

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2007

Present: David Koses (Chairman) Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer) Sgt. Norcross (Police) Ald. Christine Samuelson

Aldermen Present: Ald. Lennon, Ald. Salvucci, Ald. Baker

#158-07 ALD. GENTILE, HARNEY, SANGIOLO requesting on behalf of residents of Studio Road and Lasell College parking restrictions on STUDIO ROAD. (Ward 4) [5-2-07 @ 1:03 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 4-0

NOTE: Traffic Engineer Schuckel explained that Studio Road is a private way. (The City's jurisdiction is different when the street is a private way.) Signatures needed to be collected from all abutters to authorize parking restrictions that are not required for emergency vehicle access or trash collection. Kevin Shea of Studio Road explained he had been asked at the last meeting to gather signatures of all abutters and was able to get all but one property owner as that home was still empty. Mr. Shea was asked to submit the list of signatures to the Clerk's office when he is able to get the last signature.

#122-07 ALD. SALVUCCI, on behalf of area residents, requesting a 25 mph speed limit on Warwick Road. (Ward 3) [04-09-07 @ 11:49AM]

ACTION: NAN 4-0

NOTE: Ald. Salvucci explained this was a dangerous situation and felt that the 25 mph request was reasonable. A letter was read from Mr. DeNucci, a resident of Warwick Road, who was in support of this request.

Mr. Schuckel told the Council a study was done on Warwick Road. Only 4 to 6 cars were noted parking on the street. There were many signs posted. The daily number of cars on Warwick Road is between 450 and 500, with an 85th percentile speed of 31-32 miles per hour. These numbers are important because the city does not have the jurisdiction to set the speed limit in Massachusetts. A city ordinance must first be passed and then the state must approve our request. The state will look at this study and say that 30 mph is an appropriate speed for this street. The data do not support a change in speed limit, per the criteria used by the State.

Paul Shumacher of Warwick Road said that, in his opinion, a change in speed limit would be ignored on this street. Sgt. Norcross said if possible, speed on the street would be checked.

The Council voted NAN 4-0 on this item.

#177-07 ISRAEL M. STEIN, 17 Edge Hill Road, Chestnut Hill, requesting the speed limit be reduced to 25 mph on Hobart Road. (Ward 7) [05-09-07 @ 11:01AM]

ACTION: NAN 4-0

NOTE: Israel Stein was present and explained that he had also requested a stop sign. Since this was not clear on the docket request form, the notification was only for speed limit reduction and this stop sign request could not be discussed until all abutters are notified. It was decided that new docket item #177-07(2) would be on the next agenda for the stop sign.

Mr. Schuckel said Hobart is a one way street a little over a half mile long. It is a winding road. Speed and volume were studied. The daily number of cars on Hobart Road is about 2900, with an 85th percentile speed of 34 miles per hour. The road width varies from 33 feet in some places to 23 feet in others. The result of the one way has been less volume and more speed. Mr. Schuckel feels there is little chance that the state would agree to lower the speed limit.

It was explained that criteria are established by the state for stop signs. The criteria relates to traffic volume and accident history. Guidelines govern Mr. Schuckel's vote and he would like to come back with counts, accident history and site lines at that location.

Ald. Samuelson felt traffic calming would be the better solution for this location. Sgt. Norcross will schedule some directed patrols at this location.

#154-07 ALD. LENNON requesting on behalf of various business owners a discussion regarding the distribution of 1-, 3- and 12-hour meters in the Richardson Street Municipal Parking Lot. (Ward 1) [4-23-07 @ 9:54 PM]

ACTION: TRIAL APPROVED 4-0

NOTE: The owner of Gleason's Florists was present and explained that she has to move her car as the 12 hour meters are taken up by commuters who go into Boston.

Ald. Lennon said there appears to be a large number of three hour meters and he wondered about increasing the number of 12 hour meters.

Clint Schuckel said there are 62 parking spaces in the municipal lot. It was noted that the 12 hour spaces were generally filled by 9:00am. Three hour spaces had to one third to one half spaces taken. One hour limit had 8 cars and at a minimum 10 spaces were open. Based on observations there was 100% demand for the 12 hour spaces. In terms of pricing, the rates were changed 16 months ago to make it more expensive for short term parking. The City does not have a mechanism to reserve spaces for local businesses (i.e., preventing MBTA commuters from using them). A possibility is to make more 12 hour spaces, another option would be no parking from 7 to 9, or a local business permit that would avoid the inconvenience of feeding the meters everyday with coins. The Traffic Council felt this was the best the long-term solution, but that a short-term solution might be the 7 to 9 restriction.

Ald. Samuelson suggested no parking 7 to 9. Ald. Lennon would be in favor of a trial of no parking 7 to 9.

Approximately 14 employees work all day at this location.

Ald. Samuelson asked that the Traffic Engineer study to see if more long term parking could be added to the north side of Richardson Street toward Church Street; some of the 3 hour meters in the Richardson Street lot be turned into unmetered long term parking with no parking 7 to 9 am. Sgt. Norcross said this would be very difficult to enforce since the parking control officers have crossing guard duties in the early morning.

Ald. Samuelson moved a 60-day trial to change 10 meters to no parking 7 to 9 and reduce 3-hour meters by 10 and adding 12 hour meters. (Additional meters may be added after trial) The Council approved trial 4-0.

#155-07 ALD. LENNON requesting on behalf of KF Realty Associates that Section 19-176 re California Street be amended by striking in paragraph (3) a. the words "...and from Los Angeles Street to the Watertown Line." and by adding a new paragraph "(5) Two-hour limit, south side, from Los Angeles Street to the Watertown Line." (Ward 1) [4-23-07 @ 9:54 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 4-0

NOTE: Ald. Lennon addressed the Council and said it would be helpful to extend the existing one-hour limit to a two-hour limit. A representative of KF Realty Associates was present and explained this is needed. Mr. Schuckel was in support of this.

Ald. Samuelson moved approval and the Council voted 4-0 in favor.

#153-07 ALD. LENNON requesting a stop sign on Channing Street at the intersection of Pearl Street in Newton Corner (Ward 1). [4-23-07 @ 9:54 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 4-0

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel is in support of this not because of volume but for consistency. There are stop signs on the adjacent side streets of Peabody, Bacon and Thornton. The Council voted in favor 4-0

#156-07 ALD. LENNON requesting that Section 19-85, One-way Streets, re Vernon Street be amended by moving the "Do Not Enter" sign located near Centre Street immediately beyond the driveway of the Newton Corner Branch Library to allow vehicular access from Centre Street.(Ward 1) [4-23-07 @ 9:54 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 4-0

NOTE: Clint Schuckel said observations were done and it was noted that a fair amount of cars were parked the wrong way. The recommendation was to extend the yellow line into the new two way section to try to make things clearer. David Koses recommended that two “no parking” signs be turned around. Ald. Lennon suggested adding more signage.

There was a motion to make the trial permanent and Ald. Samuelson suggested a treatment for a bump out, but that would have to be subject of a separate docket item.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosalie Myers, Clerk