

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday, March 31, 2005

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

Aldermen Present: Danberg, Gerst, Harney, Lennon, Sangiolo

- #284-04 OFFICER DAWN KEEFE, ALD. HARNEY & SAMUELSON requesting
(A) “No Parking” on both sides of Pine Street (west side “No Parking 2:30-3:30 pm); and
 APPROVED AS AMENDED 4-1 (Samuelson)
(B) “No Parking” on one side of Washburn Avenue from 8 am to 4 pm on school days (Ward 4).
 APPROVED AS AMENDED 5-0

NOTE: Ald. Harney summarized the outcome of a recent meeting between residents and school representatives and Officer Keefe. He said most agreed the following changes would improve safety in the area: better clearing of snow from streets and walks; enforcement of existing and new laws; replacement of missing signs and crosswalk markings; restricting parking on the lower end of Pine during pick-up on school days; allowing parking on the wider part of the road in front of Burr School; restricting parking on one side of the street on school days. He noted the blue zone works well for drop-off, but not pick-up times.

Clint Schuckel said he did not favor a one-way street here, especially if only for a few hours because it sets up potential conflicts. He questioned the use of a grassy area for teacher parking on school property.

Residents and school representatives present expressed satisfaction with the outcome of their recent meeting and felt they reached reasonable recommendations for all concerned. They reinforced previous concerns about traffic and congestion causing threats to public safety and emergency access. They believed most teachers have on-site parking and those who park on the street, do so to be closer to particular entrances and not due to lack of on-site space.

After a lengthy discussion about various alternatives, the Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend approval of “No Parking from 8 am to 4 pm on school days” on the north side of Washburn Street.

On Pine Street, they voted (4-1) to recommend “No Parking from 8 am to 4 pm on the south side on school days for the first 100 feet (to ensure a good turning radius at the intersection with Washburn Street) and from the school driveway east to Pine Meadow; on the north side recommended “live” parking for queuing to the blue zone be allowed from the school driveway east to Pine Meadow from 12-2 pm on Tuesdays and 2-4 pm on remaining school days (i.e., pick-up times). Ald. Samuelson voted against the second motion due to concerns about queuing not being allowed in the City.

- #366-04 TRICIA FABRIZIO MALKASIAN, 29 Waban Avenue requesting stop sign on bend of WABAN AVENUE and COLLINS AVENUE (Ward 5).
HELD ON 3-1-05
ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0**
NOTE: Tricia Fabrizio Malkasian said traffic moves very quickly through this complex intersection, endangering pedestrians and requested a stop sign to make it safer.

Clint Schuckel reviewed some possible street reconfigurations to improve circulation in the area, but did not feel the addition of a stop sign where proposed was an appropriate remedy.

The Traffic Council discussed long-range and short-term solutions. It voted (5-0) to recommend no action on the request for a stop sign and asked the Traffic Engineer to forward reconfiguration plans that simplify traffic patterns and reduce conflicts to Public Finance for consideration.

- #369-04 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting 35 MPH speed limit on BEACON Street be reduced to 25 MPH between WALNUT and CHESTNUT Streets (Wards 5 & 6).
ACTION: **APPROVE AS AMENDED 4-1 (Koses)**
NOTE: Resident Stella Chin stated she and her neighbors witnessed many accidents on the street and are especially concerned for children crossing the street to get to Zervas School and Cold Springs Park. In addition, she said her home has been damaged by trucks rumbling over bumps in the street.

Clint Schuckel reported that though there are no parking restrictions except near the intersection of Walnut and Beacon Streets, no parked cars were observed on the street. Three accidents in five years were reported. The street handles about 11,500 cars per day. A speed study completed the previous week showed that 85% of drivers travel at around 40 MPH. He noted that there are 30 MPH zones on either side of the 35 MPH stretch.

David Koses described the guidelines for a school zone and felt the area nearest Zervas School qualifies. If the Law Dept. concurs, the speed on a portion of the street could be limited to 20 miles per hour ½ hour before and after drop-off and pick-up times and a flashing school zone sign could be installed.

Other neighbors also said their homes have cracks they believe were caused by trucks bumping in the street. They complained about difficulties backing out of their driveways and of fallen shelves. Neighbors closer to stop lights seemed to experience fewer problems, since traffic generally slows there. All agreed public safety was paramount and requested the reduced speed limit to slow cars.

David Koses noted that Beacon Street is one of the City's main arterials and, as such, a 35 MPH limit is appropriate.

The Traffic Council voted (4-1, with Koses voting against) to recommend a request be submitted to the State requesting reduction to 30 mph with a 9-month sunset clause to remove the approval from the books if not approved by the State.

#394-04

TED PASS, 24 Woodbine Terrace, Auburndale, requesting two-hour parking restriction on WOODBINE TERRACE on weekdays between 9 am and 5 pm (Ward 4).

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

NOTE:

Petitioner Ted Pass said that Woodbine Terrace is a very narrow street and was concerned about emergency access being impaired. While residents are usually careful not to park across from each other, he noted that sometimes commuters park on the street and would not be available to move their cars in an emergency.

Clint Schuckel said the street is 19 feet wide closest to Auburn Street and widens to 24 feet on the north end. He presented a petition that he received from a group of neighbors opposing restrictions.

Neighbors had varying views about the need for restrictions. While some expressed concerns about child safety, problems with deliveries and trash pick-up, others felt that traffic volumes were low and few commuters impacted the streets.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend prohibiting parking on the west side of the 19'-wide section of the street.

#396-04 ALD. GERST requesting truck exclusion for LEWIS TERRACE(Ward 1).

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0**

NOTE: Ald. Gerst described an incident in which his wife was nearly hit by a large truck coming down Lewis Terrace. He pointed out that a trucking facility is located on Newtonville Avenue and trucks use Lewis Terrace to get to Washington Street. He described it as steep, narrow and with a turn that may be too restrictive for trucks to travel on safely and recommended they reach Washington Street by way of Harvard Street instead.

Clint Schuckel said the alternative routes may not be better; only 3 homes are affected on the Lewis Terrace route and cars are rarely parked on that stretch of the street. Since the facility is in a primarily residential area, many more homes would be impacted if rerouted to Harvard Street. He added that the State requirements for truck exclusions have not been reached; usually 5% of the traffic must be trucks and they make up than less than 1% of the traffic on Lewis Terrace. The bridge it crosses is 28 feet wide and can accommodate trucks. He felt it unlikely that the State would approve such a request.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend no action on this item. It also suggested cautionary signage be installed and asked that the Police Department contact the trucking business to encourage its drivers to use caution through the residential area.

#395-04 ALD. LENNON, on behalf of residents of BRIDGE STREET, Nonantum requesting an extension of the heavy truck exclusion from 11 pm to 7 am to 9 pm to 7 am (Wards 1 & 2).

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

NOTE: Ald. Lennon said the existing truck exclusion helps keep things quiet at night, but residents would like it to start at 9 pm instead of 11 pm to make it easier to put young children to bed and generally provide an earlier time of quiet in the area.

Clint Schuckel reported that the Board approved the exclusion in 1989, but found no evidence of State approval. He cautioned the group that a request for any sort of exclusion could be denied by the State and that the existing exclusion is not enforceable. The truck volumes warranted by the State are not met for a full exclusion, but said that nighttime exclusion might merit approval by the State.

Residents verified the noise and rumbling in the late evening caused by trucks making local deliveries and pick ups to nearby facilities.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend a truck exclusion on Bridge Street between 9 pm and 7 am with a 9-month sunset clause in the event it is not approved by the State by that time.

395-04(2) ALD. LENNON, on behalf of residents of BRIDGE STREET, Nonantum requesting a reduction in the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0**

NOTE: Ald. Lennon described the street as primarily a residential cut-through with dips and straight-aways in the road that encourage speeding.

Clint Schuckel said there have been four accidents in five years on the street. The street is 23 feet wide and few cars park there. With a volume of 4100 vehicles per day, only about 1% is trucks and 85% of the cars travel an average of 32 miles per hour.

The neighbors have had trouble getting out of their driveways and don't park on the street for fear their cars will be hit. One neighbor noted there are some special needs children who are picked up by a van in the area and it would be better if traffic were slower for their benefit.

The Traffic Council agreed that traffic calming here was needed and that criteria for raised crosswalks are being developed. Council members voted (5-0) to recommend no action on this item.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chair