

CITY OF NEWTON
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Thursday, December 16, 2004

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

Aldermen Present: Danberg, Harney, Lennon, Stewart

#41-04 ISAAC BERZIN, requesting discussion of parking problems on Sumner Street (Ward 6). **HELD 11/18/04**

ACTION: **APPROVE AS AMENDED (4-0-1 Koses)**

NOTE: As previously discussed, the petitioner and other tenants of 206 Sumner Street, lack on-site parking and are frequently ticketed at the metered spaces on adjacent streets. The Traffic Council did not favor any changes to the block of Sumner street that includes #206, however, Clint Schuckel recommended modifying the existing two-hour restriction on a section of Sumner Street north of Willow at the November meeting. Monday to Friday from 9-5, with Saturdays unrestricted so residents at the subject address would be able to park there from late afternoon through the weekend. However, neighbors in the affected block had not been notified and the Traffic Council felt it important to hear their input before taking action on this item. He noted the westerly side of Sumner Street between Willow and Marshall is currently unrestricted on Saturdays, though existing signs do not indicate this. No parking is allowed on the easterly side.

Several neighbors were present and all felt restrictions on Saturdays are needed, noting existing signs that imply a two-hour restriction on weekends, keep traffic turning over so the street is not overly congested, and ensure that shoppers, valet services, and T-users do not park all day or overnight on weekends. Because of the proximity to the Fire Department, they felt accessibility is important on this narrow street. On weekends, children are present and residents wish to protect their children, their pets and the residential character of the area.

Aldermen Danberg and Harney supported the residents' wishes to secure restrictions on their portion of the street to protect the residential character. Ald. Danberg suggested the petitioner and fellow tenants rent spaces from the City, if possible.

Candace Havens felt the neighborhood parking situation is in a somewhat stable state at the present and did not support changes that would adversely affect the adjacent neighborhood, particularly if the petitioner rented his place knowing it has no on-site parking and where public transportation and support services are readily available.

In order to assure the neighborhood of the ability to enforce Saturday restrictions, the Traffic Council voted (4-0-1, with Koses abstaining) to recommend two-hour parking from 7 am – 7 pm, Monday through Saturday on the west side of Sumner Street from Willow to Marshall Streets.

NOTE: Existing ordinance states only “two-hour parking “with times of day or days of week included.

#134-04(2) TRAFFIC COUNCIL requesting public input regarding the following proposed changes to Washington Street between the Wellesley town line and Route 128: re-stripe Washington Street for four 12’-wide travel lanes and a parking lane on the south side between Concord Street and the ramps to/from Route 128; “No Parking” on the northerly side; “No Parking” on the southerly side from the Wellesley town line to Concord Street; add two to four 15-minute metered parking spaces in front of the Lower Falls Post Office; add 2-hour meters for the remainder of the southerly side to a point near #2278 Washington Street (Ward 4).

HELD 11/18/04

ACTION: APPROVE 5-0; RECOMMEND REFERRAL TO FINANCE

NOTE: Clint Schuckel noted that this item was previously held to provide notification to neighbors of possible changes that exceeded the scope of the original request for short-term parking spaces in front of the Post Office. There are currently a variety of restrictions along this stretch of Washington Street. Free parking is allowed on the south side of the street, however it encroaches on eastbound traffic lane and forces an awkward merging of eastbound cars. There is sufficient street width to create four normal-sized lanes as well as a parking lane to improve traffic flow and reduce parking conflicts.

Alderman Stewart said he notified about 150 neighbors of the proposed changes and received responses from several residents who live close to Washington Street who are concerned that metering parking along the street will cause people to park on residential streets. He requested a study be done to determine if proposed meters would adversely affect the neighbors before taking action. He also felt more parking should be provided closer to the Route 128 interchange than currently proposed, as there is sometimes demand for it there.

Ted Tye, owner of National Development and 3 buildings in the area, supported the proposal and also expressed concerns for the neighbors. He endorsed the idea of extending parking farther to the east than proposed.

Lt. Cummings stated that metered spaces are easier to enforce than time-restricted spaces. Sgt. Norcross suggested that new meters be enforced on the same days and hours as other meters in the City for ease of enforcement and consistency.

David Koses pointed out that there are already parking restrictions on the street and that there are meters on the Wellesley side. As such, he didn't feel proposed changes would create new parking issues. He suggested adding some 4-hour meters on the easterly end of the street closer to the interchange to support the parking management philosophy of placing short-term spaces closer to village centers and longer-term spaces farther away. Candace Havens added that most of the village centers are metered and also favored adding 4-hour spaces so long as they did not hinder the approach to the interchange.

In response to Ald. Stewart's concerns about shifting parking onto adjacent streets, Ald. Samuelson pointed out that there already are restrictions on the street and proposed changes will simplify and improve the situation. She questioned whether metering would make people walk across Washington Street from a residential area to avoid putting money in the meters.

The Traffic Council recommended approval (5-0) of the following changes on Washington Street between the Wellesley line and Route 128 as follows: Re-stripe street to create four 12'-wide travel lanes and one parking lane on the southerly side from Concord Street to the interchange; designate "No Parking" on the northerly side from the Wellesley line to the interchange; designate "No Parking" on the southerly side from the Wellesley town line to Concord Street; add 2-hour meters on the southerly side from Concord Street east to the bend in the street; add three to four 15-minute parking meters on the southerly side in front of the Lower Falls Post Office; add 4-hour meters from the bend in Washington Street easterly towards the 128 interchange to a point to be determined by the Traffic Engineer; meters shall be in effect from 8 am – 6 pm Monday through Saturday.

NOTE: Due to the associated cost of this recommendation, Traffic Council suggested that the Board of Aldermen refer this item to the Finance Committee.

#135-04 DAVID B. COHEN, MAYOR requesting 3-way stop sign at the intersection of Park Street and Vernon Street to reduce the problem of cars speeding through that intersection (Ward 1).

ACTION: NAN (5-0)

NOTE: Clint Schuckel indicated that the State warrants for a stop sign are not met at this location. He was concerned that traffic could back up onto Tremont at rush hour if a stop sign is installed and also felt a stop sign in close proximity to a stoplight is not appropriate. There is no accident history at this intersection.

Neighbor, Maryan Amaral spoke about the difficulties at this intersection and noted that poor island design and parked cars make pedestrian and vehicular movements dangerous.

Sgt. Norcross felt speeding around the corner towards Bigelow Middle School is limited by the turn radius and didn't support a stop sign there.

David Koses felt a stop sign would help protect students from drivers, as it would cause them to check visibility before proceeding.

Ald. Lennon noted that a school zone has been enlarged around that area and more signing and improvements are in the works. He recommended waiting until the impact of those additions are in place before making further changes.

Ald. Samuelson and Candace Havens thought the island and pedestrian crossings could be improved and Ald. Samuelson asked the Traffic Engineer to make note of this for consideration the next time street work is scheduled at this corner.

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

#260-04 DEBORAH PORTNOY, 60 Burdean Road requesting STOP SIGN at the intersection of CLIFTON and REDWOOD ROADS (Ward 8).

ACTION: APPROVE (5-0)

NOTE: Clint Schuckel described the intersection as one that is "Y"-shaped and where a stop sign seems appropriate to clarify the right of way.

Deborah Portnoy said it's often hard to see cars coming and is concerned about accidents occurring where the roads meet.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend approval of the request.

#283-04 ALD. SANGIOLO requesting Resident Sticker Parking in front of 99 Hancock Street and 103-107 Hancock Street, Auburndale (Ward 4).

ACTION: NAN (5-0)

NOTE: Clint Schuckel cited three reasons why it would be appropriate to take no action on this item: (1) a proposal for this section of Hancock Street was heard earlier this year and this item cannot be considered until a year has passed; (2) there are currently items on the Public Safety and Transportation agenda on Hancock Street that could have some bearing on this request and having items for the same area being reviewed by two bodies didn't seem appropriate; and (3) the petition is not currently eligible for consideration under the Residential Parking Permit definitions, though changes proposed by Ald. Sangiolo and Harney could affect its eligibility.

Ald. Harney added that the Traffic Study being prepared for the Riverside station could provide additional information that could be useful in review of this item; he recommended waiting until the study is complete.

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

#226-04 ALD. SALVUCCI requesting rescission of 25-minute parking restrictions on ADAMS STREET between Watertown and Washington Street (Ward 3).

ACTION: NAN (5-0)

NOTE: Clint Schuckel noted that Ald. Salvucci requested withdrawal of this request. Ald. Lennon concurred that there is no need to make changes in this area. The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend no action on this item.

Discussion items:

- Board Actions Recap. The Traffic Council reviewed actions by the Board on recent Traffic Council recommendations.
- Public Safety & Transportation reviews. Clint Schuckel noted that PS&T recently endorsed administrative changes to Handicap Parking giving Traffic Council authority to approve new spaces and removal of old ones; the Clerk's Office will maintain a master list of spaces that must be renewed every two years. . He also noted that the applications for intersection/controls must now have 5 signatures in addition to that of the petitioner's; this requirement is similar to those for other types of traffic and parking requests.
- Election of Chair. Candace Havens was re-elected Chair for another term.
- Traffic Calming. The Traffic Council reviewed the outcome of the Raised Crosswalk Bus Tour to Cambridge and the potential for implementing traffic calming measures in Newton. The current proposal was referred to the Public Facilities Committee for further refinement and consideration of funding.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chair