

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday, March 18, 2004

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

Aldermen Present: Merrill, Lennon

#364-02 ALD. JOHNSON & Lennon requesting on behalf of Bo Ly, 11 Winthrop
Avenue, parking study and recommendations on WINTHROP AVENUE.
(Ward 1) HELD ON NOVEMBER 29, 2003

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

NOTE:

Petitioner Bo Ly indicated that parking on the street is difficult because the streets are narrow and there are many cars. He had concerns about neighbors' conflicts over use of available spaces and urged all to work together to try to find solutions to the parking difficulties.

Traffic Engineer Clint Schuckel noted that this item was heard in November 2003 and was held to obtain additional input from the Fire Department. He said there are 5 homes on the streets and most don't have driveways, so parking on the street is much needed for residents. The Assistant Fire Chief noted that parking on both sides of Winthrop Avenue could restrict fire truck access to the last three houses. Oakland Street is a public way that is 17 feet wide and leads to Winthrop, a private way of about 24' in width. The west side of Oakland is restricted from 7 am to 10 pm every day. He recommended No Parking on the west side of Winthrop and Oakland Streets, ending before the last property so as to allow some unrestricted parking at the end of Winthrop Street where there is a vacant lot (owned by the adjacent property owner).

Several neighbors stressed that there is no coordinated parking within the neighborhood and there are conflicts over use of available space; some people have several cars and no on-site parking. The congestion has deterred trash pick-up and snow plowing. Others noted that near the fire hydrant, the road narrows and curves at the same time in a way that creates a bottleneck that could seriously affect emergency access. Yet, they want to maintain as much parking as possible and requested consideration of restrictions that area to allow additional parking on the opposite (east) side of the street adjacent to the bottleneck.

Aldermen Merrill and Lennon expressed concerns for public safety and advocated for an equitable resolution to the problem.

Traffic Council members concurred that public safety and the ability to provide public services is paramount and that restrictions are needed to assure emergency access. All agreed that there was no perfect solution and that people who live on the street would not all be affected the same way. Alderman Samuelson urged them to coordinate their parking efforts.

After a lengthy discussion, the Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend No Parking from Newtonville Avenue down the west side of Oakland and Winthrop Streets up to (but not past) the last lot on Winthrop Street with the final delineation of the parking restriction to be designed by the City Traffic Engineer.

#506-02

ALD. SAMUELSON requesting on behalf of Michael Milburn, 19 Jefferson Street, installation of a stop sign on JEFFERSON STREET at the intersection of MAPLE STREET (Ward 1).

ACTION:

APPROVED (5-0)

NOTE:

Clint Shuckel indicated that Maple Street connects Centre Street to Nonantum Road nearby and is fairly busy, with about 150 cars per hour during am peak hour. The side street volume is about 50 cars per hour. He cited one accident at this corner two years ago and added that a neighbor witnessed several near-misses. In his view, the right-of-way is not as clear as it could be and, given the traffic volumes, a stop sign would be beneficial.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to approve the stop sign at this location.

256-03

JAMES BOWDRING, 94 Hammondswood Road, Chestnut Hill, requesting two-hour parking limit on Hammondswood Road between Monadnock Road and Beacon Street. (Ward 7)

ACTION:

APPROVED AS AMENDED (5-0)

NOTE:

James Bowdring spoke on behalf of the neighbors, who all supported a two-hour parking restriction on this street. He noted that the adjacent streets include a variety of different restrictions and since his block is one of the few unrestricted streets near Boston College, it bears the brunt of student parking in the spring and fall. Nancy Bowdring also noted that cars speed down the street, which connects Beacon and Commonwealth Avenue.

Clint Schuckel pointed out that this street is a private way and, as such, the Traffic Council has no authority to recommend a two-hour restriction. However, he stated that the Traffic Council could restrict parking to assure

public safety. He cited the narrowness of the street (24') as a public safety concern because cars parked opposite each other limit street width for emergency access. He recommended no parking be allowed on the west side of the street where it will also improve visibility at the corners on the streets that abut Hammondswood on its west side.

The Traffic Council agreed public safety is paramount and that restricting parking to one side would achieve a traffic calming affect for speeding cars while creating through access for emergency vehicles. Clint Schuckel indicated that if all property owners on the block preferred two-hour instead of no parking, a special petition to the Board of Alderman would be needed and urged the petitioner to contact a Board representative for assistance with that process. The Council voted (5-0) to allow no parking on the west side of Hammondswood Road from Monadnock to Beacon Street.

287-03 ALD. LENNON requesting a stop sign at the intersection of Clinton Street and Adams Street (Ward 1).

ACTION : **APPROVED (5-0)**

NOTE: Alderman Lennon noted that neighbors of this area have witnessed rolling stops at this location and are concerned about conflicts with cars on Adams, which is very busy.

Clint Schuckel said the traffic volumes are about 600 cars per hour on Adams Street during, morning peak while the Clinton Street volumes are about 50 per hour. Given the traffic volumes, he felt a stop sign would be appropriate; it would also affirm who has the right of way at this location. He noted adjacent streets have stop signs.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) for approval of a stop sign as requested.

#292-03 ALD. LENNON requesting two-hour parking, including Saturday/Sunday/Holidays on Lenglen Road, east side, from a point 200 feet northerly from Washington Street to Crafts Street. Also, amend existing provision in section 10-176, Lenglen Road, to include Saturday/Sunday/Holidays. (Ward 1)

ACTION: **HOLD (5-0)**

NOTE: Ald. Lennon indicated that he had spoken with nearby business owners and residents and had several concerns about the congestion and noise caused by parking on this narrow street. He also expressed concerns about the location of mail drop-off/pick-up boxes where large truck stop. Since he is involved in on-going discussions with the neighbors, he requested this item be held for no more than two months to conclude these discussions.

Clint Schuckel met with the Assistant Fire Chief and Alderman Lennon to review the site conditions before the Traffic Council meeting. The street is L-shaped and connects Crafts and Washington Streets. The end adjacent to Crafts Street is 24' wide and primarily a private way; the section terminating at Washington Street is 22' wide and a public way. There is a mix of uses adjacent to the street including single-family residences, apartments, a church and an office building. Local employees use most of the unrestricted parking on the north side of the private way. There is two-hour parking on the southerly side of the street (includes both public and private ways). He noted that the street is narrow, especially for fire trucks turning at the inside corner. He also stressed the limits of the Traffic Council's jurisdiction do not allow it to recommend 2-hour parking on a private way.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to hold this item until the parties involved have concluded their discussions. The Chair indicated it would be rescheduled for May 2004.

#314-03

RICK LIPOF, requesting No Parking any time on Spencer Street (access way) West Newton. (Ward 3)

ACTION:

NAN (5-0)

NOTE:

Clint Schuckel indicated there is no apparent problem with parking in the access way. Traffic Council members who visited the site noted the street was extremely narrow and that parking there would make emergency access impossible, but was unobstructed. It was agreed that no action is needed at this time, but if there is a problem in the future that the petition should be reconsidered. The Traffic Council voted no action necessary (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chairperson