

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2009

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

Also Present: Ald. Brandel, Harney, Linsky, & Sangiolo

HP2-09        DR. MORTON KLIMAN requesting two handicapped parking spaces (a) Walnut Street in front of CVS Pharmacy and (b) Walnut Street in front of Bank of America. (Ward 2)

(Approved by Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities on 10-19-09)

**ACTION:    Approve as Amended (5-0) Approve one handicap space on the north side of Madison Avenue at the intersection of Walnut Street. Update the TPR to match current signage as follows: Highland Avenue, north side, from the driveway east of 19 Highland Avenue easterly to Walnut Street - metered parking zone. Highland Avenue, north side, from the driveway east of 19 Highland Avenue westerly to Lowell Avenue - 1 hour limit, Monday-Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Highland Avenue, south side, from Lowell Avenue easterly to Walnut Street - 1 hour limit, Monday-Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**NOTE:**        The petitioner, Dr. Kliman, was present and told the Council that there were very few handicapped parking spaces in the area and that it is a long walk from the handicap spaces in the Austin Street parking lot to get to the bank or to the CVS. He felt that this area was in need of a handicapped space.

Mr. Danila noted that there are handicapped spaces available in the Austin Street Parking Lot. There are about 53 on-street metered spaces in Newtonville. These spaces are based on observations made at different times during the day and are typically 85% to 90% occupied. These are all one-hour meters, to promote vehicle turnover. Mr. Danila explained that by state law, cars that have handicapped plates or tags can park at any meter without being charged or subjected to the meter time limit.

Dr. Kliman again stressed that it is a long walk from Austin Street to both the CVS and the bank. David Koses agreed with Dr. Kliman that there is a need for a handicap parking space closer to the Walnut Street retail area. Sgt. Norcross felt the spaces in the parking lot were not that far from the bank. He was inclined to think that people who use CVS for prescriptions could benefit from a handicap parking space on the east side of Walnut Street, but did not see a need for two spaces.

Ald. Danberg moved approval of one handicap space on the north side of Madison Avenue at the intersection of Walnut Street, and also to update the TPR to match current signage on Highland Avenue.

TC45-09 (#234-09) ALD. FREEDMAN on behalf of Paul Rubin requesting consideration of additional on-street handicap parking spaces in village centers particularly Newton Centre. [02/11/09 @ 8:52 AM]  
(Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities suggest "adding two spaces to the parking lot in Newton Centre and evaluate the situation" on 09-14-09)  
PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANS. NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0 on 11/04/09

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

**NOTE:** Mr. Danila said that the Langley Road parking lot currently has five handicapped spaces, which satisfies the ratio that state law requires. The Pelham Street lot has two spaces and two spaces will be added to be in compliance with state law. The Pleasant Street lot has three spaces and one handicapped space will be added to be in compliance with state law. Mr. Danila said it is the opinion of the Department of Public Works that we should provide enough handicap parking spaces to meet state law, and does not see any reason to exceed that.

TC29-09 ALD. SANGIOLO, GENTILE AND HARNEY requesting installation of a pedestrian-activated warning signal on Commonwealth Avenue in front of the Marriott Hotel in Auburndale. (Ward 4)

**ACTION:** Hold (5-0) Item will be rescheduled at a time to be requested by Ward 4 Aldermen

**NOTE:** Ald. Harney said that it is difficult for pedestrians to cross Commonwealth Avenue in the area of the Marriott Hotel with cars travelling at a high rate of speed. Mr. Danila said that to install pedestrian warning beacons, the city would have to install handicap ramps, a refuge area in the median strip, and warning beacons with mastarms at an approximate cost to exceed \$60,000.

Sgt. Norcross said given the fact that the pedestrian counts are so low, it would be hard to support this request and expect the City to absorb the extra expense, beyond \$40,000, to be provided by the Marriott Hotel as a part of a recent Special Permit approval. David Koses agreed with Sgt. Norcross and said there are probably hundreds of locations in the city that have more pedestrians crossing.

Ald. Harney feels pedestrians are not crossing because it is a very dangerous location. Ald. Danberg agreed and said that a pedestrian beacon would benefit the Marriott as well as the general public. It was noted that there is a four-year time limit on funds from the Marriott Special Permit to be spent, and that one year has passed.

Mr. Danila said that a hotel usually attracts drivers and not pedestrians. He would rather see bicyclists and pedestrians crossing at a full traffic signal rather than at a yellow pedestrian warning beacon. Installing and maintaining a warning beacon at this location does not make sense to him. Jerome Grafe felt this area did deserve some sort of a crossing.

Ald. Danberg moved hold. The Council voted to hold and the item will be rescheduled at a time to be requested by Ward 4 Aldermen.

TC32-09      FELICE D'AMORE requesting no parking on Waban Street between Pearl Street and Waban Park Monday through Friday. (Ward 1)

**ACTION:**      **Denial (5-0) This decision is subject to appeal through the end of the business day, January 6, 2010.**

**NOTE:**      Mr. D'Amore said that there are three major schools in this area causing a great deal of traffic. He feels that it is dangerous for any emergency vehicles to gain access.

Mr. Danila said that Waban Street is 24 feet wide. Several visits were made to the location and it was noted that only two cars were parked on the street during these visits.

Brad Seamans agrees that sometimes the street is busy, but is hesitant to see more parking restrictions placed on the street. He does note that snow plowing has been a problem.

Sgt. Norcross said that parked cars have the effect of slowing down cars. If parking is taken away, cars would speed. Mr. D'Amore stressed that this was such a short street with two major corners.

Ald. Danberg asked if it would be a help to administratively install a sign restricting parking (50 ft.) at an intersection. Mr. D'Amore answered that would make the situation worse.

Mr. Koses said he has received two emails from residents who were not in favor of restrictions. Jerome Grafe and Ald. Danberg suggested this area be highlighted for snow plowing.

Jim Danila made a motion to deny. The Committee voted to deny the item, 5-0.

TC33-09      ALD. BRANDEL requesting the city traffic engineer study the intersection of Brewster Road at Woodward Avenue and if necessary recommend a solution to the parking issue. (Ward 5)

**ACTION:**      **No Action Necessary (5-0) Width of Brewster Road will be measured closer to intersection of Mayflower Terrace.**

**NOTE:**      It was noted by Chairman Koses that everyone from Brewster Road had been notified. Mayflower Terrace was not notified.

Mr. Koses visited the site twice and noticed only three cars on the street. Sgt. Norcross said a fire engine roughly needs 10 feet to get by and asked if this street is wide enough to allow passage, to which Mr. Danila replied that the street width is wide enough.

Sgt. Norcross made a motion for no action necessary and the Committee voted 5-0. Brewster Road will be measured closer to intersection of Mayflower Terrace.

TC34-09      ALD. BRANDEL requesting the city traffic engineer (a) study street curve on Chestnut Street near Indiana Court Newton Upper Falls, (b) review accident reports and (c) recommend a solution to mitigate any potential hazard that this street condition presents. (Ward 5)

**ACTION:**      **No Action Necessary (5-0) DPW staff will examine warning signage and will add additional signage, if necessary. Traffic Council recommends that an item be docketed in PS&T to change the classification of Chestnut Street from an off-street municipal lot to on-street parking.**

**NOTE:**      Ald. Brandel said that a number of people have mentioned the difficulty and the danger that existed in this area.

Jim Danila said that traffic counts showed 7,100 vehicles per day and is considered a local collector road. The posted speed limit is 25 mph. The highway division had two separate malfunctions on their tubes and accurate speed data was not available. There have been five reported crashes at this location since 2005. That would make the crash rate at 1.54 crashes per million vehicle miles traveled. One crash occurred during snow which was a rear end crash. A single vehicle crash occurred at night during a rain storm. A single vehicle crash was caused by sun glare. A vehicle was hit while exiting Braceland Park parking lot and a bicyclist was hit near 1146 Chestnut Street. According to the police report, the bicyclist crossed traffic without looking and the motorist was not cited. It seemed that only one accident would be noteworthy from a safety concern seeing that the others were single vehicle crashes. Mr. Danila explained that there is not a lot that can be done for this type of collector road.

Ald. Brandel noted that when the road is wet, it can be tricky. Ald. Danberg said that although there were reasons for the accidents, five accidents in five years appear to be a red flag. Mr. Danila responded that the crash rate is 1/3 of what the state rate would be for an average, similar roadway. If the crash rate exceeded 1.46, Mr. Danila would be concerned.

The Committee voted No Action Necessary (5-0). The DPW staff will examine warning signage and will add additional signage, if necessary. Traffic Council recommends that an item be docketed in PS&T to change the classification of Chestnut Street from an off-street municipal lot to on-street parking. Off-street municipal parking lots would require the addition of handicap parking spaces.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koses, Chairman