

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday, September 23, 2004

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

Aldermen Present: Harney, Johnson, Linsky, Sangiolo, Stewart

#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 Route 16/Washington Street.

LETTER RECEIVED REQUESTING WITHDRAWAL

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

NOTE: Candace Havens said this item was rescheduled for Traffic Council to confirm relocation of a sign that hospital staff proposed to move to improve visibility at this corner. The sign has not yet been moved.

David Koses indicated that improvement plans for the Woodland T Station and the Newton-Wellesley Hospital emergency room are in review and that Traffic Impact reports will provide additional information that aid in making decisions regarding movements in and around the hospital entrance. He suggested postponing action on this item pending review of that information.

A resident familiar with the plans, requested that the situation be addressed sooner to minimize potential conflicts in the area in the meantime.

Clint Schuckel recommended no action be taken, since the petitioner had requested the item be withdrawn.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend no action on this item.

#433-03 ALD. SALVUCCI, on behalf of JOSEPH ANTONELLIS, requesting "No Turn on Red" on Waltham Street at the intersection of Crafts Street (Ward 3).

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

NOTE: Ald. Johnson witnessed many people ticketed near this intersection and has observed people speeding down the street and the stop light. She urged that something be done to make sure people stop at the light before turning.

Clint Schuckel concurred that people often drive too fast along this stretch of

Crafts Street where it merges with Waltham Street at a triangular intersection. He noted the street is wide and has good visibility for cars turning right onto Waltham Street from Crafts and did not support the request.

Joseph Antonellis said it's hard to back out of his driveway because of few breaks in the flow of quickly moving traffic and had had a car accident.

Ald. Samuelson suggested continued enforcement to curtail speeding and a larger sign to remind people that stopping is required before turning right.

After a brief discussion, the Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend no action on this item.

#434-03 BRIDGET STAFFORD, 22 Longfellow Road, requesting "No Parking" zone on one side all days, with one-hour parking from 7 am - 7 pm on other side of Longfellow Road (Ward 5).

ACTION: **APPROVE AS AMENDED (3-2) (Koses, Norcross opposed)**

NOTE: Bridget Stafford indicated that cars parked on both sides of the road make it difficult to enter and exit from Longfellow to Washington Street. On behalf of the neighborhood, she requested no parking be allowed at the corners. She noted the site is in between Newton-Wellesley Hospital and the MBTA stop at Woodland and hospital employees and T riders often park all day on Longfellow Road. Other residents confirmed the difficulties this poses for the neighborhood; residents often can't enter or exit their driveways, receive deliveries, provide parking for guests or others who serve the neighborhood. Additionally, some people think the street is a cut-through and speeds down the street, thus endangering the many children who live on the street.

Clint Schuckel indicated the street is 29 feet wide, slightly wider than many Newton Streets and that emergency access would not be hindered by parking on both sides. He added that removal of parking on one side would encourage speeding. He agreed that parking should be restricted at the intersection with Washington Street to assure safe turning. There are signs posted for tow zones near the corner, but none are on the books.

Ald. Samuelson felt the traffic calming effect of cars parked on both sides was valuable. She also did not see justification for removing parking from one side, given the street width. Posting of signs for "Children at Play" and "No Through Access/Dead End" would help address some of the other concerns.

David Koses stressed the uniqueness of the situation, given the street is the only residential street between two larger public facilities and that the Traffic

Council should support the residents' request for restrictions, even if they are more restrictive than the Traffic Council would normally implement in order to give them the relief they want.

He also stated that allowing two-hour parking is more likely to encourage some people to park on Longfellow road and walk to medical appointments at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, than one-hour parking would.

Sgt. Norcross said that time-restricted parking in this area will be hard to enforce and a resident who lived in the area for many years concurred, citing previous restrictions that went unheeded due to lack of enforcement.

Candace Havens felt one-hour parking for the residents could be too restrictive for their use and two-hour parking was more reasonable. She also favored keeping cars on both sides for traffic calming benefits.

Ald. Stewart noted an increase in parking problems over time and favored no parking at the intersection. He suggested alternating no parking from side to side on the street to provide equity to the neighbors. He favored Resident Parking as a long-term solution and supported the residents' request in the interim.

Several members of the Traffic Council as well as some residents expressed interest in Resident Permit Parking for this street. However, since the street has not been previously restricted, it is not yet eligible to apply for it. All agreed that signing to identify the dead end and children at play should be installed and increased enforcement should be part of the solution.

The first motion failed (2-3): No parking on the side of the street where the fire hydrants are located and one hour on the other side from 7 am -7 pm. (Havens, Samuelson, and Schuckel opposed)

The second motion failed (2-3): No parking on both sides of the street near the corner and two-hour parking on both sides. (Havens, Koses, and Norcross opposed).

The Traffic Council moved to approve (3-2) one-hour parking on both sides of the street from 7 am -7 pm (Koses and Norcross opposed).

#448-03 ALD. CICCONE, JOHNSON, LINSKY, on behalf of Hull Street residents, requesting a tow zone on HULL STREET from 8 am to midnight where it is marked "Bus Stop."

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

NOTE: Clint Schuckel indicated that Ald. Ciccone requested withdrawal of this item

because the bus zone has been relocated and the problem has been solved. He noted there was no record of a bus zone approved on Hull Street and recommended no action on this item. The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend no action.

#449-03

ALD.CICCONE, JOHNSON, LINSKY requesting discussion with Traffic Council on the following:

- (1) Keeping the all-night parking restrictions in effect on Rochester Road and part of Westchester Road all year;
- (2) Requesting one-hour restriction on Rochester Road from 8 am to 6 pm;
- (3) Requesting a one-hour parking restriction on the top half of Westchester Road from 8 am to 6 pm (Ward 2).

ACTION: **HOLD until March 2005 (4-0)**

NOTE:

Ald.Johnson said the general area has been impacted by Boston College. Proposed parking fees for staff and faculty parking may further impact the City streets. She added that the college has no authority to student parking violations on City streets.

Clint Schuckel said there are no restrictions on these 24-foot wide streets where parking on both sides poses a problem for emergency vehicle access, especially at curves in the road. He noted 3 cars on Rochester and between 7 and 13 cars along Westchester, saw no serious problem. He said a letter from residents noted the problem worsens in the spring. He warned that restrictions in one area could cause the problem to move down the street.

Neighbors expressed concern about noise and traffic at all hours of the day and night and that proposed parking fees at BC will further existing problems. Some were concerned about overnight parking, but differed in their views as to whether it should be banned because this would also restrict neighbors. Parking problems were greater closer to campus and neighbors seemed to be impacted in different ways, depending on their locations.

Jean Lebec, Director of Government Relations for Boston College said the school supports restrictions that protect the quality of life in the City. The school urges students not to park on City streets and provides stickers to identify student vehicles that can be used to enforce student parking and remind students to obey laws. The school also is trying to improve the campus parking supply. Illegal parking by commuters in BC lots will also be enforced to free up on-site parking. Boston College is instituting a \$120 fee for parking stickers (there is no charge now). Administration is looking at a Transportation Demand Plan, including a Zipcar and sales of T passes, a natural gas vehicle shuttle, ridesharing opportunities, and disincentives to

students to park on street (such as financial penalties and towing of cars). With some exceptions, those who live within a mile of campus are ineligible for campus parking, including students who live on-campus (87% of student body).

Ald. Linsky suggested working with BC staff since each has its unique abilities to impose and enforce restrictions. Ald. Johnson questioned to what extent information about student parking can be shared between jurisdictions.

Ald. Samuelson commented that the Traffic Council generally does not impose restrictions where there is no problem and doesn't recommend restrictions now since not much parking was observed on the street recently. The Traffic Council voted (4-0) to hold the item until March 2005 to gauge the extent of the student parking problem over the winter and spring. Candace Havens was absent for the vote.

#537-03

ALD. SAMUELSON requesting change in parking meters on WASHINGTON STREET, north side, between Harvard and Beach Streets from one-hour to two-hour meters and to create more 12- hour meters on the south side of WASHINGTON STREET (Ward 2).

ACTION: **APPROVE AS AMENDED (3-1) (Norcross opposed)**

NOTE:

Clint Schuckel noted the Traffic Council approved conversion of 1-hour meters to 2-hour meters on the south side of Washington Street (#361-02) and those will be changed as soon as replacement meters are available. At most, 10 out of 20 of existing parking spaces on the south side are used. David Koses felt that all the meters on the south side should be converted to 12-hour meters since they are close to the Newtonville T-stop and it is not convenient or safe for shoppers to park there short-term because Washington is a busy street and there is no safe crossing.

Ald. Linsky supported long-term parking. Sgt. Norcross was concerned commuters may occupy them before employees have a chance to use them. Ald. Samuelson suggested the Traffic Council consider changes if local employees aren't well-served by 12-hour meters. The Traffic Council voted (3-1) to approve 12-meters on the south side of Washington Street. Sgt Norcross opposed the motion. Candace Havens was absent for the vote.

#538-03

ALD. SANGIOLO requesting additional parking restrictions on CHESWICK ROAD to either "No Parking all day," "One-Hour Parking," or "Resident Parking Only"

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

NOTE:

Ald. Sangiolo presented the request, noting that residents have been adversely impacted by students parking during the day and overnight on weekends and by all-day commuters during the week. She also noted that the code book shows “No Parking from 8 am -10 am every day” whereas posted signs show the restriction only on week days; posting the proper signs could help solve the problem. Many spaces are occupied by Lasell students who otherwise would be charged for parking on-campus.

Ald. Harney added that cars park close together and block access to driveways, though enforcement of existing regulations has been useful. Residents support Resident Permit Parking, but can't apply for it because La Salle's administrative office occupies one of the buildings on the street; currently the law requires all uses to be residential in nature.

Clint Schuckel confirmed that residential parking is not an option. He counted from 12-20 cars on the west side of the street.

Neighbors noted that all-day commuter parking has been reduced by the “No Parking 8 am -10 am” restriction and wanted to keep it. They stressed that the congestion has made it especially difficult to get in and out of their driveways and use the street for their own purposes; one cited as many as 23 cars parked on the street at a time.

The Traffic Council voted (4-1) to recommend approval of one-hour parking on the west side of the street from 10 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday (and to maintain No Parking between 8 am and 10 am Monday-Friday) in order to address the daytime parking problems caused by students. Clint Schuckel voted against the recommendation due to his concerns about properly signing the combined restrictions.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chair