



Public Facilities Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Present: Councilors Leary (Chair), Norton, Laredo, Kalis, Danberg, Gentile and Crossley

Also Present: Downs, Bowman, Krintzman, Noel, Ryan, Humphrey, Greenberg, Wright, Albright, Baker

Absent: Councilor Kelley

City Staff Present: City Engineer Lou Taverna, Chief of Staff for DPW Shawna Sullivan, and Director of Transportation Jason Sobel

#400-21 Petition for Grant of Location in Wells Ave

ROSCITI CONSTRUCTION COMPANY/CROWN CASTLE petitioning for a grant of location to install 188'± of 4" conduit from MH # 47/327 on Wells Ave to the proposed handhole in front of #145 Wells Ave then installing 68'± in a northeasterly direction from the proposed handhole to the building at #145 Wells Ave. (Ward 8)

Action: Public Facilities voted No Action Necessary 7-0

Note: Lou Taverna, City Engineer presented the request for a grant of location in Wells Ave. Mr. Taverna explained that this request is to install conduit for telecommunication cable on Wells Ave. He further explained that the only issue with the request is that the City just did a hot in place asphalt recycling and an asphalt overlay last year so the contractor will need to mill and overlay the trench.

The construction manager for Boston Children's Hospital, Brent Valerien explained that they do have an alternative route that would stay in the public way in the grass area. Mr. Valerien questioned if resubmitting would affect the construction moratorium. Shawna Sullivan, Chief of Staff for DPW explained that they do allow for construction, weather permitting. The petitioner requested to withdraw item #400-21 so that they can resubmit the petition with a new set of plans.

Councilor Kalis motioned for a vote of no action necessary which passed unanimously.

#401-21 Amend Chapter 29, Section 160. Building Pipe Exemption
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting an ordinance amendment to Chapter 29, Section 160 of the Revised Ordinances to delete the following language: (a) the existing building sewer pipe(s) is less than twenty (20) years old; and re-letter the remaining sections.

Action: Public Facilities Approved 7-0

Note: Shawna Sullivan, Chief of Staff for DPW presented the request to amend Chapter 29, Section 160. Building Pipe Exemption. Ms. Sullivan explained that the existing requirement is that any building sewer line greater than 20 years old must be replaced. The required closed-circuit video inspection does allow the DPW to determine if the sewer line needs to be replaced. Ms. Sullivan noted that the sewer line can still be in good shape regardless of its age. She further explained that by eliminating the requirement to replace a sewer 20 years or older property owners may save money and it will help reduce the number of trenches in the street.

Councilor Crossley motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#405-21 Reallocate \$277,739.25 for rehabilitation of the stormwater infrastructure
HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to reallocate the Stormwater Fund surplus funds from the following accounts/ projects that have been completed for the rehabilitation of the stormwater infrastructure for the section of Chestnut Street between Beacon Street and Commonwealth Ave:

Laundry Brook Culvert Replacement-Cabot School (7203D401-586007)	\$130,257.25
Forest Grove Pump Station Rehabilitation (7204D401-586004)	\$147,482.00

Action: Public Facilities Approved 7-0

Note: Shawna Sullivan, Chief of Staff for DPW presented the request to reallocate \$277,739.25 for rehabilitation of the stormwater infrastructure. Ms. Sullivan explained that projects at the Laundry Brook Culvert and Forest Grove Pump station have been completed and these funds will enable the City to fund drainage improvements in Chestnut Street between Beacon Street and Commonwealth Ave. The improvements include relining and some replacement of drainage infrastructure. The estimated cost of this project is \$266, 391 and the remaining funds will be used as a contingency.

Councilor Danberg motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

#317-21 Request for public way improvements on Grant Avenue

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting public way improvements pursuant to City Ordinance Section 26-51, specifically a pilot/trial of rubber speed cushions on Grant Avenue near Marshall Street between Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue

Action: Public Facilities Approved Subject to Second Call 7-0

Note: Jason Sobel, Director of Transportation presented the request for public way improvements pursuant to City Ordinance Section 26-51, specifically a pilot/trial of rubber speed cushions on Grant Avenue near Marshall Street between Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue. Mr. Sobel explained that there will be two sets of speed cushions both north and south of Marshall Street. The speed cushions would be approximately 10 ft long and would have a break between the lanes of traffic. This will allow for fire trucks to travel down the street without hitting the speed cushions. Mr. Sobel explained that they would potentially start this trial in the Spring instead of having to remove the speed cushions for the winter months.

Councilors asked the following questions:

Q: Has this method of traffic calming been used elsewhere in Newton?

A: Mr. Sobel explained that this would be the first location. The Fire Department also agreed that Grant Avenue would be a good location for this trial. Additionally, Mr. Sobel explained that he could get back to the committee regarding other communities who have used rubber speed cushions.

Q: Have the Fire Department and Police Department completely sign off on this trial?

A: Mr. Sobel explained that the Fire Department is comfortable proceeding with this on a trial basis. Additionally, Mr. Sobel explained that they did not have a discussion with the Police Department.

Q: What is the difference between installing a speed hump and the rubber speed cushions?

A: Mr. Sobel explained that the speed cushions are not continuous across the whole roadway, which allows for ambulances and fire trucks to pass safely.

Q: How will this effect motorcycles and bicycles?

A: Mr. Sobel explained that they will be able to go around the speed cushions.

Q: How long would the trial be?

A: Mr. Sobel explained that if this approved by the full City Council then they would begin in the Spring and could be a 4–6 month process.

Q: How was this particular location chosen?

A: Mr. Sobel explained that they reviewed their top ten traffic calming locations and the data for Grant Ave shows that speeds are at 35 mph which is 10 mph over the speed limit. There are several other locations in that priority list that the department is already investigating other options for.

Q: Is there any data on the durability of the rubber speed cushions?

A: Mr. Sobel explained that the only data they have is from the manufacturer. These are designed to be on public roads and to be more durable than a plastic speed bump that can be found at a shopping center.

Q: Will the speed cushions just be at the intersection of Marshall Street and Grant Avenue?

A: Mr. Sobel explained that the plan is to have the speed cushions a few hundred feet north and south of the Marshall Street intersections.

Councilors made the following comments:

There should be a discussion with the Police Department on this trial to see if it would impact police officers responding to a call. The Council should also receive information from communities that have used this method before.

There is a safety concern that motorcyclists will need to maneuver around the speed cushions, especially at night.

If the speed cushions need to be removed during the winter, this could cause confusion.

It was noted that they use rubber speed cushions in Sacramento and Quebec.

This is an important trial to run on Grant Avenue due to the multiple serious crashes that have occurred.

Councilors discussed approving subject to second call so that Mr. Sobel can discuss this trial with the Police Department and send their responses to the committee before the next City Council meeting.

Mr. Sobel provided the attached information after the conclusion of the meeting.

Councilor Laredo motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

Referred to Public Facilities and Programs & Services Committee

#371-21 Update on the Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School project

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting the opportunity to provide a Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School project update to the Public Facilities and Programs & Services Committees.

Programs & Services Held 7-0 (Councilor Noel not voting)

Action: Public Facilities Held 6-0 (Councilor Norton not voting)

Note: Please see the 11-03-21 Programs & Services Committee Report for the discussion on this item.

The Committee adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alison Leary, Chair

Cassidy Flynn

From: Jason Sobel
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 12:20 PM
To: Alison M. Leary
Cc: Cassidy Flynn; Deborah J. Crossley; Nicole Freedman; Alicia Bowman
Subject: RE: Grant Ave improvements

Hello Councilor Leary,

As discussed at the meeting, rubber speed cushions are used in many communities, including in the northeast, but I am not aware of other communities in Massachusetts currently using these rubber speed cushions. We will be following the best practices from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), which are outlined here: <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/street-design-elements/vertical-speed-control-elements/speed-cushion/> Motorcycles will be able to safely travel over them (or pass by between the speed cushions), and they will be well marked and well signed.

In our most recent traffic calming evaluation (available here: <https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/65561/637485506596670000>), this section of Grant Ave ranked highly (#8) on our traffic calming priority list. The largest factor for Grant Ave was speeding, with an 85th percentile speed of 35 mph, 10mph greater than the speed limit. During the two-year period that was reviewed, there were six vehicle crashes on this segment of Grant Ave.

Please let me know if you would like any additional information.

Thanks,
Jason

Jason S. Sobel, P.E., PTOE
Director of Transportation Operations
Department of Public Works
City of Newton
617-796-1476

From: Alison M. Leary <aleary@newtonma.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 11:57 AM
To: Cassidy Flynn <cflynn@newtonma.gov>; Deborah J. Crossley <dcrossley@newtonma.gov>; Jason Sobel <jsobel@newtonma.gov>; Nicole Freedman <nfreedman@newtonma.gov>; Alicia Bowman <abowman@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Re: Grant Ave improvements

Hi Cassidy and Jason,

Thankyou for the information the NPD is comfortable with the pilot program on Grant Ave. However, the Committee did also request information on any safety concerns with how motorcycles can comfortably maneuver around the speed cushions (rather than going over them slowly).

Can you clarify if any Massachusetts communities have the rubberized speed cushions in place? There was a request to get some information from communities that have these speed cushions in place.

Do we have the crash data from Grant Ave that indicates that this is a high priority location for traffic calming measures?

Thank you.

Alison M. Leary

Newton City Council

Ward 1

617-821-5619

From: Cassidy Flynn <cflynn@newtonma.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 10:11 AM
To: Alison M. Leary <aleary@newtonma.gov>; Emily Norton <enorton@newtonma.gov>; Marc C. Laredo <mlaredo@newtonma.gov>; Leonard J. Gentile <lgentile@newtonma.gov>; Lenny Gentile <LGentile@fbchomeloans.com>; LENNY GENTILE <lennypmgi@aol.com>; Deborah J. Crossley <dcrossley@newtonma.gov>; Victoria Danberg <vdanberg@newtonma.gov>; Andrea W. Kelley <akelley@newtonma.gov>; David Kalis <dkalis@newtonma.gov>
Subject: FW: Grant Ave improvements

Good Morning,

I received the below email from Jason Sobel regarding item #317-21, which the committee approved subject to second call on 11/03/21.

Please let me know if there is any additional information that is needed.

Thank you,
Cassidy Flynn
Committee Clerk
City of Newton
(617) 796-1213

From: Jason Sobel <jsobel@newtonma.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 11:05 AM
To: Cassidy Flynn <cflynn@newtonma.gov>
Cc: Jeffrey Boudreau <jeboudre@newtonma.gov>
Subject: RE: Grant Ave improvements

Hello Cassidy,

Thanks for following-up. I spoke with Capt. Boudreau a little while ago regarding the rubber speed cushion pilot for Grant Ave (#317-21). NPD is comfortable with DPW moving ahead with this pilot/trial on Grant Ave next Spring.

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Thanks,
Jason

Jason S. Sobel, P.E., PTOE
Director of Transportation Operations
Department of Public Works
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