

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday May 27, 2004

Members Present: Candace Havens (Chair), David Koses (Transportation Planner),  
Sergeant Norcross (Police), Christine Samuelson (Aldermanic  
Representative), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer)  
Aldermen Present: Harney, Lappin, Lipof, Parker, Sangiolo  
Others Present: Police Officer Dawn Howe

#202-03 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting revocation of parking restrictions on  
Hancock Street and also consideration of one-way for Hancock Street.  
(Ward 4).

**ACTION:** **APPROVE AS AMENDED (4-1)**

**NOTE:**

Ald. Sangiolo said the existing restrictions are difficult for an elderly resident on the corner of Fern and Hancock, whose driveway faces Fern Street but has better access for unloading on Hancock. At the present time, parking is prohibited from 7 am to 4 pm on school days on her side (westerly side) of the street. On weekends, the neighborhood is inundated with cars from the nearby church and sports events at Williams School and parking for neighbors and guests is limited. She also mentioned that school policy asks that parents walk their children into school, thus requiring the parents to park rather than drop off children.

Clint Schuckel noted that most of the street varies between 20 and 22 feet, though it is wider for a couple of house lengths near Fern Street, and is too narrow for two-way traffic with parked cars on one side. He suggested either a one-way street or restricted parking to ensure free flow of traffic. He received 10 letters regarding this issue and their sentiments were mixed.

Officer Howe said the existing restrictions are difficult to enforce because often patrol cars can't get down the street at busy times and she felt no parking should be allowed on the street. She expressed concerns that a one-way street would become a frequent cut-through to Route 9.

Several neighbors confirmed the dangers of traffic congestion, including: cars backing into the crosswalks and blocking driveways, parking illegally, children walking in streets during the winter when snow builds up on sidewalks, and inadequate emergency access. However, there was no consensus on the appropriate remedy.

The residents and Traffic Council members discussed a variety of options including using the former blue zone for buses and creating a drop-off zone in the front of the school where the buses currently unload; enforcement of the existing regulations by officers on foot; prohibiting cars from entering the street at the intersection of Woodland and Hancock Streets during pick-up and drop-off times; creation of a one-way street; a change in the school's walk-in policy; and having school staff available to meet kids at the drop-off to walk them into school.

Dave Koses made a motion for a trial "Do Not Enter" sign at the intersection of Woodland and Hancock Streets. The motion failed (2-2-1). Candace Havens and Dave Koses voted for the trial, Clint Schuckel and Sgt. Norcross voted against it, Ald. Samuelson abstained.

After further discussion, the Traffic Council voted (4-1) with Koses voting against, to prohibit parking at any time on the east side of Hancock from Grove to Fern Streets and requested additional enforcement of existing regulations to ensure public safety. Clint Schuckel noted that no parking is allowed for 20 feet from any corner and signs could be posted to remind people.

#316-03

ALD. SANGIOLO requesting four-way stop sign at the intersection of CENTRAL STREET and WOODLAND ROAD. (Ward 4)

**ACTION:**

**APPROVE (5-0)**

**NOTE:**

Ald. Sangiolo indicated that a request for four-way stop was previously considered by they Traffic Council and denied (5-0). The vegetation was trimmed back at that time, but problems still exist because some people treat it like a 4-way stop and sight visibility remains poor.

Clint Schuckel concurred that the vegetation as well as the bridge configuration and abutments make visibility at the intersection difficult. The volume warrants for a stop sign are not met and there were 3 accidents on record during the last 3 years (where 5 are normally a baseline requirement). Nonetheless, he felt that there was a basis for considering a stop sign due to sight visibility constraints and to eliminate confusion. He received 10 letters of support for this proposal; one neighbor present favored alternatives to a stop sign.

After discussing the potential shortcomings of having too many stops signs on the street and the previous efforts to improve sight visibility by pruning vegetation which failed to solve the problem adequately, the Traffic Council voted (5-0) to approve the proposed stop signs.

# 348-03

ALD. SANGIOLO requesting speed reduction in front of Pierce School on Temple Street. (Ward 4)

**ACTION:**

**NAN (5-0)**

**NOTE:**

Ald. Sangiolo spoke on behalf of one of the neighbors who witnessed cars speeding in the area of Pierce School, particularly beyond the posted school zone.

Clint Schuckel noted that the speed limit in the school zone is 20 mph and is enforceable for an hour at drop-off and pick-up times. The rest of the time, the speed limit on the entire street is 30 mph. About 2000-2200 cars travel the road daily and 85 percent average 33 mph. He also noted that some people park their cars in the Temple parking and walk their children across the street to school, but don't use the crosswalk. The principal submitted a letter of support for speed reduction to protect children crossing the street. The Traffic Engineer expressed concern about requesting a reduced speed limit to accommodate pedestrians who aren't using the crosswalk and doubted that the State would favor such a request. The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend the Board take no action on this item.

# 289-03

ADAM PELLER, 28 Daniel Street, requesting three-way stop sign at the intersection of JACKSTON SREET and DANIEL STREET. (Ward 6)

**ACTION :**  
**NOTE:**

**HOLD (3-0-2)**

Adam Peller and other neighbors indicated that the petition was submitted because traffic volumes have increased with the development of The Terraces and Hebrew College and noted that many people use the Jackson/Daniel Streets to cut through from Route 9 to Parker Street. Many children walk to Bowen School on these streets and their parents are concerned about the dangers of speed and aggressive driving they have witnessed. They noted the intersection is ambiguous and confusing and proposed design changes to its configuration, including some that would add stop signs.

Clint Schuckel noted that a previous request for a stop sign at this location was denied (5-0). There is one stop sign going east on Daniel at Jackson. Records show there has been one crash in 3 years at this intersection and about 50 citations issued on the street each year. He received 2 letters of support for redesign of the intersection with removal of the centerline stripe, which is not appropriately located with allowed parking on one side of this 24' wide road.

The Traffic Council expressed concerns about the safety issues mentioned and felt redesign of the street should be looked at, particularly if funds are available for study or capital improvements in this area.

The Council voted (3-2) to hold this item to allow the Traffic Engineer to consider redesign options. Dave Koses and Candace Havens voted against the motion; while they favored the long-term solution of redesign, they felt

stop signs should be installed in the interim. (see also next item, as these two petitions were heard together).

#290-03

SEAN ROCHE, 42 Daniel Street, requesting speed limit on Jackson Street heading to Daniel Street be reduced from 30 mph to 25 mph. (Ward 6)

**ACTION:**

**NAN (5-0)**

**NOTE:**

Sean Roche summarized the neighborhood concerns about speeding (see previous item for more details of issues). Alderman Parker noted that prior to street improvements, the flow of traffic was slower and confirmed the increase in traffic as a cut-through.

Clint Schuckel stated the volume of traffic doesn't meet the warrants for a stop sign (2000 where 4000 cars per day are required) and an 85 percentile speed of 34 mph. Sgt. Norcross verified the overall increase in traffic. Alderman Samuelson noted that the 30 mph speed limit is standard in the City. Candace Havens pointed out that there are posted speed limits for 20, 25 and 30 mph on the streets, but neither of the reduced speeds is documented in City records. Clint Schuckel confirmed this observation. While he didn't expect the State would approve a speed reduction in this situation, he said a sign could be installed that advises people of an appropriate lower speed.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend the Board take no action on this item and supported the use of an advisory sign.

#315-03

ELLEN B. CONCANNON, 131 Brandeis Road, Newton Centre, requesting parking restrictions on BRANDEIS ROAD; 2-hour time limit on school days on one side and "No Parking Anytime" on the other. (Ward 8)

Rizzo Corscidi, presented the request for restricted parking, citing emergency access as a chief concern; he said a fire truck responding to a chimney fire in the neighborhood was unable to reach its destination directly and the incident heightened concerns about safety in the neighborhood. The homes are near Newton South High School and most of the cars parking on the street in the daytime are used by students.

Clint Schuckel noted the street is narrow and concurred with the concern about emergency access; he also said the street probably doesn't need a centerline and noted that car speeds may increase if parking is removed from the street. According to school records, enrollment at Newton South is expected to increase by about 200 students by 2007. There are currently 455 on-site spaces and after reconstruction, there will be 480; most will be for faculty and the remainder (estimated less than 80) will be available for students. In 2002, the Public Safety and Transportation Committee

approved 2-hour parking from 7 am to 4 pm on school days and no parking on the west side of Adeline Road, which abuts Brandeis.

Several long-time residents reflected on the changes in the neighborhood over the years, citing increases in student drivers and traffic on the street. Delivery trucks and maintenance vehicles often can't serve them easily. When it snows, conditions worsen. Cars often block driveways and residents can't see to get out of them, endangering themselves and pedestrians. The residents mentioned that they all have good driveways and would support no parking on either side of the street.

Ald. Lipof felt the narrowness of the streets and student drivers should be discouraged. He pointed out that the proposed time restriction is consistent with that already approved on Adeline Road. Ald. Lappin suggested early enforcement if restrictions are put in place to assure compliance. She also suggested the principal notify students of upcoming changes.

Ald. Samuelson said more students drive or are driven to school since bus fees went into effect. Sgt. Norcross was concerned that restrictions would push the problem onto adjacent streets. Clint Schuckel indicated he has been working with school officials to create a parking plan for graduation ceremonies and would mention approved changes to the appropriate representatives.

The Traffic Council has consistently recommended parking restrictions in residential neighborhoods abutting schools to maintain neighborhood character and to discourage students and parents from driving to the schools. The Council voted (5-0) to prohibit parking at any time in front of residences on the northerly side of Brandeis Road between Parker Terrace and the easterly property line of the easternmost home on Brandeis Road; and to establish two-hour parking from 7 am to 4 pm on school days on the southerly side of the street for this same distance.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chairperson