

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday April 29, 2004

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

Aldermen Present: Harney, Johnson, Mansfield

#222-02 JOAN AND JOHN DRUKER requesting RESIDENT STICKER
PARKING on FURBER LANE (Ward 6).

HELD (4-0) ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2003

ACTION: **NAN (4-1) (Samuelson)**

NOTE:

This petition was first considered in September 2003. At that time, residents voiced support for the proposal and church representatives and tenants argued against further restrictions. The item was held to further research the site's eligibility for a resident parking program and to confirm the traffic generated by the tenants of the church was from permitted uses. Clint Schuckel said the Law Department determined the street is not eligible for resident parking because all uses on the block must be primarily residential; since there is a church on the block, it does not qualify. He also noted that the Law Department advised that further inquiries into the status of the existing uses should be directed to the Department of Inspectional Services (ISD). ISD indicated that nonprofits are permitted by State law and that the uses mentioned (Suzuki Music School, preschool, and Philharmonica) are nonprofits.

Attorney for the church, Alan Schlesinger also felt a residential parking program should not be allowed. Sachiko Isihara, Director of the Suzuki School, noted that the school has made scheduling changes to reduce traffic; she submitted a petition, signed by her patrons protesting further restrictions on Furber Lane. Reverend Danner indicated that a daytime music program no longer operates at the church and that his observations and traffic counts confirm traffic in the area has declined since December. Residents Monique Stern, Mildred Gelbloom, and Isabelle Searle voiced concerns about safety in the neighborhood, especially for children, as traffic has increased and requested a remedy. Resident Maurice Searle, stressed the need for enforcement of existing laws and restrictions. Linda Berkowitz, a frequent visitor to the area, submitted a letter describing her difficulties parking in the area. Karen Lawrence, a member of the Suzuki Board, felt the situation reflects general increases in auto dependence and

also is a likely by-product of living near an institution. Alderman Mansfield was surprised at the Law Department's determination and said the law was intended to keep resident permit parking out of business areas; he felt other provisions of the law for institutional uses should allow a permit program, such as that allowed for a church near Lowell and Otis Street.

Clint Schuckel noted that over the years, the street had been made one-way. Later, parking was prohibited on one side and limited to two hours on the other. David Koses stated that there was a need for balance in the neighborhood and did not feel further restrictions would improve the situation, especially since all the residents have ample off-street parking and long driveways, and favored more enforcement. Alderman Samuelson suggested a blue zone on Homer Street, rental of parking spaces from another nearby church, and use of other frontages for loading as possible alternatives. Candace Havens summarized the Council's general concerns and noted that further restrictions could create new problems on adjacent streets. She also suggested staff meet children at the curb and walk them to the classrooms to reduce the need for parents' parking and/or idling in the area. Sgt. Norcross urged residents to contact the police when they see violations of the law. The Traffic Council voted (4-1) to recommend no action necessary on the proposed residential permit program. Alderman Samuelson wanted to see an alternative solution developed and voted against the recommendation.

#359-02

ALD. SALVUCCI on behalf of ELLEN RYAN, 29 Davis Avenue, West Newton, requesting truck/bus exclusion on DAVIS AVENUE (Ward 3).

ACTION:
NOTE:

APPROVED AS AMENDED (5-0)

This item was held on October 23, 2003 to gather traffic data; road work in the area delayed data collection until recently. According to Ellen Ryan and other neighbors, this street is often used as a cut-through between Waltham to Watertown Streets by large trucks that clip the trees, encroach on private property and endanger residents, especially pedestrians. Residents have limited on-site parking and frequently park on the street, which is hazardous at times.

Clint Schuckel said the street is L-shaped and varies in width from 18 feet to 25 feet; it is too narrow to accommodate large trucks well, especially at the turn. The volume of trucks was much less than warranted by the State (less than 14 per day or less than 2% of the total volume). He explained that only the State can authorize an exclusion and the City must submit a request with required data to the State. By definition, he did not believe buses could be excluded. He reviewed possible alternative routes including Webster, Cherry and Crafts Streets.

Representatives of the Community Service Center, a nearby nonprofit center that hosts a variety of programs for people of all ages, were concerned that limiting bus usage on the road would adversely affect them, but supported a truck exclusion.

The Traffic Council felt that although the volumes are low, the street curves too sharply and is too narrow for trucks to operate safely, and voted (5-0) to recommend that an application be submitted to the State for a truck exclusion, but not a bus exclusion. It was further suggested that several alternative routes be included in the State proposal.

288-03 LINDA WEIGENBERG, 186 Nehoiden Road, Waban, requesting a two-way STOP sign at the intersection of Carlton and Waban with stop only on CARLTON ROAD (Ward 5).

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

NOTE: The petitioner said the existing stop signs are obscured by overgrown bushes and requests additional stop signs to assure there are no conflicts at the intersections.

Clint Schuckel reported that the peak morning traffic counts show nearly equal volume in each direction, however the volume warrants for a stop sign are not met. There were no reported accidents at the intersection in the last three years. He recommended shrub and tree trimming to improve sight distance.

The Traffic Council agreed that pruning should be attempted before considering more stop signs and recommended no action be taken on the request for stop signs (5-0).

346-03 JOHN S. FIGLIOLINI, 15 Edinboro Terrace requesting a “No Parking” restriction on the odd-numbered side of EDINBORO TERRACE including #9 Edinboro Terrace. The residence at 15 Edinboro would not have a “No Parking” restriction in front to provide for emergency vehicle access and snow removal (Ward 3).

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

NOTE: Arthur Gallant, representative for the petition, described an incident in which an ambulance was unable to reach its destination on Edinboro Terrace because cars were parked on both sides. Though the emergency personnel were able to respond on foot, he and his neighbors felt it was not a good situation, especially in the event of a fire and requested restrictions to assure emergency access as well as snow and trash removal.

Clint Schuckel indicated that this is a private way and can be restricted by the City to assure public safety. It is 20 feet wide and all the homes have driveways, though #15 has a short drive suitable for zero or one car only. He visited the site with Assistant Fire Chief Proia who supported the proposed restriction and also recommended restricted parking for 25 feet on the even side (north) of the Edinboro Terrace from the corner of Edinboro Street to assure a good turning radius for fire trucks.

David Koses questioned restricting the odd side of the street, noting that it seemed more logical to restrict the even side based on the location of driveways. He also was concerned that two new 3-bedroom units on the corner of the two streets will have no parking if the area is restricted as proposed. The petitioner indicated that the neighbors favor restricting the odd side because it's easier for people on the even side to get in and out of their driveways; he believed there is on-site parking for the new building, although nobody could confirm the exact number of spaces for the structure.

The Traffic Council voted (4-1) to recommend no parking on the odd-numbered (south) side of Edinboro Terrace up to and not including #15 and to allow no parking for 20 feet on the even-numbered (north) side of Edinboro Terrace from the corner at Edinboro Street (can be posted without an ordinance change). Dave Koses voted against the recommendation, noting his concern for parking for the new condo unit (#3-5). (Note: A later site visit confirmed that there are 4 on-site spaces for that building.)

#347-03

ALD. JOHNSON requesting "No Parking" restriction a portion of the east side of CLINTON PLACE between Mill Street and Janet Road (Ward 2).

ACTION:

NAN (5-0)

NOTE:

Neighbor Holly Gunner said the neighbors request no parking in this area to limit long-term parking by BC students. Alderman Johnson mentioned that representatives of the Board, BC, neighborhood met with Captain Sbordone and all agreed that limiting student parking there is appropriate. Neighbor, Gary Glynn submitted a letter of support for the restriction and a copy of a sign he installed prohibiting public parking, which has been an effective deterrent. He also mentioned that he hoped that the neighbors could have occasional use of the area if it's restricted.

Clint Schuckel stated that this is a 32-foot wide private way and that it is legal for residents to post "Private Property/No Parking" signs there. He also noted that if the City created a "No Parking" zone, residents would not be able to park there either. He felt it might serve the residents better if they posted their own signs and had cars towed as needed.

Candace Havens noted that the properties can be accessed from Janet Road or Mill Street in an emergency and that a restriction may not be needed to assure public safety.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to take no action on this petition and encouraged the residents to post their own "Private Property" signs. It was also noted that no parking is permitted at the corners and appropriate signs could be posted to that effect.

#349-03

DONNA WHITHAM, 295 Central Street, Auburndale, requesting that Section 19-176 re: *Central Street* be amended by changing the existing parking prohibition, which restricts parking from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on the south side from Woodland Road to Fern Street, to allow parking in front of the Whitham residence (Ward 4).

ACTION:
NOTE:

HOLD (5-0)

Ms. Whitham indicated her driveway is very steep and she often needs to use the space in front of her house for loading and unloading her family during the restricted hours. She said that a similar request was approved in the early 1990's, but signs no longer indicate the exception from the restrictions in front of her house and she has been ticketed for parking there. She said the restriction was originally put in place on the street to discourage commuter parking near the Auburndale T stop.

Clint Schuckel found no record of a previous action to rescind a portion of the restriction on Central Street. He noted that the Traffic Council has not historically recommended restrictions with gaps such as this. The Whitham house is near the end of the restricted area; as proposed, one house to the south would remain restricted and the rest of the block northerly to Woodland Road would be restricted. He also noted that the application lacked required signatures.

David Koses thought the restriction adjacent to property where there are no residences should be reconsidered, since it is near a T stop and could help serve commuters. Candace Havens and Alderman Samuelson agreed that a broad look at the vicinity should be considered. Alderman Harney felt that introducing commuter parking would adversely impact the neighborhood. Candace Havens recommended the application be resubmitted with required signatures so the neighbors could be informed and included in the discussion. The Traffic Council voted to hold the item (5-0) to allow the petitioner to submit a complete application.

#123-04

CANDACE HAVENS, Traffic Council Chair, requesting review of proposed policy for establishment of handicapped parking spaces in residential areas.

ACTION: APPROVE AS AMENDED (5-0)

NOTE:

In the summer of 2003, the Traffic Council presented the Public Safety and Transportation Committee with a Draft Handicapped Parking Policy for Residential Areas and the Committee requested it be "tested" on incoming cases. Since then, four cases have been considered and the Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities also has reviewed the policy. Representatives of the Mayor's Committee have offered to review future handicap parking requests, make recommendations to the Traffic Council prior to its review of such petitions, and represent the Mayor's Committee at Traffic Council as needed. They also forwarded several topics to the Traffic Council for further consideration:

- "Grandfathering" of existing handicap spaces. The draft policy allows existing handicap parking spaces to remain until they are no longer needed. The Mayor's Committee suggested a term limit (such as 2 years) be applied and petitioners resubmit requests upon expiration. Since there are estimated to be about 50 on-street handicap parking spaces in the City and few annual requests (2 per year in 2003 and 2004), the Council felt this was not a problem and grandfathering should be permitted. Additionally, to enable staff to expedite removal of spaces that are no longer needed, the Traffic Council agreed to state removal of spaces would be required if no longer needed, as part of any motion to approve new spaces.
- Eligibility for an on-street space should not be limited to disabled drivers While there is potential for misuse of handicap spaces on the street by those with placards but are not disabled, the Traffic Council was concerned that there may be circumstances, such as a parent with a child that is difficult to transport, who need a street-side space and felt it best to err on the side of leniency, especially since there are few requests for such spaces.
- The number of other handicap parking spaces on a street. The policy states that the number of other handicapped parking spaces and their location(s) on the street should be considered when reviewing future requests. The Mayor's Committee noted that the number of existing spaces should not affect the need for a space. The Traffic Council agreed, yet wanted to look at spaces in the area to make sure they are approved spaces; the wording has been revised accordingly.
- Demand for parking on the street in the area. The policy also states that the Traffic Council will look at general demand for parking on the street when reviewing requests. The Mayor's Committee asserted the greater the demand for parking, the more justification there would be for

designating a handicapped space. The Traffic Council wished to leave this policy as a general consideration.

- Mayor's Committee Liaison to Traffic Council. The Traffic Council liked the suggestion of a liaison from the Mayor's Committee to serve as a contact for the Traffic Engineer who handles the initial requests and who will attend Traffic Council meetings when on-street handicap space requests are heard.

In her research of local mandates for handicap parking, Candace Havens found no specific guidelines for establishment of handicapped parking spaces on the streets for either residential non-residential zones; it appears that all on-street handicapped spaces are established by ordinance. The current policy could be adapted to a citywide policy, if desired. However, the Council felt it best to apply the policy to residences initially and to broaden its scope later, if desired. The policy would not include institutions in residential zones. Clint Schuckel suggested the petition for the spaces require only the signature of the petitioner. The Traffic Council moved to approve the policy as amended and to submit it to the Public Safety & Transportation Committee for review and adoption.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chairperson