

TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING

September 18, 2019

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

Meeting opened at 5:33 PM

Elena introduces the Interim Director of DPW, Rick Stinson to the Committee.

I. Continued Business:

1. Approve minutes from June 19, 2019

Motion to approve minutes made by John Vetere. Tom Rossi points out that the date on the minutes from the last meeting is incorrect and seconds the motion to approve, as amended. All in favor. Minutes approved.

2. Update on Traffic Studies

Chair Proakis Ellis described that there have been a handful of traffic studies requested at prior meetings going back 1.5 years and we always said that when we had funding we would proceed with these studies. The City has reached out to Stantec, who has submitted a proposal for \$44K, which is a little higher than the money we have available at the present time to cover for these studies for four areas, three of which are TC related.

1. Traffic counts and consideration of a four-way stop at Dell at Foster - we told the neighborhood that we would get back to them either with a special meeting or a full meeting once we had this information.
2. Franklin Street at both Vinton and Greenwood which dates back to over a year. The only recommendation from the prior Woodland Ave. discussion was a turn restriction which required approval from Wakefield. They didn't approve that request, so we have given that neighborhood nothing thus far and recognize they have a concern. Also on Woodland, National Grid was going to be putting in a new gas line, and they didn't opt to do that project. The City had sidewalk money to follow after paving, including curbing which is sorely needed, and that is now on hold. The City recognizes that there is still a cut through problem, and this will allow us to get data and evaluate the intersection at Franklin and Greenwood, as the turn gotten more dangerous and more difficult. At Franklin and Vinton there is a crash history, where the Welcome to the Melrose Highlands sign has been hit twice.

3. The intersection of Lebanon and Malvern is a high crash area and had a request for a crosswalk. We want Stantec to look at the crash history before we consider putting a crosswalk there. We have put in new crosswalks on Lebanon at Appleton and Beech.
4. City request for data at Main and Sylvan. This is an area where the City will be working in 2020, and we want to have a better understanding of the traffic counts.

The combined effort of these four tasks is a little higher budget-wise, so Elena will go through the proposal in detail and determine where we can cut some things. Chief Lyle asked what the budget was for these items, and Chair Proakis Ellis stated \$30-35k.

There was nothing to vote on for these items.

II. New Business:

3. Request by resident for Do Not Enter, Residents Only, or other options at east end of Circuit Street at intersection with Hurd Street

Chair Proakis Ellis noted that the City initially tried to handle this request outside of the TC. We put a Not a Thru Way sign and there was concern about the location of the sign, so we moved it. The sign was to deter people from thinking they could get somewhere during heavy traffic by taking Circuit Street, which brings you back out to Hurd Street. We left the wording open ended on the agenda to encompass the options of Do Not Enter, making it a one way street, or Residents Only.

Sarah Hoff, 29 Circuit Street, provided a map (see attached). Hash marks represent children on the street ranging from 6 months to 18 years. She stated there is a lot of activity on her street. The premise for the changing of Not a Thru Way to something more of a deterrent as safety is the main focus. There is an increase in cars in Melrose which has led to an increase in traffic in our area. It is not clear that it is not a thru street. There is a dead end sign outside of her house and she watches people pause and still proceed. The drivers are not seeing the signs and get frustrated and speed up. Ms. Hoff would like the sign replaced with either a Do Not Enter Sign or Residents Only. Unfortunately, because of the timing of this meeting, a lot of residents couldn't attend. She has spoken with most residents who want to give their input. She has almost been hit twice and is trying to figure out a way to create a safer environment for the residents.

Tom Rossi asked if there is a particular time of day this is happening. Ms. Hoff explained that from May through November she was on maternity leave and it was worse during the school year when drivers are trying to avoid school traffic. Weekends are more treacherous, as there are a lot of cars with residents who have guests parked on the street, making it difficult to see the children. Sidewalks are not present in certain areas making it difficult to walk sometimes.

Sgt. Goc asks if it's mostly the cars traveling Wyoming to Hurd to Circuit. He assumes the majority of it is in the morning hours. He asked for a best estimate how many cars enter Circuit Street from 7-10 AM. She states 15-20 cars.

Tom Rossi opens public participation, Jeff Parenti seconds, all in favor.

Shannon Sullivan lives at 48 Circuit Street, in the last house at the dead end. She retired a few months ago and is now home to see the difference. She moved here when her kids were young and could play on the street. She is no longer able to have her grandchildren play out. She thinks drivers are driving too fast.

Grace Birdie, 69 Circuit Street, is here to speak in favor of new signage being put up. She doesn't see people stopping at Hurd Street and they whip around onto Circuit. She does not have sidewalks on her end of the street and residents have to walk in street. She is in favor and supports signs for the street.

John Vetere closes public participation. Bob Boisselle seconds. All in favor.

Elena Proakis Ellis explains that prior to working in Melrose, she has driven onto Circuit Street thinking it went somewhere and was disappointed when she came back out to Hurd St. and acknowledges it is tempting to turn there. Since it doesn't go anywhere but back out to Hurd Street, if there is support from the residents on Circuit Street, she proposes to have Do Not Enter signs similar to what was done at Albion Street during school hours, but this would be all the time. The residents on the street would have to adhere to this, too. Putting a Do Not Enter, Residents Only sign would not be easy to police.

Jeff Parenti states that there are three choices before us as the Residents Only is off the table. Either Do Not Enter as described, turning it into a One Way which is different, and changing the city posted Not a Thru street which is still there. There is not a great place to put a sign on the right due to the driveway which is related to all three choices, because if we decide to go one way or do not enter we would still need an area to post those signs. The Do Not Enter or the One Way would apply to all residents. In his experience, residents will not adhere to the Do Not Enter. If there is agreement then he is in favor of either a One Way or Do Not Enter.

Tom Rossi states that there is another option, to put a No Right Turn sign at Hurd Street from Circuit Street. This was done years ago at Stevens Place.

Jeff Parenti is afraid that the audience has a false sense of either of these signs erasing the annoyance. Chair Proakis Ellis would recommend two Do Not Enter signs.

Jeff Parenti states that a No Outlet sign is more in compliance than a Dead End sign.

Chief Lyle is in favor of a one way and feels this is much easier to police. He would recommend message boards to educate the commuters. He agrees with Jeff Parenti that a Do Not Enter will not be seen. Some neighbors don't want that as stated through Alderman Wright's email.

One resident would like to see it as a one way and has spoken to residents who would support a one way. The resident that lives on the dead end portion states that a tree is covering the dead end sign. Elena Proakis Ellis states that the City will have that taken care of.

Tom Rossi states that there are seven houses that would be affected by a one way, and he prefers not to do this at this meeting because the agenda did not state One Way as an option. He wouldn't want to make this decision without them specifically notified. We could put it on the agenda with public notice for next TC meeting so that if they decide not to come then they aren't concerned about it, and that way we have covered all options because this is more restrictive. He asks if it is possible or cost effective to try a yellow No Outlet sign to see if it does something in the meantime. Elena Proakis Ellis wonders if we are going to go that route, would it make sense to post Do Not Enter because that location would be the same as the One Way sign, then if we approve a one way street, we can always add a the One Way sign. She also states that the agenda does say "or other options" so people would understand that there were other options that could be discussed.

John Vetere makes a motion to put up Do Not Enter signs, dual signs at the intersection of Circuit Street off of Hurd Street on the Wyoming end. Chief Lyle seconds for Do Not Enter. Chief Lyle recommends a 90 day trial and at the next TC meeting vote for one way. Jeff Parenti seconds Chief Lyle's recommendation. A message board was mentioned as an option to notify residents. All were in favor. No one opposed.

4. Request by resident for no parking opposite driveway sign across from 29 Gould St

John Vetere makes a motion to open public participation.

The resident of 29 Gould Street, Karema, states that people park behind her driveway, making it difficult for her to back out. She hit a car in June due to the car being parked across the street and, because of the configuration of her driveway, it is difficult to pull out.

Bob Boisselle moves to close public participation; John Vetere seconds.

John Vetere states that other residents on that street may bring this issue up to TC to have this done for them as well and to be prepared for them. Tom Rossi states that there are possibly two other residents that may be effected.

Another resident indicates he has come for this item. Elena Proakis Ellis moves to open public participation for this item. Jeff Parenti seconds.

Robert Chisholme has lived at 34 Gould Street since 1982. Some changes were made to the street; he did not put in curbs. There are four quad homes that are new since this work was done. He is not in favor as no one will be able to have visitors on that street if everyone restricts parking across from their driveways.

Tom Rossi makes a motion to close public participation; Bob Boisselle seconds. All are in favor.

Tom Rossi suggests no parking between two signs and adds that this is a unique situation to this street.

Elena Proakis Ellis states the commission doesn't often approve this, as there are many narrow streets in Melrose. This is similar to requests on Cottage, Brookledge, or Chestnut.

John Vetere is not in favor as there will be a line of residents requesting similar signs and acknowledges this is a difficult situation.

A motion is made to approve No Parking between the two driveways opposite 29 Gould Street. In favor are Alderman Boisselle and Tom Rossi. Opposed are Chief Lyle, Jeff Parenti, John Vetere, and Chair Proakis Ellis.

5. Request by resident for a Stop Sign on Sanford Street at Florence Street

No one is in attendance from the public for this item. The resident that reached out to the City from 126-128 Florence Street had some concerns on the manner of how people are driving down Florence and thought it would add some safety. He would like the stop sign on Sanford Street, where drivers are required to yield but not stop as it is a T-intersection.

Elena Proakis Ellis stated that residents on Florence Street have suggested some line stripping and the City will be reaching out to the neighborhood to see if they want it. At the neighborhood meeting they wanted a parking lane striped, so when there are fewer cars parked there, people aren't speeding down Florence. Elena Proakis Ellis is not in favor this striping, but Alderman Wright and a couple of residents really like the idea. The City is working with them on different things to perhaps slow down the traffic. Elena Proakis Ellis does not think there is a need for a stop sign. Sergeant Goc did do an accident study there over a 5 year period, and there was one accident which was a single car accident.

A motion is made by John Vetere to deny this request. Bob Boisselle seconds. All are in favor except Jeff Parenti opposes.

6. Request by a resident for a Stop Sign on Martin at Maple

John Vetere makes a motion to open for Public participation

A resident named John spoke in favor of the stop sign. He has lived there since 1971 and states there was a stop sign that was knocked down 3-4 years ago and never put back up. He was told he needed to bring it to the TC to make the request because the original sign was illegal. Because there is a nursing home at the end of the street, there is a lot of traffic and cars are rolling out, and he would like a stop sign there. Elena notes that that stop sign was knocked down over 14 years ago according to Google Maps, if it used to be present. The resident feels because there is a business at the end of the street, drivers are not stopping and rolling out so he would like it replaced.

Elena reads a letter from Alderman Lipper-Garabedian. Alderman Lipper-Garabedian is in support of this stop sign.

Tom Rossi did a drive by there and didn't see any site distance issues coming out. He states it is similar to the Florence and Sanford intersection. He was also wondering if there were any accident records. Elena Proakis Ellis also took a ride down at a time when there were a lot of cars parked on Maple and notes it is very narrow when cars are parked and it can be a little sketchy with the turn with large delivery trucks coming out of that nursing home.

Alderman Boisselle makes a motion to reinstall the stop sign and John Vetere seconds the motion. Chair Proakis Ellis, John Vetere, Jeff Parenti, and Alderman Boisselle vote in favor. Tom Rossi and Chief Lyle oppose. Motion passes.

7. Request by resident to have either a 4-way or 2-way stop at the intersection Hawes Avenue and Bay State Road

John Vetere makes a motion to open public participation; all are in favor.

Pat Muxley from 180 Green Street speaks. During Columbus Day 2017, she and her daughter were t-boned at this intersection and would like to see at least a 2 way stop sign to prevent any further accidents. She thanks Chair Proakis Ellis for responding to her concerns and mentions that Elena went to the site of the accident. Pat states that there is a stop sign at Hawes and Hawley heading north and feels it would make sense to have a stop sign at Hawes and Bay State Road. There are some site issues with shrubs on a private property at 66 Hawes Avenue and when there are cars parked on the right side of Bay State Road, which could limit drivers from seeing in both direction. She hopes the committee votes in favor of this as she feels very fortunate to have walked away from such a terrible accident and does not want to see anyone else go through it.

Jeff Berry at 84 Bay State Road is against this. He states it is not going to make a difference, and this has been tried before and failed. He does not want stop signs on Bay State Road and Hawes Road.

Tom Rossi makes a motion to close public participation and Bob Boisselle seconds. All are in favor.

Jeff Parenti strongly advises the Commission to control at least two of the four approaches. Sergeant Goc has accident data, and in 2015 to present, there were three accidents at that location. In one incident, the driver did state he stopped at Hawes, the second states that they did not stop, and the third states they think they stopped. All three were coming from the Wakefield area, straight across, not from the dirt road area. Sergeant Goc went to the area and states the site line looks like you can go across and further back on Hawley, Melrose has a stop sign going toward Wakefield. He is in agreement with Jeff Parenti and believes that we should at least control it from the one side but obviously putting it on the other side wouldn't hurt. There are not a lot of accidents, but he doesn't want to see any further incidents as it is not clear who has the right-of-way except for the people who live

there who know to stop. Elena Proakis Ellis noted she will be sending a letter to Wakefield outlining Melrose's concerns with the nearby location at Hawes Road and Hawley Avenue and that Rick Stinson has also reached out to Wakefield.

John Vetere makes motion to put stops signs on Hawes Road in both directions at Bay State Road. Tom Rossi seconds. All are in favor with Chief Lyle opposing.

Motion passes for two stop signs on Hawes Road in either direction at Bay State Road.

- 8. Request by the Police and Fire Chiefs to add to the current restrictions on Eastman Place, which prohibit parking on the private way on the north side from Main Street, 130 feet easterly, to designate this location as a fire lane, and to add to the current restrictions on Field's Court, which prohibit parking on the private way on the south side from Main Street, 120 feet easterly, to similarly designate this location as a fire lane.**

Chief Collina is in support of this designation on both sides of this alley way. He explains it is very challenging for their apparatus to get in there.

Chief Lyle supports this motion as it was brought to him by Alderman Lipper-Garabedian and he brought it to the attention of Chief Collina, and both agreed this should be brought before the Commission. Chief Lyle states that they tag vehicles there on a regular basis but this does not prevent the vehicles from parking there. If this passes, they would be able to tag and tow the vehicle. Since the majority of the cars parked there are running into Starbucks, Sgt. Goc feels that not many cars would be towed but certainly tagged.

Tom Rossi moves to open public participation. The motion is seconded and all are in favor.

David Addario owns property on the corner of Eastman and Stevens Place and supports the fire lane. He would like to see the fire lane extend down to the existing fire lane on Stevens Place. He also asks if the City could revisit the Stevens Place fire lane to make sure that it is marked and labeled properly, as the lines are currently white and he believes they should be yellow to indicate a fire lane.

Motion to close public participation by John Vetere, seconded by Tom Rossi. All are in favor.

Elena Proakis Ellis clarifies what was voted on last time as referred to by Mr. Addario - a fire lane of 50 feet in front of 8 Eastman Place, where there was not a fire lane previously. This was passed on March 21, 2018. The Melrose Engineering Division did a turning radius analysis based on Chief Leary's size of the trucks the Fire Department operated. The City has painted the lines and signs were installed.

A motion was made by John Vetere to make both sides a fire lane. Chief Lyle seconds based on the order as presented on the agenda. All are in favor. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.