

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2006

Present: Candace Havens (Chair), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Ald. Christine Samuelson, Sgt. Norcross (Police), Rosalie Myers (Clerk)

Also present: Aldermen Baker, Danberg, Vance, Beverly Droz (Health and Human Services), Linda Hiller (Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities)

#277-06 JANE MULLOWNEY, 10 Monadnock Road, Chestnut Hill requesting one-hour restricted parking apply to all MONADNOCK ROAD between Wauchusett Road and Hobart Road. (Ward 7)

ACTION: **HELD 4-1 Norcross opposed**

NOTE: Michael Mallowney, 10 Monadnock Road, said his neighbors are interested in participating in the one-hour trial that is currently taking place on the block to the east. Ald. Baker agreed with the timeliness of considering both blocks at the same time and supported their request.

Clint Schuckel noted there is a one-hour restriction on the block between Tudor Road and Hammondswood Road (1st block) nearest Boston College and neighbors indicated the restriction has reduced long-term parking there. Earlier this month, a trial for one-hour parking from 7 am to 1 pm began on Monadnock Road between Hammondswood and Wauchusett Roads (2nd block) and will end in October. The 2nd block is 23.5 feet wide and narrows to 22 feet in width in the 3rd block between Wauchusett and Hobart Roads. He observed a few cars on each of the blocks on three recent visits to the street and did not feel that the restrictions had been effective. He added that no parking on one side would be appropriate, given the narrowness of the street.

Malcolm Salter, 20 Monadnock Road, presented a letter on behalf of residents of the 3rd block who were unable to attend the meeting requesting inclusion in the ongoing trial. He noted that the 3rd block has some steep driveways and access to them in the winter is challenging when the roads are icy and cars are parked on the street in front of them. He believed the trial has decongested the 2nd block and felt restricting parking to one side would be helpful.

Gloria Garvis, 21 Monadnock Road, agreed with the previous comments and added that she and her husband are BC graduates and understand the situation. They would like to find a reasonable solution that allows them all to coexist peacefully.

Sgt. Norcross indicated a willingness to proceed with a trial. After discussing a variety of alternatives for testing the effectiveness of restrictions on the street, the Traffic Council voted to hold the item (4-1, Norcross opposed) to see if restrictions on the 2nd block push cars onto the 3rd block. Review of conditions on both blocks will take place at the next Traffic Council meeting.

HP-11 MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES requesting the creation of one handicap accessible parking space on the north side of ASH STREET opposite the Auburndale Branch Library; also request approval of a crosswalk across Ash Street adjacent to the new HP parking space. (Ward 4)

ACTION: **APPROVED AS AMENDED 5-0**

NOTE: Beverly Droz stated that handicap access to the library is needed; of the two streets that border the library, Ash Street is less busy and would be safer for handicap access. Linda Hiller indicated that having curb cuts on either side of the crosswalk is a key feature to make them safe and useful.

Clint Schuckel said there is no parking allowed on the south side of the street; on the north side, two-hour parking is allowed from 7 am – 7 pm. The proposed parking space is near an existing crosswalk with curb cuts and the proposed new crosswalk is about 80 feet from the existing one. He did not consider it appropriate to locate two crosswalks so close together and noted the library has no on-site parking. He recommended either approval of the handicap space only or placement on the south side of Auburndale where there is an existing crosswalk and curb cuts.

David Koses said the location of the proposed space has good sight visibility and agreed that two crosswalks so close together were not preferable.

Ald. Samuelson was interested in placing the space where it can serve the square as well.

Candace Havens suggested that for the long-term, consideration be given to switching the restrictions on the street so that no parking is allowed on the north side, cars can park on the library side and handicap users can exit onto the sidewalk rather than the street. Ald. Danberg also felt parking should be on the library side of the street.

The Traffic Council took action to approve the handicap parking space as proposed and not the proposed crosswalk (5-0).

HP-12 MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES requesting the creation of one handicap accessible parking space on the north side of WASHINGTON STREET just east of the intersection of Highland Street, near the existing curb cut. (Ward 3)

ACTION: **DENIED 5-0**

NOTE: Clint Schuckel expressed concerns about the proposed location of the space; due to the existence of a left turn lane, a total of three lanes are needed for westbound traffic to flow properly and the proposed space would block one lane.

David Koses indicated that a recent parking survey in West Newton showed an abundance of handicap parking spaces in the area, although they may not be placed where they can be best used; he noted most are on the north side of Washington Street.

The group agreed that redistribution of handicap spaces in West Newton is needed, but that the proposed space was not in an acceptable location and voted (5-0) to deny the request. The Council urged the Mayor's Committee or the Planning Department to submit a new proposal when the West Newton parking study is complete, with revised placement of handicap spaces where they can provide good access to the Courthouse and local businesses and activities.

HP-13 MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES requesting the parking spot in front of Brigham House (20 Hartford Street, Newton Highlands) be converted to a no-parking HP drop-off area. The requested drop-off area is immediately southwest of the exit of the municipal lot. (Ward 6)

ACTION: **DENIED 5-0**

NOTE: Clint Schuckel said that there are three handicap spaces in the municipal lot, but they are not accessible to the building entrance which is in front of the building and people must cross the existing driveways to reach the Brigham House. He proposed "No Parking" area rather than a handicap parking space; given the high demand for parking in the area, he was concerned it would be parked all day and would not serve the intended purpose.

Linda Heller indicated that there is a need for better access to the Brigham House, especially for Senior activities on Saturdays; the parking spaces area usually full and there is no safe place for drop-offs and pick-ups in the area. She noted that the last parking space in the municipal lot would be ideal for handicap access.

Beverly Droz said Brigham House programs for Seniors are expanding and asked that handicap parking be located where it would be accessible at all times to accommodate future needs.

Ald. Samuelson had concerns about replacing a parking space with a handicap space that would be used very little of the time. The Council then reviewed HP-14, since the requests are both in Newton Highlands and the loss of parking in one spot could be offset by the gain in parking at the other.

The Traffic Council felt it was better for the van to drop-off in the parking lot near the Brigham House rather than to dedicate an existing parking space for occasional use and denied this request (5-0).

HP-14

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES requesting crosswalk near the corner of Lincoln and Chester Streets be moved to a point west of the intersection of the two streets; to include designation of an appropriate no parking area just west of the curb cut (to be constructed) on the south side of Lincoln Street to provide better visibility and safety for crossing Lincoln Street in wheelchairs.

ACTION:

APPROVED AS AMENDED 5-0

NOTE:

Clint Schuckel pointed out that there are three crosswalks in the immediate vicinity of Lincoln and Chester and he recommended they be consolidated. This would result in additional street parking, especially if restrictions on Lincoln Street are loosened. He felt the crosswalk nearest the intersection should be moved closer to the corner.

Linda Hiller said the Mayor's Committee would support consolidation of crosswalks and elimination of mid-block crosswalks, which she considered unsafe and supported the relocation of the one at Chester.

Clint Schuckel suggested that if the Traffic Council approves elimination of some crosswalks, it reconsider time limits on Lincoln Street as some future date; he felt that additional long-term parking could be accommodated on this stretch to help address village needs.

After discussing the pros and cons of various options, including the proposed changes requested in HP-13, the Traffic Council approved elimination of the three existing curb cuts and crosswalks in the subject block and creation of a new crosswalk and curb cuts on the southeast side of the Chester/Lincoln Streets intersection.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Havens, Chair
Traffic Council