

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2003

Present: Candace Havens (Chair) Evelyn Addante (Transportation Planner) David Willett (City Engineer) Sgt. Norcross (Police) Rosalie Myers (Clerk)

Absent: Ald. Samuelson

Also Present: Ald. Lennon

#175-01 ALD. LIPSITT, BAKER, GERST, MERRILL & O'HALLORAN
requesting reduction in speed limit on WAVERLEY AVENUE between
KENRICK/SARGENT STREET & TREMONT STREET.
(Ward 7, Ward 1)

ACTION: HELD 4-0 for 120 days

NOTE: Present for this discussion were Bob Ravelson, 71 Waverley Avenue;
Maxine Milstein, 71 Waverley Avenue; Amy Koel, 70 Waverley Avenue;
and Ari Frosch , 70 Waverley Avenue.

Sgt. Norcross addressed the Committee and reported there had been heavy police enforcement on Waverley Avenue. There were four reported accidents in the period from January 1, 2001 through February 2003. (See report attached)

Ald. Lennon reported that changing a speed limit must follow certain criteria as well as receive approval from the state. Ald. Lennon was pleased to hear that over the course of a year there had been extensive enforcement in the Waverley Avenue area. He hoped that in the short term there could be more signage in the area, particularly on Park Street.

An important reason that this item was brought back to Committee, even though all appropriate data had not been gathered, was to express assurance that this area was at the top of the Traffic Commission's list and Ms. Havens hoped to be able to go further with actions as soon as the appropriate information is received. Ald. Lennon reiterated that this item ranked with the top five issues he was working on.

City Engineer David Willett provided information that certain criteria must be followed in order to designate both truck exclusions and speed limits on a roadway such as Waverley Avenue. Newton would have to do

a preliminary study of the conditions including speed calculations, speed observations as well as a study of accident conditions. The state uses federal guidelines known as the 85% percentile standard where the travelling public determines what the speed of the road would be. The speed of 85% of the average speeds travelling the road would be the designated speed. This data collection would determine what the state would be looking at. The city would then make application to the state and after review; the state would come back with findings. It could be possible to go up or down five miles an hour but generally stay within the 85% percentile rule. Mr. Willett went on to say a decision has to be made on what approach would be taken. Possibilities include 15 ft. lanes instead of the wide open road or some other kind of traffic calming. This could not be done until the snow clears.

Mr. Willett said the area that was mentioned for a potential crosswalk appears to be a dangerous location.

Chair Candace Havens read into the record correspondence received from Gary Sparrow, a resident of Newton Corner, which described excessive speeding in both directions. He said his daughter has been involved in two car accidents on Waverley Avenue.

City Engineer Willett felt the item should be held for four months to allow for the snow banks to be cleared, compilation of the extensive amount of research still needed, and a new Traffic Engineer is hired. In the interim period, Ms. Havens said there would be increased enforcement.

#266-02 JENNIFER HAAS, 115 Franklin Street requesting pedestrian activated traffic signal to be installed at Waverley Avenue and Franklin Street. (Ref #175-01) (Ward 7)

ACTION: HELD 4-0 for 120 days.

NOTE: Ald. Lennon said he has been in constant communication with Ms. Haas with regard to her item. The petitioner expressed concern that this intersection is very dangerous and would like to see a four-way blinking light to stop cars that are coming down Waverley Avenue. The Committee observed that there appears to be a need for clarification of whether Ms. Haas's request is for a four-way stop, a blinking red light, or new pedestrian activated light.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosalie Myers, Clerk