

TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING

June 19, 2019

IN ATTENDANCE: Chair Elena Proakis Ellis, Alderman Bob Boisselle, Tom Rossi, Elizabeth Peart, Jeff Parenti, Chief Mike Lyle, Sgt. Jon Goc and Diane Ardizzoni – Clerk

Meeting opened at 5:33 PM

I. Continued Business:

1. Approve minutes from March 20, 2019

Chief Lyle makes a motion to approve minutes. Tom Rossi seconds. All in favor.
Minutes approved.

II. New Business:

1. Request by resident to add a stop sign at the intersection of Sewall Woods Road and the Lynn Fells Parkway and Perkins Street

Proponent Jill Wilson is on vacation and Elena reads her email as she cannot be present. Elena asks for a show of hands who are here for this agenda item; four people raise hands. Jeff Parenti recuses himself from the discussion as he is a DCR employee. If vote to approve we will represent it to DCR.

Dan Krechmer makes a motion to open public participation. All are in favor.

Brendan Bernard from 52 Sears Avenue begins the public discussion. He is in favor of a stop sign. He states that most of the intersections along the Lynn Fells Parkway do have stop signs to protect pedestrians and to slow down traffic. He has seen an increase in traffic and more people taking short cuts during the school year. We have students who walk to the Roosevelt School, Middle and High School.

Ann Severson from 154 Youle Street states she is here to discuss for Jill and support a safe way for kids to walk. She feels this is a dangerous situation and is in favor of a stop sign.

Carla Ranelli sent a letter stating she is not in favor and feels it is redundant to have multiple stop signs along the route. She suggests to cut back overgrowth to increase visibility.

Rich Murphy from Sewall Woods Road opposes this stop sign and states money should be spent elsewhere. His concern is the amount of traffic.

Alderman Boisselle makes a motion to close public participation. All are in favor.

Tom Rossi states that traffic doesn't have the ability to see Lynn Fells Parkway clearly from this intersection. Sgt. Goc does not have records of any crashes but the Commonwealth may have some records. He agrees that Perkins has one 50 feet away, so it can't hurt to have one here. Elena states that it is not a big cost to put up a stop sign.

Motion to approve by Alderman Boisselle, John Vetere seconds. All are in favor. Motion passes. Engineering will reach out to the DCR to fix painted crosswalks to match up to ramps.

2. Request by multiple residents to have four-way stop reconsidered at Dell Ave and East Foster Street based on new crash history data

Rachel Bowling from 39 Dell Avenue came to discuss multiple options if they cannot get a four-way stop, which did not pass at a previous Traffic Commission meeting. Ideally to prevent additional accidents, she wants stop signs. Rachel brings up that there are four-way stop signs at every intersection from Lebanon Street up to the Common and that Dell is the only intersection that does not have one.

Elena Proakis Ellis reads a letter from a resident who was unable to attend. The resident has had damage to their fence from a car that landed in their front yard.

Tom Rossi makes motion to open public participation. Chief Lyle seconds. All are in favor.

Janna Jackson of 50 E. Foster explains that her driveway is behind a home which is on Winter Street Extension. She has a blind spot coming out of her driveway and supports a four-way stop sign.

Kathy Michaud from 7 Winter Street has lived there since 1987 and traffic has picked up excessively. Drivers are using it as a cut through from 5 am to 11:30- 12:00 pm. She herself has almost been killed walking her dog. She has changed when and where she walks her dog due to the increase in traffic. Something needs to be done. When her kids were in school they always walked and now she would never let her kids walk.

Janice Meckstroth from 83 E. Foster Street has lived there for 32 years and has a history of what goes on at that intersection. A big part of the problem is excessive speed; people are flying down the street. She would like to see posting of a flashing speed sign which reminds cars to slow down. If possible, Police should start issuing citations if they could spend some time there. People are distracted by cell phones and not paying attention; driving habits are contributing to this as well. She requests the speed bumps to be repainted.

Phil Hermann from 83 E. Foster Street who has lived there 32 years has seen every accident. He gives some history of the area; when they moved in, the Square One Mall was being built and he blocked at that time the proposed widening of the road. He feels this has become a cut through from Grove to E. Foster and Upham. This area is getting the bulk of traffic to get to Route One to avoid lights on Main Street. He feels speed is getting up to 40-50 mph. He asks if there is data for speeding tickets as he has never witnessed a police presence there. He would like to see a blinking speed sign that reminds people what the speed limit is.

Cindy Constantino from 96 E. Foster has lived there since 1998 and has seen countless accidents. She states she constantly is hearing horns, shouting, arguing and swearing all hours of the day. The new "Cross traffic does not stop" sign does not stop traffic from entering the intersection. She would like the 4-way stop sign.

Cristina Mortelliti from 82 E. Foster Street, which sits right at the corner, is here to confirm the concerns of all the other residents.

Jose Ferreira from 72 E. Foster Street wants to echo the same sentiments as all other residents. He cannot have the window open while working from home due to screaming, horns blaring and screeching tires. He feels people are using Dell Avenue as a cut through and there is reckless speeding. Please reconsider a blinking speed sign to remind drivers to slow down. He has witnessed many accidents, fearful someone is going to get hurt or killed.

John Vetere makes a motion to close public participation. Dan Krechmer seconds. All are in favor.

Sgt. Goc gives his feedback with crash reports. There have been seven crashes since 2017. Three to four were drivers admitting to running the stop sign, and citations were issued. A 10-day study was conducted in February and March 2019 where a laser box on East Foster Street recorded 29,000 cars with an average speed of 26 mph, 5-6 cars a day doing 40 mph, and 5 cars were recorded going over 50 mph.

Elizabeth Peart speaks to the warrants that engineers use to install devices for traffic. She explains that one criterion for installing a multi-way stop is that the traffic volumes on the major road (in this case E. Foster St) must exceed 300 vehicles/hour for any 8 hours on an average day. Along East Foster, traffic volumes rarely exceed 300 vehicles/hour. However, there is an option that allows consideration of volumes at 80% of this value (or $300 \times 0.80 = 240$) under certain circumstances. The red highlighted data shows the hours where volumes exceed 240. This data does not satisfy the requirement for a multi-way stop, but should be used for discussion purposes. Another criterion, which should be satisfied along with the major road volumes, is that the combined vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle volume entering the intersection on both minor approaches (in this case Dell Ave) exceed 200 units/hour for the same 8 hours that the major street exceeds the thresholds. She does not believe that we have any count data of vehicles, pedestrians, and bikes for Dell Ave. Interestingly, Saturday is the highest volume. A multi-way stop should be considered when five or more reported crashes occur during a 12 month period. The crashes must be of the type that is susceptible to correction by a multi-way stop. If the 80% threshold is applied here, the criterion would become 4 crashes during a 12-month period, as long as the volume criteria are satisfied.

Jeff Parenti points out that compliance is an issue, but the warrants are in place for a reason.

Chief Lyle would like an engineering study done at that intersection. He thinks this would provide valuable information. He also provided the dates of the accidents for this intersection; 5/16/17 & 11/21/2017, 3/18/18 & 10/28/18 and 3/6/19, 3/15/19 & 5/2/19.

John Vetere is in support of an engineering study. He feels posting speed signs would be beneficial to remind drivers of the speed limit.

Tom Rossi states there is clearly a trend in the increase of crashes, site line problems, and the bend in the road.

Elena Proakis Ellis mentions that the full traffic study should be done in September when school is in session as this would provide a more accurate data. If this study is done and results are not available in time for the September 18th meeting, we could hold a special meeting in the fall.

John Vetere makes a motion to table this until a study is done, Tom Rossi seconds the motion.

Jeff Parenti wants to encourage us to talk about making it a possible one way for that section of Dell Avenue. This engineering study should give us all possibilities.

Tom Rossi wants to let residents know that the fact that we are not rejecting it and revisiting this one year later is unusual and Elena explained that the Commission usually does not revisit requests within a one-year time frame.

Chief Lyle makes a motion to pursue a formal engineering study aimed to have counts done in September and to reconvene as soon as we have results, which hopefully will be by the September meeting, if not, we will call for a special meeting.

All are in favor.

3. City request to formally accept north-south bike route contraflow portion on West Highland Avenue from Chipman Avenue to Ashland Street

John Vetere moves to open public participation. All are in favor.

Jeremy Garczynski from 23 Linwood Avenue is here to speak on behalf of the bicycle community. There are currently two North-South routes, the Main St route and a lower stress/residential route. The block in question is part of the lower stress/residential route, and that block would eliminate the need to use Franklin Street. There is a lot of activity, especially near the train station. Keeping bicycles off that section would be beneficial. He mentions that contraflow is used elsewhere in Massachusetts particularly in Somerville and also throughout the Boston area.

Alderman Monica Mederios from 3 Baystate Road mentions that approximately, 5-6 weeks ago, she saw sharrows on the one way street going the wrong way and called Chief Lyle with concerns that she felt this was dangerous. She stated she is here to oppose what is there now and she would request a bike lane. It scares her to see bicyclists going in the opposite direction.

Tom Rossi motions to close public participation. All are in favor.

In the past, the Mayor requested we do a press meeting on the bike route to give an opportunity for the public to comment.

Cyclists have no stop sign at Ashland and Chief Lyle is opposed of cyclists going the wrong way. Crash data should be looked at. He states the Police Department was not involved in the decision to paint the sharrows. He states he is following Massachusetts law.

Jeff Parenti seconds Alderman Mederios and discourages the shared lane markings. He strongly encourages public works to remove the existing east bound shared lane markings ASAP. Elena suggests that the committee make a decision at the present meeting so that we can easily modify what's there instead of painting over, which she feels would make it look worse.

Jeff Parenti agrees with the bicycle stop sign. Jeff makes a motion that bikes are permitted to travel eastbound on W. Highland between Chipman and Ashland with a stop sign for bicycles and only bicycles eastbound on Highland, with a double yellow line installed between Chipman and Ashland to separate the westbound vehicle traffic from the eastbound bicycle traffic.

John Vetere seconds the motion. John Vetere suggests someone should go out and modify the one way sign.

Elena takes a vote on the motion. Those in favor are Commissioners Krechmer, Parenti, Peart, Rossi, Vetere, and Proakis Ellis. Those opposed are Chief Lyle and Commissioner Boisselle. Motion passes.

4. Request by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee to remove one parking space in front of Mexico Lindo immediately prior to the crosswalk, for pedestrian safety/visibility, and replace it with a space in front of the alley south of Mexico Lindo.

Elena explains that the new space was striped by mistake by the contractor as we had gone out to measure to ensure the spaces would fit and put some paint markings on the ground and the contractor mistakenly assumed it was a mark out for the parking space. Mexico Lindo was in favor of this as the alley is not used and is not big enough to fit a vehicle.

Elena explains that this request came following the Bicycle Committee's Cinco de Mayo ride, which incidentally got rained out, but they wanted to temporarily block off the parking space for use during the ride, and when speaking with the owners of Mexico Lindo, they suggested to remove the space directly in front of building and make one in front of the alley instead.

Jeremy Garczynski from 23 Linwood Avenue is here to speak on behalf of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee. Jeremy states that when traveling north on Main Street, that block is essentially the gateway to downtown. There are a few crosswalks in the downtown area that have bollards that come out and are helpful for drivers to be on the lookout for pedestrians. The crosswalk in front of Mexico Lindo should be considered for removal of the spot in front and replace it with the one in front of the alley. There is a picture in the packet which shows a vehicle with the bumper inside of the crosswalk. Chief Lyle mentions that he could not find a city ordinance in regard to the distance a vehicle needs to be from a crosswalk.

Jeff Parenti is asking what will be placed there. Elena would like a bike rack though this is not a decision that Traffic Commission would make. It is discussed that something should go there to deter folks who may be ordering take out from Mexico Lindo not to park there while running in to pick up their order. Chief Lyle adds that Fire Chief Collina is opposed to a parking spot in front

of alley as this alley allows them access for equipment (hoses, ladders) in case of a fire, which did occur a while back at Mexico Lindo.

Chief Lyle makes a motion for this to be tabled until further discussion can be had with Fire Chief Collina, to identify his specific needs. John Vetere seconds the motion. All are in favor.

5. Request by resident to add a stop sign on Felicia Road at Longfellow Road

John Vetere makes motion to open public participation. Motion is seconded and all are in favor.

The proponent is Karen Rogers of 20 Felicia Road. She states there are currently 16 small children under age 10 on Felicia Road and cars coming of Lynn Fells Parkway are using it as a cut through, between 4:30 and 6:00 pm, which appears to be the busiest times. She feels that drivers' GPSes are telling commuters to use this route to avoid Lynn Fells Parkway. There are no speed limit signs and vehicles are speeding down the street.

Elena doesn't think the volume meets the warrants and is not sure what basis we have to put a stop sign there and, as we discussed earlier, deterring speeding is not the proper use of a stop sign.

Bob Boisselle makes a motion to open participation. The motion is seconded and all are in favor.

There was discussion regarding the drivers who have the right of way at the T intersection and without a stop sign, the drivers who don't come to a complete stop and have the right of way are not doing anything illegal.

There is no accident data. Bob Boisselle makes a motion to put in a stop sign. John Vetere seconds the motion and Jeff Parenti is also in favor to clarify for drivers who has the right a way. Tom Rossi brings up that if we put one at this T intersection then we would have to put one at every T intersection. Jeff Parenti states that isn't necessarily the case but Tom Rossi thinks that residents may request them if we approve this one.

Chief Lyle suggests that Elena assist the residents in writing a letter to the DCR for restricted pass through at certain times of the day signage on state property. Elena asks the residents their opinion if a restricted sign was to go up noting that it would apply to them. She asks if they are comfortable with having to travel around the block to get home. Karen Rogers mentions that they have discussed this at a neighborhood meeting and they would adhere to it.

A vote is taken and the motion does not pass. In favor are Jeff Parenti, Bob Boisselle, Dan Krechmer and John Vetere. Opposed are Tom Rossi, Chief Lyle, Elena Proakis Ellis and Liz Peart.

Chief Lyle asks that we take Alderman Lemmerman's request next. All are in favor.

7. Request by Alderman Lemmerman to add a crosswalk across Howard Street at Carlida Road

Jen Lemmerman of 21 Baystate Road, Ward 2 Alderman, represents resident that lives on Howard Street who brought to her attention that there is not an area to cross Howard Street from Ruggles up to the Saugus line. The residents acknowledge that the speed sign that was installed, one of the first in the city, has helped with cars speeding but does not help the people scrambling to cross the road. Therefore, Alderman Lemmerman requested the DPW look into an area in that ½-mile stretch where we could put a crosswalk and signage. She adds a thank you to the Board of Aldermen for the funding for this that has been secured. The resident thought Sunset would be a good location as it is elevated, and it may make it easier for pedestrians and cars to see. Elena explains that she and her Intern went out with the wheel and measured site distances and explains that Carlida actually has better sight distances than Sunset. This is also approximately the halfway point between Saugus and the next crosswalk in Melrose. Windsor also had good sight lines, but Carlida is the site that Elena is recommending for the crosswalk. Chief Lyle asks if the residents were made aware of this and if any were opposed to having the crosswalk in front of their homes. Elena explains that at one corner it meets up with the ramps and the other side falls between two homes and therefore will not be in front of anyone's home.

Chief Lyle makes a motion to approve and John Vetere seconds the motion. All are in favor.

6. Request by resident to add a crosswalk across Upham Street at Dell Avenue.

This was a request that came in directly to DPW Director John Scenna. Alderman Boisselle walks this route and explains that he often sees multiple cars backed up from Lebanon to Main from 7-9 am and 4-6 pm. Elena Proakis Ellis notes that the recommendation is for the crosswalk to be put on the east side after you pass Dell Avenue coming from Main Street. Due to the numerous drainage structures at that intersection, it made it difficult to find the right spot to put ramps. This location is also closer to the playground. Elena measured and this location is basically the halfway point between Lebanon Street and Main Street. Chief Lyle inquires about the proximity of the emergency exit for the Coolidge apartment building and Elena explains that coming from Main Street, the crosswalk would be just past that emergency gate and therefore not an issue.

John Vetere makes a motion to approve. The motion is seconded and all are in favor.

8. Election of Chair for the Traffic Commission

John Vetere motions to elect Elena Proakis Ellis. All are in Favor.

Motion to adjourn by Thomas Rossi at 8:23 pm.