

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday, June 30, 2005

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

Aldermen Present: Baker, Fischman, Harney, Sangiolo

#HP-3 TINA STERPE, 163 Dorset Road, Waban requesting handicap parking in front of 163 Dorset Road.

ACTION: **NAN 5-0**

NOTE: Neither the Petitioner nor a representative responded to the request to appear before the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities or the Traffic Council. The Traffic Council recommended no further action be taken on this item (5-0).

#HP-4 ROBERT STRICH, 165 Collins Road, Waban requesting HP space be moved onto Windsor Road (i.e., the space nearest the stop sign (Ward 5)).
HELD ON 5/19/05

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

NOTE: At its previous review, Traffic Council considered an alternative location for the handicap space as recommended by the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities, but felt it was too far from most of the shops. Since then, Clint Schuckel, David Koses, and representative of the Mayor's Committee, Lowell Haynes, revisited the site and concluded a better alternative would be the first space at the northwesterly corner of the intersection of Beacon Street and Windsor Road, which is a quieter street with access on both sides and a handicap ramp at the corner nearer the shops. The Traffic Council voted to recommend approval of removal of the existing handicap space on Beacon Street and its relocation at the northwesterly corner of Beacon Street and Windsor Road IN FRONT OF Bank of America.

#HP-5 CECILE C. FINNERTY, 80b Seminary Avenue, Auburndale requesting handicapped parking space in Waban located on Wyman Street between Fleet Bank and the Waban Post Office (Ward 5).

ACTION: **APPROVED AS AMENDED 4-0-1 (Samuelson abstaining)**

NOTE: The petitioner's daughter, Susan Fessenden explained that when her mother visits lower Waban she is often unable to access the handicap space in front of

Starbuck's because it's usually occupied with the same car. She requested another space be added on the street.

Clint Schuckel noted that the handicap space is improperly situated in front of a ramp and in a crosswalk that connects to a stairway and another crosswalk across Beacon Street. He suggested the space be relocated to the right (west) of the ramp for easier access. He felt the location cited by the petitioner for an additional handicap space could be marked to allow 2 more spaces, but didn't recommend they be handicap spaces since there are three handicap spaces in the MBTA lot adjacent that are not regularly used. He added that the regular user of the space is permitted by law to park there for an unlimited time.

David Koses noted that the MBTA spaces are metered and farther away, but often empty. Candace Havens pointed out that the number of handicap spaces in the lot and street combined is proportionate to that which is required by the City of Newton for private development and seems adequate, though not properly used. Sgt. Norcross questioned whether handicap eligible patrons are eligible are required to pay when parking in the MBTA lot and noted that vehicles with handicap placards are not be subject to the on-street parking limitation. He suggested that the longer term parker use on of the on-street spaces to free up the more convenient accessible parking pace for short-term visitors.

The Traffic Council voted to recommend moving the existing handicap space out of the crosswalk to improve access to the existing ramp and adding two new spaces on Wyman Road between Fleet Bank and the post office. Staff will investigate the MBTA's use of meters in their lot for handicap parking and will ask the long-term parker for his cooperation in making the short-term space available to others by parking in an MBTA space or other short-term space (persons with handicap placards are exempt from the one-hour parking limit).

#413-04 ALD. FISCHMAN requesting on behalf of MARILYN PEREZ, 5 Bound Brook Road requesting relocation of "No Parking" sign to a location beyond driveway to provide cars from blocking driveway (Ward 8).
HELD ON 4/28/05

ACTION: HELD 5-0 trial to resume in September to October 2005

NOTE: In April 2005, the Traffic Council initiated a 60-day trial of "No Parking from 8 am – 4 pm on School Days" in front of the first three houses on the north side of Bound Brook Road.

Ald. Fishman indicated that the trial effectively eliminated Ms. Perez's problems with parents who blocked access to her house at drop-off and pick-up times. However, her neighbors were unhappy with the restriction in front of their homes, though they supported Ms. Perez's request for restricting parking in front of her house.

Clint Schuckel felt the trial was successful, did not support restricting a single house and recommended the trial become permanent.

Ald. Samuelson felt it was most important that the intersection of Bound Brook Road and Dedham Street be unobstructed and didn't feel it necessary to extend the restriction beyond the first house to protect public safety. David Koses thought it would set an unfortunate precedent to put restrictions in front of a single house and was also concerned about access. Candace Havens pointed out that photographs taken before the trial show cars parked along both sides of the street up to the 2nd or 3rd house during drop-off and pick-up times at Countryside School and suggested restricting the street block in front of all three homes only during those hours.

Ald. Samuelson made a motion to allow no parking on the north side of Bound Brook from Dedham Street to five feet past the driveway at 5 Bound Brook. The motion failed.

After lengthy discussion and at Ald. Fischman's urging, the Traffic Council agreed to another 60-day trial in front of Ms. Perez's house to resolve whether cars will park in front of neighbors' homes and cause an access problem there. The trial will take place in September when school resumes and the Traffic Council will review again in October.

#451-04 ELIZABETH AND DAVID CARROLL, 131 Sumner Street requesting
STOP SIGN on Sumner Street at the corner of GIBBS STREET (Ward 6).
HELD ON 5/19/05

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

NOTE: This item was held in order to solicit input from the School Transportation Coordinator, Ken Tempkin of the School Transportation Department and School Safety Officer Dawn Keefe. Both met with Clint Schuckel at the intersection while students were boarding the buses in the morning. They discussed alternate bus routes, options for stop signs as well as the efficacy of the use of stop signs on buses to halt traffic when children are present and concluded that none of those solutions would improve the situation.

Resident David Carroll, again expressed his concern about the safety of children in the neighbor and cars speeding, though traffic data indicates that 85% of drivers average 29 mph in this 30 mph zone.

Though crash history and traffic volumes don't meet State minimums, David Koses felt the two intersecting streets are of similar design and operating characteristics and suggested the consideration of other quality of life criteria, such as its proximity to Newton Centre and the existence of a school bus stop. He favored installing a 4-way stop.

Council members endorsed repainting the crosswalk and installing crosswalk signs to alert drivers to the situation and noted these do not require formal action by the Traffic Council or Board of Aldermen.

#30-05 ALD. SANGIOLO AND ALD. HARNEY requesting on behalf of Chatham Village, located on Commonwealth Avenue parking restriction on Woodbine Street (side that abuts Chatham Village) no parking 8 am – 10 am Mondays and Tuesdays.

ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED 4-1 (Koses opposed)

NOTE: Ald. Sangiolo and Harney explained that the dumpster at Chatham Village Condominiums is located at the end of Woodbine Street and garbage trucks have difficulty turning around when cars are parked there. Consequently, there have been long periods of time during which the garbage was not collected and posed a health/safety concern. The docketed request is for restrictions on the east side of the entire street, but after talking with others who wish to park there, the aldermen felt that a less restrictive action could solve the problem.

Clint Schuckel said that Woodbine is 24 feet wide and has no curb, so its width is effectively 34 feet and can support parking on both sides. He suggested restricting two parking spaces on the west side of the street and one space on the east side from 7-9 on Monday and Tuesday mornings only. He felt this was a minimal restriction to enable access for trash pick-up.

David Koses noted the dumpster was moved to this location from a location approved by special permit. He was uncertain if the dumpster is currently sited in an approved spot. He preferred to examine other alternatives, rather than to recommend removing parking spaces on Monday and Tuesday mornings. He said these are times that the spaces are heavily used by residents who visit the conservation area, which is located at the end of the street.

Edmund Prescatano, owner of the neighboring veterinary clinic said his employees and patients park on Woodbine and asked that restrictions be minimized. Other neighbors agreed that parking was badly needed and many of the spaces are used by dog walkers visiting the conservation area.

Ald. Samuelson noted that the conservation area is not a dog park and that she and Ald. Sangiolo are working on some alternatives for dog walkers in the area. Ald. Samuelson pointed out available parking on the carriageway on Commonwealth Avenue could be used by dog walkers during those hours.

The Traffic Council voted to recommend approval of “No Parking from 7-9 am, Mondays and Tuesdays” for two spaces at the northwest end and one space at the northeast end of Woodbine Street., approximately 75 feet from the park entrance.

419-04(2) ALD. SANGIOLO AND ALD. HARNEY, on behalf of Michael Wardell, 334 Wolcott Street, requesting a "No Turn On Red" sign at Wolcott and Lexington Streets (Ward 4).

ACTION: NAN 4-1 (Koses opposed)

NOTE: Melissa Sommer, 461 Wolcott Street said that cars speed through the intersection and create a serious pedestrian safety problem. She felt if cars had to stop and wait at the light it would reduce the potential conflicts at Wolcott Street. The neighborhood consensus was that the light from Wolcott should be moved to Auburndale and a stop sign be installed at Wolcott as it was before. She and the petitioner, Michael Wardell believed people use this residential street more now because there is a stop light.

Clint Schuckel said the sensors on Wolcott Street are back in service and should be helping the situation and noted it's difficult to address the signal timing on three lights close together in a way that creates proper gaps for side traffic. There have been six crashes in the last five years. There are pedestrian activated lights in all directions, but not a lot of foot traffic. The situation doesn't fit any of the criteria for a "No Turn On Red" sign, such as a green arrow in another direction, limited sight visibility, or unusual road geometry.

Ald. Sangiolo and Harney concurred that this intersection is dangerous and that a stop sign could cause cars to back up. Cars have been observed edging into the crosswalk to prepare to turn and some street/crosswalk reconfiguration may be needed to address this.

After discussing the options, the Council suggested a "Right Turn on Red after Stopping" sign be put up that reminds people they must stop before turning. The Council also wanted to see the street geometry revised to improve the situation whenever possible. The Traffic Council recommended the Board take no further action on this item (4-1; Koses voted against taking no action because he supported installing a "No Turn On Red" sign on Wolcott Street for vehicles turning onto Lexington Street due to limited sight lines, but did support adding signage and a revised street configuration on Lexington Street for vehicles turning onto Wolcott Street.)

#237-05 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting the two-hour parking restriction on SAMOSET ROAD (both sides) be rescinded. NOTE: Resident Sticker parking was added in 1990 and would remain in effect (Ward 4).

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0

NOTE: Clint Schuckel indicated that the two-hour restriction had likely been on the books before resident permit parking for the neighborhood was approved, but was not rescinded. Existing signs reflect both restrictions. The Traffic Council voted to rescind the two-hour restriction.

#468-04 ALD. BAKER transmitting request of Boston College that Section 19-177, Football game day be amended by extending the tow-zone restriction from 7 am until five hours after scheduled football game time on the following streets only: Beacon Street, both sides from Hammond Street to the Boston City line; Commonwealth Avenue (main portion, not carriage lane) both sides, from College Road to Boston city line.

ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED 5-0

NOTE: Ald. Baker noted that the request is for the non-residential areas nearest the college and is intended to keep the main thoroughfares clear. Boston College representative, Jeanne Levesque concurred with the proposal and noted there are six games this season.

Clint Schuckel said the request would extend the time of the existing restriction along this stretch; it is currently restricted for two hours before and after the games. He also noted that Commonwealth Avenue between Manet Road and College road is residential and has signs that designate it as a no parking/tow zone for two hours before and after games like adjacent residential areas, though there is no ordinance for this part of the road and Mr. Schuckel recommended it be made consistent with its neighbors and what appears to be in effect now.

The Traffic Council voted to recommend amendment of Section 19-177 to extend the tow zone restriction from 7 am until 5 hours after scheduled games on 1) Beacon Street, both sides from Hammond street to the Boston city line and on 2) Commonwealth Avenue (main portion, not carriage lane) both sides, from College Road to Boston city line and 3) to restrict parking from two hours before and after scheduled games on Commonwealth Avenue between Manet Road and College Road.

#70-05 ALD. LENNON requesting “No Parking” on Thornton Street, west side from Pearl Street to Crescent Square (Ward 1).

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0

NOTE: Clint Schuckel described the area as a very short block at the approach to an intersection. There is an island that separates the lanes of traffic at the approach. Before the island was installed, there may have been room for parking at the curb. However, there is no longer adequate width to support parking and a lane of traffic. In addition, the block is so short that a car parked there would probably not be able to maintain a legal distance from each corner. The Traffic Council voted to recommend “No Parking” on the west side of Thornton Street between Pearl Street and Crescent Square

#114-05 DAVID KOSES, City Transportation Planner, requesting stop sign be added on Myrtle Street at the intersection with Temple Street. This is in front of the Peirce School crosswalk (Ward 3).

ACTION: APPROVED 5-0

NOTE: David Koses and Clint Schuckel described this as a “T” intersection abutting Peirce School, adjacent to a school crosswalk and an appropriate place for a stop sign to clarify right of way. The Traffic Council supported the request and voted to recommend its approval.

#235-05 ALD. JOHNSON, ALBRIGHT, LINSKY GENTILE, HESS-MAHAN, SALVUCCI requesting an analysis and discussion of traffic mitigation possibilities during the morning and evening commuter rush hour time frames on the section of Crafts Street between Waltham Street and Walnut Street (Wards 1 and 3).

ACTION: **NAN 5-0**

NOTE: This item is a duplicate of petition #217-05. The Traffic Council recommended no further actions on this item .

147-05 ARNOLD FREEDMAN, 1065 Walnut Street requesting parking restriction on Walnut Street between Duncklee and Forest and beyond (Ward 6).

ACTION: **Refer to Public Safety and Transportation Committee 5-0**

NOTE: The Traffic Council voted to recommend this item be heard by Public Safety and Transportation Committee with other Newton Highlands items.

186-05 ALD. SAMUELSON requesting parking restrictions on Woodward Street between Lincoln Street and Plymouth Road to discourage commuter parking (Ward 5).

ACTION: **Refer to Public Safety and Transportation 5-0**

NOTE: The Traffic Council voted to recommend this item be heard by Public Safety and Transportation Committee with other Newton Highlands items.

DISCUSSION

1. David Koses reported that the MPO granted the City of Newton \$95,000 for an Origin/Destination study of Mass Pike Exit 17 interchange. The study is expected to glean insights into ways to solve the many conflicts inherent in its current design and make it a safer interchange. Candace Havens commended David for alerting the City to the available funds and for staying abreast of the application process. She also thanked Clint Schuckel and Alderman Lennon for their input and advocacy in this effort.
2. The Traffic Council approved the revised Traffic Council petition form, which includes a map and asks for a description of the problem, but not a remedy in an effort to foster a problem-solving approach between the Council and petitioners. The new form also includes the new petition requirements approved by the Board.

3. Candace Havens reported that she met with Gayle Smalley and Dan Funk of the Law Department regarding raised crosswalks and they plan to seek clarification from the State regarding its role in regulating the traffic calming devices. They were unsure whether raised crosswalks were considered Traffic Control Devices and were reluctant to authorize use of any device that is perceived as lowering the speed limit below posted speeds. The Council discussed ways for funding traffic calming, including ear-marking a percentage of street reconstruction funds for such purposes. Since other cities have been able to install such devices, all agreed that Clint and David should proceed with fine-tuning the traffic calming criteria and process for evaluating and ranking requests while awaiting a determination from the Law Department.

4. The Council briefly discussed the potential for delineating school zones with physical enhancements such as special paving, raised crosswalks, signs and/or lighting by crosswalks, so people are more aware they must drive cautiously upon entering the zone. The Council will schedule this for discussion in the fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chair