

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2004

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

Aldermen Present: Ald. Linsky, Mansfield, Salvucci, Lennon, Yates

Clerk's Note: As a new addition to our meeting format, Clint Schuckel had Powerpoint displays for all of the petitions scheduled for discussion, including photographs and graphics. Those present found this most helpful and thanked him and his assistant for the clear and professional presentations.

#257-03 AMY MACKRELL & VASILIOS VALAES, 12 Dexter Road, Newtonville, requesting to change the current one-hour parking restriction to NO PARKING, 8am - 3pm on school days, the northern end of DEXTER ROAD (#12-26 adjacent to Newton North High School) (Ward 2)

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

NOTE: Petitioner Amy Mackrell observed during the trial that the street is much safer with a significant reduction in traffic. The problems with cars turning around on the street, blocking intersections and driveways vandalism, and litter have been virtually eliminated leaving the street much calmer and safer.

Traffic Engineer Clint Schuckel noted that this item was heard in September 2003 and at that time a trial No Parking zone was instituted on the east side of Dexter Road from Hull Street to Walnut Street from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on school days. Mr. Schuckel recommended this restriction become permanent.

Elaine Lindy of 36 Dexter Road felt this parking change was too restrictive because it removed a convenience from neighbors and she hoped there could be another solution. Susan Bartlet who lives at the corner of Walnut and Dexter felt the present solution is working. Residents of 20 and 36 Dexter Road also favored the restriction.

Mr. Schuckel suggested a more limited period of time. After discussing the pros and cons of various starting and ending times, the Council voted

to approve a No Parking restriction in the subject area from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on school days.

#363-02 ALD. SALVUCCI requesting on behalf of MARK WILLIAMS, 157 Fuller Street, West Newton, the installation of a STOP SIGN at the intersection of FULLER & DARTMOUTH Streets. (Ward 3)

ACTION: **DENIED 5-0**

NOTE:

A large group of residents from Fuller Street were present and Ken Boudreau made the neighborhood presentation. He had observed a high volume of traffic during rush hour as well as high speeds on Fuller Street and found the current situation unacceptable. He said the problem was caused partly by drivers who use Fuller Street (which parallels Commonwealth Avenue) to avoid waiting at the red light on Commonwealth Avenue and Chestnut Streets during busy times. Representatives of Brae Burn Country Club were present and also expressed concerns over safety, especially since many of its members must cross Fuller Street to get to the Club's parking lot. Many of the neighbors felt a stop sign would be an excellent first step to improve safety and generally requested some traffic calming measures be taken.

Clint Schuckel noted that four years ago, the Board of Aldermen approved a 25 mph speed limit on a section of Fuller Street that is currently signed 30 mph, but didn't know if that application was rejected by the State or not filed. He said he would determine the current status of that application and make sure the correct speed is posted. His studies also showed a good case for a reduced speed limit; the volume of cars was between 1600 and 1800 cars per day with about 65% traveling over 35 mph. However, the conditions do not meet State warrants for a stop sign. He pointed out that there would still be long stretches of Fuller Street where drivers could speed and was concerned people would eventually ignore a stop sign at Dartmouth and Fuller because there is very little cross traffic there. He noted some bushes limit site lines and it would be helpful if they were cut down. He recommended consideration of traffic calming measures such as narrowing the roadway, a median and/or a raised crosswalk. Alderman Samuelson noted that there is sufficient road width to allow parked cars on the street, which could slow down cars. Candace Havens suggested restricting right turns at the light on Chestnut and Commonwealth Avenue during rush hour to reduce traffic on the Fuller Street.

The Council denied the request for a stop sign, but wanted to consider other ways to address the problem in this area. Ald. Samuelson moved to place a request for traffic calming measures on Fuller Street on the Public Safety and Transportation Committee Agenda.

#433-02 EVELYN F. MESERVE, Director of Security, Safety & Parking, NWH
requesting No Right Turn on Red sign at the intersection of the north
entrance to Newton Wellesley Hospital and Rt. 16 Washington Street.
(Ward 4)

ACTION : **HELD 3-2**

NOTE: The petitioner requested this item be removed from the agenda. However,
some members of the Council had observed conflicts at this location and
wanted to look at ways to improve safety at this location.

#437-02 JUDITH BRICKMAN, 3 Glenwood Avenue requesting two-hour parking
restriction on GLENWOOD AVENUE and RIDGE AVENUE. (Ward 6)

ACTION: **HELD UNTIL MAY 5-0**

NOTE: Andy Tvirbutis of 84 Parker Street explained that over the years, parking
has become a problem in the neighborhood and cars often block
driveways, causing difficulty for residents and narrowing the streets in a
way that could limit emergency access. The neighbors believe most
regular parkers are commuters using the T in Newton Centre. Neighbors
farthest from Parker Street indicated few conflicts on their end of the
street, but wondered if that would change if Glenwood closest to Parker is
restricted.

Clint Schuckel pointed out that on four site visits at different times of the
day he saw only 3 to 5 cars in the area. Residents agreed that commuters
were not using the neighborhood as much as usual and felt this was due to
the severe cold. Other Council members also had not observed a problem
in the area, but agreed to revisit the site again in May.

#468-02 PATRICIAWEITZMAN, 22 Kensington Avenue, West Newton,
requesting installation of a pedestrian actuated stop signal on WALTHAM
STREET at the crosswalk in the vicinity of KENSINGTON AVENUE.
(Ward 3)

ACTION: **DENIED 5-0**

NOTE: Applicant Patricia Weitzman indicated that there are 17 small children in
the immediate neighborhood who walk to school and play in the area.
Their parents are very concerned about their safety crossing Waltham
Street because traffic travels quickly down the street; there are no other
signals in the immediate area to slow traffic. Parked cars along the road
further limit site visibility and they cited numerous instances in which
their families were endangered.

Clint Schuckel stated that the street is 40 feet wide with parking on both
sides. It appears that most of the parked cars and trucks are accessing the

local market there. Police Reports indicate there have been 4 accidents in 3 years at this location and that none were pedestrian-related. Warrants for a pedestrian activated light have not been met. He also mentioned that he is working on improvements to crosswalks citywide. The Council felt this crosswalk should be included in that review so it could be improved to address these safety concerns. .

#96-03 ALD. YATES transmitting the request of Elaine Carroll, 19 Rockland Place to include a delayed red light in the traffic signal cycle in all directions at the Elliot-Chestnut street intersection. (Ward 5)

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

NOTE: Ald. Yates said that neighbors have observed a lot of traffic and running of red lights at this intersection, particularly at rush hour.

Clint Schuckel indicated that there is a high accident rate at this location and recommended a green arrow be included at the light; he felt this would be a more effective way to discourage red light running and reduce conflicts. The Council concurred and approved a green light arrow as recommended by the Traffic Engineer.

#166-03 AUDREY BORUS, 11 Howard Street, West Newton requesting two-hour parking restriction on Howard Street during school hours. (Ward 3)

ACTION: **APPROVED AS AMENDED 3-1-1**

NOTE: Knut Langset represented the neighbors. He stated that Howard Street abuts Franklin School and is used by parents to drop-off and pick-up children on school days. At those times, the street is severely narrowed by cars parking on both sides causing the neighbors difficulty getting in and out of their driveways and restricting emergency access.

Clint Schuckel observed the congestion on school days and Council members were concerned about ensuring emergency access. The Council did not feel a 2-hour restriction would properly address the conflict during busy times and instead recommended No Parking on the west side of the street from 8-4 pm with No Stopping allowed at the north end of the street nearest the steps to the school (to allow for ample turnaround and to keep drivers from blocking the drive at the end of the street). The neighbors generally supported this option, but expressed concern about the traffic being pushed onto other streets and had different preferences about which side of the street should be restricted. Ald. Samuelson abstained, Candace Havens voted against the amended motion.

#167-03 ALD. LENNON, on behalf of LYNN GOLDSMITH, 30 Wesley Street requesting an extension of the parking restriction on Wesley Street from one hour to four hours in Ord. 19-176 (2) four-hour limit, all days 6:00 am. to 6:00 p.m., south, west and north sides from Mt. Ida Street to Centre Street. (Ward 1)

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

NOTE:

Ald. Lennon represented the petitioner. The residents feel the current time limit is overly restrictive and would like more time for themselves and their guests to park on the street. He also noted that if left unrestricted, the area would likely be used by local commuters and merchants.

Clint Schuckel indicated that Wesley Street is very narrow with No Parking on one side and one-hour parking on the other side from 6 am to 6 p.m. on weekdays. He added that the time limit was more restrictive than on adjacent streets. Sgt. Norcross stated that a four-hour restriction would be much more difficult to enforce and could lead to abuses. The Council felt a restriction was needed to ensure use by the residents and after discussing various time restrictions and enforcement implications of each, determined that a restriction that matched those of adjacent areas was most sensible. The Council recommended 2-hour parking from 7 am to 7 pm on weekdays to replace 1-hour parking from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chair