

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2007

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

Also: Ald. Baker, Ald. Linsky, Ald. Albright, Ald. Sangiolo

#HP-17 **ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH** requesting relocation of two handicapped designated parking spaces; one to west and one to the east of the 2 existing spaces. (Ward 7)

ACTION: **APPROVED 3-0**

NOTE: Richard Moynihan, Business Manager for St. Ignatius Church, addressed the Council. He noted the parish was built in 1996. On a typical weekend, about 2,200 people worship at this church. The best access is from Commonwealth Avenue. He felt the best access for handicapped would be additional spaces on Commonwealth Avenue. The Mayor's Committee has recommended approval of these spaces.

Clint Schuckel said five site visits did not show that all spaces were in use. He noted that possibly visits were not done at the right times but did not see the need for additional spaces that should be provided on a public street versus off-street. Mr. Moynihan said that weekend visits would show the need. He also noted that some of the current reserved spaces are in locations that are not helpful and that there are only four useful spaces.

Mr. Koses made a motion to approve one space immediately east of the two existing spaces until more proof is shown for further need. The Council voted to approve 3-0 (Ald. Harney absent).

#HP-18 **SHELDON BROWN**, 384 Linwood Avenue, requesting handicapped parking space in front of 384 Linwood Avenue. (Ward 2) [09-05-07 @ 3:34PM]

ACTION: **NAN 3-0 (Ald. Harney absent)**

NOTE: Mr. Brown, the petitioner, requested this petition be withdrawn.

#157-07 ANTHONY P. RAUCCI, 19 Alderwood Road, Newton Centre, requesting parking restriction on ALDERWOOD ROAD for safe passage of emergency/service vehicles as well as for cars entering/exiting residential driveways (Ward 7). [04-24-07 @3:13 PM]
NO PARKING, 7 A.M.-7 P.M., NORTH SIDE; 1-HOUR PARKING, 7 A.M.-7 P.M., SOUTH SIDE HELD FOR 60-DAY TRIAL 5-0 on 9/20/07

ACTION: **HELD 4-0 (TRIAL EXTENDED)**

NOTE: Mr. Raucci said the trial has worked out extremely well. Ald. Baker indicated neighbors have been working on this and there is one house that has a problem. He feels the general plan has been good and hoped the one problem could be solved,

Silka Rothchild of 46 Alderwood Road said she has lived on Alderwood Road for 13 years. There are medical issues in the Rothchild family. Since this trial, it has been difficult for access to her front door. Her proposal is a sign which leaves her property free and clear. She was in strong opposition to a handicapped sign in front of her house. Other residents suggested resident sticker parking. Clint Schuckel explained that this was not an option as the ordinance states that another type of parking restriction must be in place for a year and determined to have failed to address the associated problem.

Sgt Norcross was concerned this would set a precedent for allowing just a portion of a street to have no parking. Mr. Koses noted that in this case he could see the need for the one house restriction. Mr. Schuckel felt the only remedy would be the handicapped space.

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Sgt. Norcross felt consistency by the Traffic Council is important. It has been demonstrated that there is a parking need at the location of 46 Alderwood and handicapped space, in his opinion, would be a viable option.

The Traffic Council was split 2-2 on whether to approve the trial as implemented or make changes to try and accommodate Ms. Rothchild without creating a handicapped parking space. To maintain emergency vehicle access, there was a motion to keep the current trial in place until a new fifth (resident) member is appointed. The Council voted 4-0 to extend the trial and agreed to hear the item again as soon as a fifth member is present to break the tie.

#177-07(2) ISRAEL M. STEIN, 17 Edge Hill Road, Chestnut Hill, requesting installation of a stop sign on HOBART ROAD at the intersection of INTERVALE ROAD, Newton (Ward 7). [05-09-07 @11:01 A.M.]

ACTION: **NAN 4-0**

NOTE: Ms. Stein of 17 Edge Hill Road explained that exiting Intervale Road is impossible until you are half way out on the street. Clint Schuckel said studies show about a maximum of 200 cars an hour southbound on Hobart and found that one car every 5-10 minutes was observed on Intervale. (85% of cars were going 34 mph or less.) Traffic on Intervale Road was shown to be light and would not meet the warrants. There has been one accident in the last 3 years. Mr. Schuckel would not recommend a stop sign at this location. He did feel that narrowing of the road or some other physical change to the road would be helpful.

Two letters were read from residents; one in favor, one against

A resident of 91 Intervale said that when you are coming down Hobart, cars are moving rapidly and you are unable to see. In her opinion, there would be a problem with a stop sign but does feel a parabolic mirror could be helpful.

Sgt. Norcross said this appears to be more of a design issue rather than a need for a stop sign. Mr. Koses agreed that a design solution could help the problem. Ald. Harney felt that if a stop sign were installed, rolling stops would be the result. Mr. Schuckel said he would investigate the effectiveness of a parabolic mirror on this site.

A motion was made by Clint Schuckel for No Action Necessary on this item. The Council voted 4-0.

#295-07 DAVID KOSES, TRANSPORTATION PLANNER, requesting relocating or improving light on Centre Street, northbound at Pearl Street. (Ward 1) [09-13-07 @3:08 PM]

ACTION: NAN 4-0

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel said that adding a signal head for northbound Centre Street near Pearl Street would cause driver confusion for vehicles turning right out of Jefferson Street who would think they must stop again at Pearl Street after turning right, and unfortunately, there is not another feasible solution to the situation.

#258-07 ALD. LINSKY, JOHNSON, ALBRIGHT, LENNON, SALVUCCI requesting a discussion relative to changing the traffic flow so that the east end of the Lowell Avenue extension would no longer accommodate two-way through traffic into the intersection of Watertown, Crafts, and Lowell Avenue extension. [8-7-07 @3:12 PM]

ACTION: HELD 4-0

NOTE: Danielle Bailey of the Planning Department explained this project was recommended by the Newtonville Advisory Committee and was funded in 2005 to include improvement of both pedestrian and vehicular safety. At the intersection of Walnut and Lowell Ave, the crosswalk is reduced by half making it shorter and safer. Traffic has been reduced by 40% on Lowell Avenue between Walnut Street and Watertown Street. Ms Bailey said the goal is to make the park safer. A suggestion was to remove the bump at 6 Lowell Avenue.

Mr. Schuckel said the plan designed by the Engineering Department was to test the changes and eventually make things more safe, pedestrian friendly, and attractive. Watertown and Crafts Street show a large amount of accidents. (Trial has been in place for four weeks.) Some of the pros include keeping through traffic on arterial streets, eliminating crossover. Cons include egress from 6 and 10 Lowell Avenue has worsened. The Fire Department had a negative impact. The curb at that location is difficult for large trucks to maneuver. Some residents are forced to drive around the block. The trial did not address eastbound traffic coming Lowell Avenue to Watertown Street. There still are issues with the merge at Craft Street. Mr. Schuckel questioned if this should go back the way it was or if the goals warrant further study. He noted that the only way to really address the westbound traffic issue would be a full closure of the road at Watertown Street, with traversable curb for emergency vehicle use only.

David Koses said he had received a letter from Ald. Lennon who expressed concern regarding lack of notification of the changes that are being tried.

Tom Frost of 568 California Street said that more congestion is now on side streets.

Various comments and suggestions were made including coordinated lights.

Ald. Linsky said the trial could be extended. He mentioned the Watertown/Walnut intersection and hoped the flow could be improved. Ald. Albright wanted to focus on the Watertown/Walnut Street light and possibly having a turning lane in that location. Without a turning lane, she feels traffic could back up. Sgt. Norcross felt the general concept seems favorable with the exception of Lowell and Watertown showing some problems. Clint Schuckel felt the plan should continue to be worked on as there are some some good pieces to keep and some that need to be changed. He recommended this item be held in Traffic Council to further develop an improvement.

The Council voted to hold 4-0.

#134-04(3) ALD. SANGIOLO requesting (1) the rescission of Ordinance Y-2, dated February 5, 2007, that provides for installation of parking meters along Washington Street, Lower Falls and (2) a parking study of Washington, Grove, and Moulton Streets and the surrounding area to determine if other parking restrictions are necessary to deal with other overflow parking from businesses along Washington Street.

NO PARKING, 9-11 A.M., MOULTON STREET, BETWEEN GROVE STREET AND GAIL ROAD; NO PARKING, GROVE STREET, FROM MOULTON STREET FOR EQUAL DISTANCE (TO MOULTON Street RESTRICTION) HELD 5-0 FOR 60-DAY TRIAL on 9/20/07

ACTION: NAN 4-0

NOTE: The Board of Aldermen has previously approved parking meters along the south side of Washington Street in Lower Falls between the Charles River and Route I-95/Wales Street. This docket item requested further study of the potential impacts of parking meters on the adjacent residential areas. Additional restrictions were placed on a trial basis on nearby sections of Grove Street and Moulton Street to discourage long-term commuter parking. The outcome of this study/trial led to a modified recommendations regarding the time limits for the parking meters.

Most of the cars, 63 out of 81 cars were parked less than two hours. Only 4 were parked longer. Mr. Schuckel felt whatever is done should be two hours limits or less and that parking should be allowed during all hours. Existing ordinances were complicated and contradictory in this area. Meters could encourage turnover at this location and help enforcement.

Ald. Sangiolo has noted parking in areas that should be no parking. She questioned 15 minute parking at the post office as sometimes more time is needed. She noted that the resident of 660 Grove Street was the only resident who had a problem with the sign and asked that it be moved.

David Koses asked that this item be voted NAN and voted to approve the following:

#134-04(4) Make the “no parking 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. trial permanent for Grove Street and Moulton Street.

Install parking meters on the south side of Washington Street with a two-hour time limit, from the Charles River to the Gregorian Rug Company.

Allow unrestricted parking on the south side of Washington Street from north of the Gregorian Rug Company to a point across from Executive Park Drive.

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalie Myers, Clerk