

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 2008

Present: Ald Linsky (Chair), Ald. Ciccone, Fischman, Coletti, and Swiston; absent: Ald. Danberg, Harney, and Vance

City personnel: Officer Paul Bianchi (Police), Linda Finucane (Chief Committee Clerk), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer)

#225-08 POLICE DEPARTMENT submitting report of semi-annual taxi license/public auto inspections for review. [6-3-08 @ 12:49 PM]

ACTION: APPROVED 4-0 (Swiston not present and voting)

NOTE: Ordinance §19-309(b) requires that all licensed taxis and public autos "...shall be inspected by the chief of police in March and October of each year..." This evening, Officer Bianchi, who performs the inspections, provided a summary (attached) of the voluminous data attached to this evening's agenda. Currently, with a population of 83,58, the existing 83 taxi medallions are right at the limit (one license for each population unit of 1000) and the 13 public autos (one license for each population unit of 5,000), leave three medallions available. One public auto, PMI Services, turned in its medallion. Vehicles replaced since the last inspection include two Yellow Cabs and Bill's Nice Ride, a public auto. Officer Bianchi noted that provisions of the ordinance also require that a vehicle be replaced if it is ten years old and prohibit a vehicle from being out of service for more than 14 consecutive days, unless for service. This last provision allays Alderman Coletti's concern about potential hoarding of unused medallions

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve its review of the semi-annual auto inspections. Officer Bianchi apologized for not submitting them earlier, but changes in board staff and the return to patrol the officer he was training delayed the inspections. Aldermen Ciccone and Coletti commented on the improved condition of taxis and public autos during Officer's Bianchi's tenure. The Committee thanked him for the excellent job he has done and was dismayed to hear that he is retiring next year. Members, believing strongly that it is important for the Chief of Police to have Officer Bianchi teach another officer to perform this function, agreed that the Chairman will speak with the Chief or that an item will be docketed asking the Chief to meet with the Committee.

#152-07(3) ALD. JOHNSON, LINSKY, ALBRIGHT requesting a discussion relative to establishing temporary parking restrictions on streets affected by the implementation of the Newton North Tiger Zone parking program.

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-0 (Swiston not present and voting)

NOTE: This item had been held pending action by the Traffic Council, which approved a related item, TC27, in June. Given the action by the Traffic Council, Alderman Fischman moved No Action Necessary, which carried unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE: *The following item was approved as amended 5-0 (Ald Linsky, Swiston, Coletti not voting) by the Committee on June 18.*

Item held in Committee on June 2, 2009

#124-03(3) TRAFFIC COUNCIL & ALD. DANBERG proposing that Ordinance Section 19-178, **Handicapped persons and disabled veterans parking**, be amended to improve the administrative process relative to adding, relocating, or removing handicapped parking spaces.

The Committee approved the substance of the proposed item on May 21, but held the item in Committee at the June 2 full board because the draft board order was not distributed. The proposed amendments are not substantive; they simplify somewhat the process for a person seeking a handicapped parking space. The Committee with a draft ordinance in front of it approved the same amendments on June 18 but, at the suggestion of a citizen who attended that meeting, changed the word "handicapped" to "disabled." Subsequently, the substitution came to the attention of the Law Department, which wrote the attached memorandum, dated June 30. In essence, although the Registry of Motor Vehicles uses the term "disabled" on its web page, all state statutes, placards, and signage refer to "handicapped." The substitution would create inconsistency between state statutes as well as other sections of the city's ordinances.

This evening, members noted that the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities had reviewed the proposed amendments without suggesting any changes. Alderman Ciccone felt it made sense to use "handicapped" to comply with the terminology in the statutes. The other members agreed, but thought that perhaps a resolution to the General Court relative to changing "handicapped" to "disabled" would be in order.

Therefore, after reviewing the Law Department's memorandum with Committee members, at the July 14th Board meeting, the Committee Chair will request a suspension of the rules to poll the Committee to substitute "handicapped" for "disabled." In accordance with the draft ordinance originally approved (attached).

All other items were held without discussion and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen M. Linsky, Chairman