Street, said she does not believe speed is an issue. The problem is with the road curving on both sides and one cannot exit safely onto Nahanton Street. Nahanton Street has become a cut through from Route 128.

John Shea, 210 Nahanton Street #311, stated that Nahanton Woods is basically housing for the elderly. He considers this a safety factor for the elderly. As part of the Route 128 construction project, there will be a new exit ramp leading to Nahanton Street.

Ald. Danberg said that circumstances have changed over the past twenty-six years. Now, when a large complex is proposed to be built, the City sometimes requires that the developer undertake traffic mitigation and may require them to pay for the installation of a traffic signal. She asked about the approximate cost of installing a traffic signal. Mr. Danila said that it would cost at least \$150,000, plus the annual upkeep, to install a full signal and approximately \$25,000 to install a warning beacon. Ald. Danberg asked if there was another option the City could do in this location.

David Koses asked about using the speed box in this location. Sgt. Norcross explained the problem with the speed box is that it has a short battery life. During cold weather the battery would only last for a day.

Ald. Danberg made the motion to deny this item. The motion passed 5-0. The following can be done administratively: directed patrols, tree cleaning, and additional signage. Traffic Council

recommends an item be docketed to allow for consideration of a traffic signal at the intersection of Winchester Street & Nahanton Street.

TC13-09      ALD. DANBERG requesting discussion of the possibility of changing the existing 8-10 am parking restriction on Arapahoe Road to 9-11 am or other restriction to facilitate neighborhood needs for using on-street parking when children are going to school and adults are leaving for work. (Ward 4)

**ACTION:**      **Approve (4-1, Grafe).** No parking, both sides, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Monday-Friday. This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, November 12, 2009.

**NOTE:**      Ald. Harney and Sangiolo joined the Traffic Council on this item. Mr. Koses said that all houses that had any frontage on Arapahoe Road were notified of this meeting.

Mr. Danila said that Arapahoe Road has no parking between 8 and 10 am. Windermere and Brae Burn also have the same regulation. There is a two hour limit on Greenough between 8 am and 6 pm and Washington Street has no parking along the west side and no parking between 7 am and 7 pm on the east side.

Mr. Koses read the following from Traffic Council Policy #1: "Given the availability of long-term parking options, it shall be the general practice of Traffic Council to attempt to protect streets nearest the green line and commuter rail stations from over-use by commuters in search of free all-day parking. In the process, the Traffic Council shall strive to balance the parking needs of residents and their visitors while ensuring safe access for emergency vehicles while also providing express bus commuters with some ability to park on public streets near their express bus stops in Newton."

A resident of 47 Arapahoe Road said there are about twenty houses on Arapahoe Road with nine elementary school children as well as other children walking to school. Most of the driveways are single lane and cars have to be moved into the street causing danger to the children.

Mr. Koses said that one email from an Arapahoe resident stated that the 9 to 11 am parking ban is not a feasible solution and suggests either a no parking sign between 6 and 8 am or between 7 and 9 am or resident only permit. There was another email read that said that the current 8 to 10 am parking restriction should not be changed and that neighborhood needs are being met.

Sgt. Norcross said that parking control officers would not be able to enforce an 8 am restriction because they are doing crossing guard duty and are not out in the street until 9 am.

Ald. Danberg asked about a 9 am to 10 am ban, which would serve the same purpose as it limits commuter parking and it would give the police an opportunity to enforce a 9 and 10 restriction.

David Koses said public transportation should be encouraged. Ald. Harney said that Arapahoe Street is very narrow and if a car is parked across the street, it would be difficult to get out of the driveway. He felt strongly that the street should not be opened to commuter parking.

Ald. Sangiolo would like the item to be held and have a neighborhood meeting. Ald. Harney would also like to have more neighborhood discussion. Sgt Norcross noted that if the item were held, the upcoming Traffic Council meetings have many items and this would not come up until after the first of the year. Jerome Grafe did not see the need for any change.

Sgt. Norcross made a motion to change the current parking restriction from 8 to 10 am to 9 to 10 am Monday through Friday. The motion passed 4-1 (Grafe) No parking, both sides, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 am, Monday-Friday.

TC27-09      CHARLES MUELLER, 22 Chestnut Hill Road, Chestnut Hill requesting (1) First 50 yards on Gate House Road southwards from Beacon Street “No Parking” (2) Chestnut Hill Terrace “1 hour parking from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm excluding Sundays and Holidays” and “No Parking from 5:30 pm to 10:00 pm”. (Ward 7)

**ACTION:**      **Hold (5-0).** 60-day trial of the following: No parking, Chestnut Hill Terrace, north side, all days. No parking, Chestnut Hill Terrace, south side, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., all days. No parking, Gate House Road, both sides, between Chestnut Hill Terrace and Beacon Street, all days. This item will be heard again in January 2010 or later.

**NOTE:**      Mrs. Mueller, 22 Chestnut Hill Road spoke and explained that Gate House Road is situated at a right angle to Beacon Street at the eastern edge of Boston College. Gate House Road is 23 ft. wide. It has a steep slope and provides access to Chestnut Hill Terrace and Chestnut Hill Road. There are many service trucks that access the hill by driving up Gate House Road. In the winter, the road is often slick and difficult to negotiate. The issue is that Gate House Road has become a 24 hour parking lot, mostly for Boston College students but also for bicycle commuters who park their cars and ride into Boston and return at the end of the day. Fire trucks have difficulty progressing up the hill. Gate House Road is a two-way street and with one row of parked cars, it can no longer function well as a two-way street. A recommendation made by the neighbors is for the entire stretch of Gate House Road, south from Beacon Street to be restricted to no parking on either side. For Chestnut Hill Terrace the recommendation would be one hour parking from 8 am to 5:30 pm excluding Sundays and holidays.

Mr. Koses pointed out that Traffic Council Policy 1 states that ” when institutional parking adversely impacts nearby neighborhoods, it shall be the general practice of Traffic Council to establish parking restrictions to allow for adequate use of the streets by residents as well as their visitors and contractors.” However, Traffic Council’s general practice has been to employ the least restrictive means available to limit spillover since residents must also abide by whatever restrictions are placed on the streets in front of their homes.

Mr. Danila said on his site visits, he noted that spaces were 85% to 100% occupied. Most of the cars had out of state plates or Boston College stickers. Chestnut Hill Terrace had between 2 and 8 cars parked during site visits.

Ald. Baker said that parking was initially limited at the foot of Gate House Road simply because motorists had difficulty seeing when turning in or out. (The Traffic Engineer has the capacity to administratively post a “no parking here to corner” restriction). When trash removal

subsequently became a problem, the Police Department placed additional emergency restrictions in place, as a temporary fix, as follows: no parking on Gate House Road between Chestnut Hill Terrace and Beacon Street, no parking between 8:00 am and 11 am as well as no parking between 8 pm to 10 pm on Chestnut Hill Terrace. These restrictions appear to have worked.

Kenneth Leet, 16 Gate House Road, said that this problem started about six months ago and this was not a problem in the past. Two cars have difficulty as the road is narrow. Snowplows will have great difficulty. He would like to see the no parking restriction extended. Timothy Allen, 96 Beacon Street, said that Gate House Road is extremely dangerous in winter as water runoff comes down off the hill creating an ice rink on that road.

A resident of 62 Chestnut Hill Road feels Gate House Road is very dangerous and feels cars will be towed if parked there. Ruthanne Fuller, 32 Suffolk Road said 99% of the neighbors are in favor of the current proposal. Sarah Allen, 96 Beacon Street, said that she cannot back out of her driveway. A resident of 33 Chestnut Hill Road reiterated that Gate House Road is narrow and dangerous. Karen Alpern, 5 Chestnut Hill Terrace, feels that the new restrictions have helped but should be more restrictive. Kevin Raskin, 28 Chestnut Hill Terrace said there are children on the street and likes the fact that the street is a dead-end street but now the traffic is a problem. He said that garbage was not collected for three days due to the parking issue and feels the restrictions are helpful. Peter Levangie, 20 Chestnut Hill Terrace also feels the current restrictions have been helpful. A resident of 30 Chestnut Hill Road asked about allowing residents to park on the street. Mr. Koses explained that residents, and their contractors and visitors must also have to abide by any parking restriction that is placed on their street. Sgt. Norcross said that on some occasions (such as birthday parties) there would be consideration for a special event.

Ald. Baker said that tow zones have worked during football games and asked that the Council think of a tow zone if necessary. Ald. Danberg made the motion to hold the item to enact a 60-day trial of the following: No parking, Chestnut Hill Terrace, north side, all days. No parking, Chestnut Hill Terrace, south side, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., all days. No parking, Gate House Road, both sides, between Chestnut Hill Terrace and Beacon Street, all days.

TC8-09      ALD. FREEDMAN on behalf of Paul Rubin requesting study of congestion at intersection of Dedham Street and Wiswall Road with consideration of adding or moving traffic signals on Dedham Street. (Ward 8)

**ACTION:**    **Denial (5-0).** This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, November 12, 2009.

**NOTE:**        Traffic Engineer Danila gave a power point presentation and noted that there have been four reported accidents since 2005. Based on that, the crash rate is 0.15 which is 1.5 crashes per million entering vehicles. In Mr. Danila's opinion safety is not an issue here. Sgt. Norcross noted that the problem only occurs during a very small time period. Mr. Danila said traffic signals should be placed at least 1000 feet apart. Adding another traffic signal could make traffic worse. Ald. Danberg made the motion to deny this item. The motion passed 5-0.

TC30-09      DAVID KOSES requesting to add pedestrian-activated warning signals in TPR 19-146 at the following locations for which funding was approved on 10/6/08, board order #319-08.

- (1) Crafts Street and Linwood Avenue
- (2) Washington Street and Harvard Street
- (3) Waverley Avenue and Franklin Street
- (4) Waverley Avenue and Arlington Street
- (5) Centre Street near Pelham Street

**ACTION:**    **Hold (5-0).** Allow for further discussion between the Law Department and the Department of Public Works.

**NOTE:**        David Koses made the motion to hold this item. The motion to hold passed 5-0 to allow for further discussion between the Law Department and the Department of Public Works.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Traffic Council Chair