

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN
POST AUDIT & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE REPORT

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2008

Present: Ald. Albright (Chairman), Lennon, Swiston, Harney and Mansfield

Absent: Ald. Coletti, Schnipper and Freedman

Also present: Ald. Sangiolo and Baker

City staff present: Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer) and Shawna Sullivan (Committee Clerk)

#33-02 ALD. LIPSITT requesting report on status of implementation of speed zone and truck exclusion ordinances adopted by the Board of Aldermen.

ACTION: **RECOMMEND HOLD 3-0 (Mansfield not voting)**

NOTE: Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer, joined the Committee for discussion of this item. Mr. Schuckel gave a status report on the truck exclusions and speed limits. The truck exclusions and speed limits are now part of the Traffic Regulations instead of the City Ordinances. Truck exclusions and speed restrictions require State approval. Currently, there are a few speed restrictions and several truck exclusions that are part of the regulations but have not been approved by the State. Part of the charge of the Traffic Council is to rewrite and reformat the Traffic Regulations by May 31, 2008 and Mr. Schuckel would like to clear any issues with truck exclusions and speed limits by that date. He would also like to set up a process when there is a petition for either a speed restriction or truck exclusions to avoid any further issues.

The Traffic Engineer reviewed the speed zones that are part of the traffic regulations. There are 92 streets listed with speed regulations and most of these were approved in the 1970s, when there were less stringent requirements. Of the 92 streets, 86 of them have state approval. Mr. Schuckel will follow up with Mass Highway regarding the streets.

The State defines a truck as a commercial vehicle, which weighs 2 ½ tons or more and has three or more axles. There are three criteria that determine whether the State will grant a truck exclusion. The first criterion requires that 5 to 8% of the traffic on the street is truck traffic. Second is the condition of the road such as if there is a bridge or the pavement is in rough shape. Third, the street is in a residential area, where a large volume of trucks would be inappropriate. In addition, when the City applies for a truck exclusion an alternate route for the trucks must be given.

There are 31 truck exclusions in the regulations but only six of them have been approved by the State. It is Mr. Schuckel's belief that it is unlikely that the state will approve these truck exclusions. He is willing to look at a few of the exclusions and determine whether it is possible to validate the exclusions. However, he will notify the Aldermen regarding the remaining requests that have not been approved and it will be up to the Aldermen to request further study if they feel that the exclusion meets the warrants for exclusion. Mr. Schuckel pointed out that trucks are always allowed on a street if they have business on the street or there is no other way

to reach their destination. He has found that the State is more likely to grant an exclusion if it is a nighttime request in a residential area. Mr. Schuckel will update the Committee on his progress with the speed restrictions and truck exclusions. Ald. Swiston recommended hold, which carried.

#178-04(3) ALD. LAPPIN requesting a report from the Commissioner of Public Buildings regarding why no progress has been made on the implementation of the construction project database approved by the Board of Aldermen on April 20, 2004.

ACTION: **RECOMMEND HOLD 3-0 (Mansfield not voting)**

NOTE: Ald. Albright provided the Committee with a brief history of the item (reports attached). Ald. Lappin, Commissioner of Public Buildings and the Director of Information Technology have met and have discussed the database. However, there has been no further progress. Ald. Lappin has provided the Committee with the attached fact sheet. Ald. Albright has communicated with Commissioner Parnell (attached) regarding the database and asked if he would agree to a timeline for implementation of the database. The Commissioner responded (attached) and is will share a draft of the database by the next Post Audit meeting.

There was some question as to who would be inputting the data and whether it was possible to find volunteers through the Volunteer Services Department. In addition, it was decided that in order to keep the database moving forward there should be an additional meeting with Ald. Lappin, Commissioner Parnell and the Director of Information Technology before the next Post Audit Committee meeting. On a motion to hold, the Committee voted to recommend hold.

Chairman's Note: The Committee briefly reviewed a spreadsheet of financial items dealt with by the Board in 2007 that was attached to the agenda. The Clerk also provided the Committee with a report on the status of Community Preservation proposals and projects at the meeting. As many members were not present and the Committee had just received a portion of the information, it was decided that the discussion of this information should be delayed until the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan S. Albright, Chairman