

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2005

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

Other Aldermen Present: Ald. Johnson, Hess-Mahan, Linsky, Sangiolo

Also Present: Audrey Peller (Ward School Principal)

#453-04 SHEILA MACPHAIL, 15 Charles Street requesting 2 hour parking on both sides of CHARLES STREET. (Ward 5)

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

NOTE: The Traffic Engineer began deliberations by noting that the question for the Council is does the influence of the T Station extend as far down as Charles Street. The traffic study showed that the walk to the T Station from this location is approximately five to six minutes. It was noted that there has not been a commuter parking problem on Waldorf Road or Canterbury Road which are even closer. Commuter parking has not been a problem on some streets that are nearer possibly because of less accessibility from the west. The street is short with a 24 ft. width which cannot support parking on both sides. Three or four cars were parked on the south side of the street. Parking on both sides was **not** noted.

In June of 2000, the Traffic Council discussed Charles Street. At that time, the Traffic Engineer reported approximately one to four cars parking. The item was held for further observations and three months later, the Traffic Council met again and felt after continued studies of Charles Street still did not see enough parking on that street to constitute a need for a two-hour restriction. At that time this request was denied. Mr. Schuckel questioned whether there is enough commuter parking to warrant that a restriction be implemented which would at certain times also inconvenience residents. He added that there was no history on the street of any trash pick-up problems.

Alex McAdam of 66 Margaret Road noted more cars are parked on the street in the winter and was in strong support of a restriction. Sheila and David MacPhail of 125 Charles Street also felt a limitation was needed. Carol Marino of 15 Charles Street has seen cars parked on the street for the entire weekend.

Ald. Samuelson suggested a less restrictive ban that might eliminate the commuters.

David Koses had concern that some of the driveways were small but could support the restriction. From an enforcement point of view, Sgt. Norcross said enforcing an 8 am to 10 am is

easier. Samuelson wanted the residents to be aware that problems can be created with these parking restrictions as they would also apply to house painters, plumbers, electricians, etc.

Ald. Samuelson made a motion to restrict parking 8 am to 10 am all days, both sides. The Traffic Council approved 5-0.

#452-04 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting on behalf of the All Newton Music School STOP SIGNS at the corners of Prince and Chestnut Street. (Ward 4)

ACTION: **DENIED 5-0**

NOTE: Mail notification of this hearing and phone calls were made to the All Newton Music School but there was no one present. Mr. Schuckel reported that the section of Chestnut Street in question is between two traffic lights. Counts were done to see if the proposal would meet engineering warrants for a 4-way stop. These warrants are primarily based on the traffic volume, accidents at the intersection as well as the site distance for cars. Cars were counted over the course of several days to get a sense of the highest hour of traffic for the day. That information didn't show how many motorists were turning. Between 5 pm - 6 pm, a count was done revealing between 400 and 500 cars in each direction on Chestnut Street and about 25 coming out of Prince Street. The ratio of the traffic volume is about 17 cars for every one car coming out onto Prince. A strong concern for installing a stop sign without cross traffic is that people get into the habit of never seeing a car and tend to **not** stop and roll through resulting in a very dangerous situation for anyone crossing the street. A five year accident study obtained from the Police Department show two accidents in 2002, three accidents in 2003 and one accident in 2004. These statistics do not meet the traffic warrants and Mr. Schuckel would not recommend approval of a four-way stop at this location. The intent is one often encountered to try control speed by the use of stop signs and there are many consequences of doing that. All of literature Mr. Schuckel is aware of indicates that even though a stop sign is placed at one location, the speeds might be lowered at that specific spot, but motorists will tend to speed up at other locations to make up the time. Lowering the speed at this location might in fact be increasing the speed everywhere else. For those reasons, Mr. Schuckel would not recommend approval.

Candace Havens noted that there was a problem with rhododendron blocking the site line and it was agreed the greenery would be modified. There were no residents present who supported this petition.

A vote to deny the request for the stop sign was voted 5-0 by the Traffic Council.

#HP-4 ROBERT STRICH, 165 Collins Road, Waban_02468 requesting HP space be moved onto Windsor Road (i.e. the space nearest to the stop sign.) (Ward 5)

ACTION: **HELD 5-0**

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel stated that this item has been discussed at a meeting of the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities. There were criticisms of the existing space as the slope of the street makes it difficult for a car to back in. Also, if the handicapped person is the driver, the door would have to be opened against the slope. This space would require backing out into

the crosswalk. Adding to the concern would be backing into the Windsor Road intersection. For those reasons, the Mayor's Committee felt that moving the space was justified and was of the opinion that the space should be located around the corner down by the end of the Waban Market because that was in a less congested, flatter area.

Ald. Samuelson pointed out that there are different types of issues involved other than just a wheel chair. After lengthy deliberation, the Council felt it would be better to hold this item for further study and look at alternate locations.

#425-04 ALD. LINSKY, JOHNSON, ALBRIGHT requesting discussion as to the possible installation of 4-way traffic sign controls at the intersections of Central Avenue and Turner Street; and Central Avenue and Prescott Street, Newtonville. (Ward 2)

ACTION: **NAN 5-0**

NOTE: Ald. Linsky began deliberation by noting that there has been concern from constituents in the area of Central Avenue. During various times of the day the street is used as a cut through between Crafts Street and Washington Street causing safety concerns due to speed. One suggestion was to install stop signs to lessen the speed on the street as well as to provide safer crossing. Ald. Johnson also expressed her strong concern for the speed in this area.

Clint Schuckel said parking on Central Avenue is prohibited on the west side from Washington Street up to Prescott Street. There is a two-hour limit from 8 to 6 on the east side. The street varies in width from 25 ft. to 33 ft. Observations indicated that there isn't much parking on the road and that obviously does contribute to the speed of vehicles. Studies show that the cars in both directions number about 100; roughly a car per minute was observed in each direction. Tubes placed in the road indicated approximately 100 cars per hour. Over a period of the last five years, Police Department records report zero crashes at either Central and Turner and Central and Prescott. Typically the cut throughs will still occur even with a four way stop. The speed study northbound and southbound showed that the 85th percentile speed was 32 miles an hour. (85 out of every 100 drivers were going 32 mph or less; the next 10% were going 35 mph or less.) The outcome shows 95% of drivers are going 35 mph or less with 5% going above that. Based on the traffic volumes at Central and Turner, the Traffic Engineer would not recommend approval of a Stop Sign.

Jon Pollock of 22 Turner Terrace said he agreed with what Clint Schuckel has previously said. He also said stop signs are not designed to limit speed but are for controlling intersections. Mr. Li of 24 Turner Street expressed his concern for the speed on the street and was in favor of a stop sign. Alex Reid of 39 Central Ave. said he has seen unreported accidents on the street. Many neighborhood people were present for this discussion and were in favor of a stop sign.

David Koses, Transportation Planner, agreed with Clint Schuckel that stop signs will not solve the problems that the residents are experiencing. He felt it could create a more dangerous situation if you locate stop signs in that area.

Mr. Schuckel pointed out that this is a Community Target Block Grant target area. Central Avenue has been discussed and hopefully there will be some road improvements, possibly a narrowing of the road that could potentially be effective in this location.

Ald. Samuelson said this is a street that would benefit from traffic calming, but unfortunately this is not possible at this time. She moved no action necessary and the Traffic Council voted 5-0.

#434-04 ALD. HESS-MAHAN on behalf of HARRINGTON STREET residents requesting parking restrictions on the east side of Harrington Street only.(Ward 3)

ACTION: **APPROVED AS AMENDED 3-1-1 (Schuckel opposed, Norcross abstaining) (No Parking on the west side of Harrington Street all days.)**

NOTE: Ald. Hess-Mahan was present on behalf of the petitioners. He explained that the petition asked for restrictions to be placed on the east side of Harrington Street. This was a typographical error and should have been to allow parking on the west side and not the east side. There are approximately nineteen houses on the street which consists of both owner/occupied and rental housing. Cars park on both sides of the street causing difficulty in backing out of driveways.

Clint Schuckel informed the Council that there are very few parking restrictions in this area. He noted nine driveways on the west side and seven or eight on the right side. The east side would be the Traffic Engineer's preference for parking restrictions. The east side would allow signs to be placed on existing wood poles and not create a bunch of posts up and down the road. (This reduces the installation and maintenance costs for public works.)

Charles Wagner of 25 Harrington Street indicated his strong support for this petition. He had heard from a number of senior citizens who were not able to be present but were in strong support. Zach Lawrence of 38 Harrington Street was in strong opposition to his petition. He emphasized that many households had four to six cars that park in their driveway and this restriction would cause a good deal of hardship.

Ald. Samuelson moved no parking on the west side of Harrington Street all days. The Traffic Engineer was not convinced that the east side would be a bad idea. Sgt. Norcross was troubled as generally the problem is commuters parking to use the T but he felt that this restriction would displace people who live on the street.

David Kisses indicated it was a safety issue and felt there should be parking limited to one side of the street.

The Traffic Engineer does support one side parking but prefers the east side. Ald. Samuelson's motion was approved: No Parking on the west side of Harrington Street all days with 3 in favor, 1 abstaining, 1 against (Schuckel against, Norcross abstaining)

#435-04 CLINT SCHUCKEL (TRAFFIC ENGINEER) KEN TEMKIN (SCHOOL DEPT.) AUDREY PELLER (WARD SCHOOL PRINCIPAL) requesting parking restrictions (school days only) be extended on south side of FELLSMERE ROAD from Dolphin Road to Mandalay Road to ensure passage of busses and emergency vehicles. (Ward 7)

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Ken Temkin was not able to be present. This item is primarily a bus access issue. Emergency vehicle access has to be considered as well. On a request from Ken Temkin, Clint Schuckel observed pickup and drop-off times. Fellsmere Road is a one-way route from Dolphin to Fellsmere. The same circulation pattern is used for all buses, parents, and teachers. The parking restriction on Fellsmere was not extended all the way to Mandalay, ending 286 ft. short of that. More and more parents are driving their children to school resulting in an increase in parents coming to school at pickup and drop off times. From observations parking was shown on both sides occurring on Fellsmere further down toward Mandalay and that it made sense to extend the restriction all the way to Mandalay. This would allow buses to get out. The proposal is to extend the restrictions for school days only.

Audrey Peller, School Principal focused on the fact that there are two buses at the school at 3 pm and often at the same time there could also be a resident's car or possibly a truck. Regardless of the vehicle, the bus cannot get through.

Clint Schuckel asked that the Council allow him to modify all other parking ordinances on Dolphin and Fellsmere to be consistent with existing signs. For example there is a "blue zone" beyond the school driveway that does not appear to have a Board Order.

Ald. Samuelson moved approval. There was no opposition and the Council voted 5-0 in favor.

#451-04 ELIZABETH AND DAVID CARROLL, 131 Sumner Street requesting STOP SIGN ON Sumner Street at the corner of GIBBS STREET. (Ward 6)

ACTION: **HELD 4 -1 (Schuckel against)**

NOTE: The petitioners David and Elizabeth Carroll began the discussion by focusing on the fact that Sumner Street is a cut through to get to Newton Center as well as a cut through for people coming from Beacon going to Commonwealth Avenue. Coming from Commonwealth Avenue to Newton Centre at all times of the day you will see cars moving at a high rate of speed. Sumner Street is a cross street for most of the students going to Mason Rice and this area appears to be a safety issue. There is a bus stop at Gibbs and Sumner.

The Traffic Engineer said the proposal is for stop signs on Sumner Street, northbound and southbound at Gibbs. Gibbs Street currently has stop signs and is one way from Centre Street to Sumner Street and two-way the rest of the length. Observations of Clint's were somewhat different in terms of cut throughs. Most of this study was done in the morning and what he noted was that motorists were coming northbound on Centre Street and seeing the queue of backed up

cars at Commonwealth Avenue were then turning right on Gibbs and then going left on Sumner. The left turn from Gibbs Street onto Sumner was the heaviest movement. Counts done in morning rush hour showed about 100 cars in one hour coming up Centre and making a right onto Gibbs (one or two cars per minute). Most of these vehicles were making a left turn. Sumner Street did not appear to have a large amount of traffic. Study indicated that there were 35 vehicles southbound and 20 vehicles northbound over the course of one hour. The traffic tube placed on the road indicated that they were counting the cars going downhill in the southbound direction and going northbound up hill. Many of the cars were turning off of Gibbs Street from a stop so the northbound speed would be lower than southbound. The primary function of a stop sign is to assign the right of way at an intersection. Sumner Street would be the major approach in this case because it does not have the stop signs on it. An eight hour average indicated that there are about 100 cars an hour traveling in both directions. The Gibbs Street volume is approximately 40 or 50 cars an hour. Police reports only identified one accident in the last five years and that occurred on May 26, 2004. Based on the Traffic Engineer's study, he would not recommend a four-way stop at this location. One concern would be since the major movement is Gibbs Street; it appeared that in general people stop. Speed study showed an 85th percentile speed of 29 mph.

David Koses said the time he was there, he noted many children. He called the School Department and found many students did get off the school bus in that area. He would be in favor of a stop sign. Even though this area does not meet the warrants, he felt this location should have a four-way stop. Ald. Samuelson and Candace Havens questioned what Mr. Shuckel thought of a three-way and Mr. Schuckel was not in favor. Residents also made a point of noting that in the winter there were 12 ft. snow banks that hindered vision. Ms. Havens suggested the relocation of the bus stop. Mr. Koses felt that even if the bus stop were moved, it would not help.

David Koses made a motion for a four-way stop. In Mr. Schuckel's opinion approving a four-way stop would result in compliance going down. Sgt. Norcross would not support a four way stop because of information received such as accident data, turning movements and would like to see consistency with previous decisions. Ms. Havens wanted to have more information from Ken Temkin. Mr. Koses withdrew his motion for approval and Ald. Samuelson made a motion to hold until June 30th. The Council voted 4 in favor and 1 against (Schuckel) to hold.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalie Myers, Clerk