

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

January 20, 2005

Members Present: Candace Havens (Chair), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Sgt. Norcross (Police), Christine Samuelson (Aldermanic Representative), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer)

Aldermen Present: Harney, Lennon, Sangiolo

Others Present: Officer Dawn Keefe

#259-04 NANCY KEATING, 108 Herrick Road requesting STOP SIGN on CHASE STREET at intersection with Herrick Road (Ward 6).

ACTION: **NAN (3-1-1)**

NOTE: Nancy Keating described the situation as a “T” intersection where there is a single stop sign on Herrick Road facing downhill. She feels this intersection is dangerous because of the ambiguity of the situation. Some people on Herrick expect people going to and from Chase to stop, but they don’t have to. Though Chase dead-ends into Herrick, newcomers to the area sometimes are confused because it looks like a through street. She requests another stop sign be added on Chase Street.

Clint Schuckel reported that there is no accident history at this intersection. Visibility going up Herrick and turning left on Chase is slightly obscured by bushes. The highest daily volume is the morning rush hour from 8-9 am and on Tuesday evenings when there are events at the Hebrew College. Warrants for a sign at this intersection are not met. He felt 3-way stop signs would be better than a single stop sign because a single sign creates an expectation that cars must stop in all directions when they may not.

David Koses mentioned that changes at the Hebrew College could change this situation and it might be prudent to wait and see the effects before taking further action to add one more stop signs.

The Traffic Council voted 3-1-1 to recommend no action on this item (Ald. Samuelson arrived after the discussion and abstained from voting; Koses voted against the motion)

#284-04 OFFICER DAWN KEEFE, ALD. HARNEY & SAMUELSON requesting “No Parking” on both sides of Pine Street (west side No Parking 2:30-3:30 pm) and “No Parking” on one side of Washburn Avenue from 8 am to 4 pm on school days (Ward 4).

ACTION: **Hold until March (5-0)**

NOTE: Ald. Harney began the presentation by stating that he felt the neighborhood needed time to more fully discuss the neighborhood's problems and possible solutions. Some neighbors met with school representatives in May 2004, but they had not reached a consensus yet. Officer Keefe, described the situation as one in which the street bottlenecks and causes traffic to clog the streets during pick-up times at Burr School and creates a serious threat to emergency access. People ignore existing restrictions and the neighbors are adversely impacted with people parking in, turning around and blocking their driveways. She noted that some of the signs for current regulations are missing. Ald. Samuelson added that there are some overriding public safety issues that may warrant taking action sooner than later to protect emergency access.

Clint Schuckel said the street varies in width from 34 feet in front of the school and narrows to 24 feet in front of residences on each end of the street. When it snows, the usable roads are narrowed further. He recommended some changes that would allow for more drop-off in front of the school and some queuing and parking on the streets for parents where they won't block access.

Several neighbors and school representatives spoke of the troubles on the street. They concurred that access by emergency and other city vehicles is a serious problem and getting to and from homes is also challenging. Some neighbors noted that the student population has increased along with the number of parents who drive their kids to school. They asked that good signing and enforcement be employed to assure the chosen solution works. Space in the rear of the school may be available for additional parking that could offer relief. Many people noted that they wanted to be good neighbors and are willing to keep an open dialog.

Ald. Sangiolo noted that more creative solutions are needed that involve the school and that don't require parents to park and retrieve their children, such as having teachers escort kids out to the cars.

Traffic Council members felt that given the number of issues and the limited communication between the parties prior to the meeting, it would be useful to delay action to allow for more discussion among the parties and for the Traffic Council to revisit the site and think more about possible remedies. Because of the public safety issues, the Council wanted to reconsider it fairly soon. The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to hold the item until March. 2005.

#299-04 FELICE D'AMORE requesting stop sign on Hovey Street at the corner of Hovey Street and Waban Street (Ward 1).

ACTION: Approve (5-0)

NOTE: The petitioner was not present. Clint Schuckel relayed that the proposal is a request for approval of an existing stop sign that is not currently on the books. All agreed the sign is needed to clarify the right of way and recommended approval (5-0).

#322-04 ALD. LENNON on behalf of Francis Bearfield, 49 Crafts Street requesting two-hour parking on the west side of LINCOLN ROAD from Crafts Street to Shamrock Street (Ward 1).

ACTION: **Approve as amended (5-0)**

NOTE: Ald. Lennon noted that cars park near Crafts Street and appear to be employees of Whole Foods. The situation resembles that on Lenglen Road, one block to the south, which was recently restricted. Cars park too close to the intersections, restrict the turning radius for large vehicles and block access on this narrow street.

Clint Schuckel confirmed the street is narrow at 25 feet in width and recommended two-hour parking from 7 am to 7 pm on the west side.

Francis Bearfield said that employees of Whole Foods park all over the neighborhood every day. Jim Bearfield said sometimes they park on both sides of the road, further restricting access. Larry Bearfield said his father lives alone and is often visited by family members who have no place to park. They noted that Whole Foods provides free parking for employees elsewhere and they don't feel the need to accommodate them in front of their homes.

The Traffic Council felt it would probably be necessary to restrict both sides of the street so the same problems don't occur on the other side of the street and to be consistent with recent restrictions on Lenglen Road. The Council voted (5-0) to create a two-hour parking zone on both sides of Lincoln Street from Crafts Street to Shamrock Street from 7am-7pm all days.

#342-04 JEFF SPENCE, 25 Woodrow Avenue, requesting removal of one-hour parking signs on WOODROW AVENUE (Ward 1).

ACTION: **NAN (4-1)**

NOTE: The petitioner was not present, but a neighbor explained that the restrictions on this street were installed when a Raytheon facility was operating in the area and its employees were congesting the streets. Though that problem no longer exists, he noted that signs had come down and residents began parking their cars on both sides of the street (especially in the warm months). He has witnessed garbage trucks and emergency vehicles having difficulty reaching their destinations on the street as a result because it is a narrow street. When old signs were replaced,

some residents objected, but he felt that the existing restriction is working to protect public safety and requested it remain.

Clint Schuckel said that the adjacent streets on either side of Woodrow have similar restrictions (one-hour on one side and unrestricted on the other). People still may park on the one-hour side, but as noted by the neighbor, the existing restriction has the effect of keeping parkers to one side. For public safety reasons and to be consistent with existing regulations, he felt the restriction should remain in place and recommended no action on the petition.

David Koses noted that on narrow streets where public safety is compromised, the Traffic Council has most often created a ‘No Parking’ zone on one side. For the sake of consistency, he urged the Council to change the “One-Hour Parking” to “No Parking.” Ald. Samuelson preferred the less restrictive approach if it is working. Candace Havens felt a precedent on adjacent streets had been set and, though she favored a consistent policy generally, didn’t feel a change here was warranted. Ald. Lennon agreed with David Koses that a consistent policy is needed for such matters.

The Traffic Council voted (4-1) to recommend no action on this item (Koses voted against).

#343-04 BARBARA BIX, 989 East Side Parkway, requesting removal of parking restrictions on the east side of EAST SIDE PARKWAY (Ward 1).

ACTION: (1) **APPROVE (4-0-1);**
(2) **Extend “No Parking” zone along the entire west side (4-1-0)**

NOTE: Barbara Bix said the neighbors like visitors to Cabot Park to park their cars on the street in front of their homes because they feel the on-going activity protects their homes and also provides their own visitors a place to park. They were unaware of the existing restrictions until signs were recently installed to replace missing ones. They would like the street returned to the way it was before the signs went up.

Clint Schuckel said the street varies in width from 29-32 feet and is wide enough to safely allow parking on one side. He said the opposite (west) of the street has a “No Parking” zone, which ends before it reaches the corner of Cabot Street and had no explanation as to why it didn’t extend along the entire block. Based on traffic volumes, he felt double striping of the road was unnecessary and suggested it be allowed to fade out.

26-year resident, Jim Bearfield said parked cars have never been a problem. He noted it may not desirable to park near the intersection of Cabot and East Side

Parkway because there is a chain link fence along the baseball field adjacent and may be why the “No Parking” zone wasn’t needed there.

All seemed to agree that parking where it had been allowed previously was a good idea and the Traffic Council discussion focused on whether to extend the “No Parking” zone along the entire west side. The Traffic Council took two actions on this item: (1) It voted (4-0-1) to rescind the restriction on the east side as requested (Schuckel abstained because he wanted the motion to include extending the “No Parking” zone on the east side) and (2) it voted (4-1-0) to extend the “No Parking” restriction along the entire west side (Ald. Samuelson voted against because she wanted to know why it was not previously restricted before taking action).

Discussion items:

1. Due to the absence of Council members Koses and Havens on the scheduled February meeting date, the Traffic Council agreed to meet on March 1 and March 31 if rooms are available.
2. In response to a citizen concern, David Koses and Candace Havens agreed to look at ways to pursue installation of MBTA-recommended changes to the Exit 17 loop in Newton Corner to make the area safer as soon as possible. Ald. Lennon said he would assist in this effort. Ald. Samuelson suggested seeking additional engineering help if needed for design work.
3. Clint Schuckel asked Traffic Council members to forward their comments on the new application form so they can be revised and put into circulation soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chairperson

2005 TRAFFIC COUNCIL MEETINGS

January 20

March 1

March 31 - Rochester/Westchester (minutes say March, but April may be better)
Burr School – Washburn/Pine

April 21

May 19

June 16

July 21/August 18

September 15

October 20

November 17

December 15