

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2008

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

Absent: Ald. Coletti

Also Present: Ald. Hess-Mahan

City Staff: Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer) and David Koses (Transportation Planner)

#296-08 TRAFFIC ENGINEER requesting a discussion of the process for Aldermen to advance capital improvements (e.g., traffic safety, traffic calming) following a favorable recommendation by the Traffic Council, for primarily those projects that may require subsequent approval of the Public Facilities Committee and/or Finance Committee. [08-05-08 @ 9:11 AM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0** (Ald. Harney and Coletti not present and voting)

NOTE: The City's Traffic Engineer, Clint Schuckel, appeared before the committee for discussion of this item. Mr. Schuckel prepared and presented a slide show (attached to this report).

Mr. Schuckel presented an overview of the recently revised Traffic Council process. Under the current process, a resident's request for traffic improvement or change is docketed with the Traffic Council. Unless the action of the Traffic Council is appealed, it does not result in an item being docketed before the Board. Consequently, the Traffic Engineer wanted to apprise the Board of pending traffic calming projects recommended by the Traffic Council so that appropriate Board action is taken. The Traffic Engineer submitted a list of these projects as part of his presentation.

Ald. Fischman made the motion No Action Necessary.

**REFERRED TO PROG. & SERV., ZONING & PLANNING, PUB. FACIL,
PUB. SAFETY AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#273-08 ALD. JOHNSON proposing a RESOLUTION to His Honor the Mayor requesting that the Executive and Human Resources Departments develop a comprehensive human capital strategy for the City to include: performance management, talent development, succession planning, and compensation. [07-17-08 @ 9:53 AM]

ACTION: **HELD 6-0** (Ald. Ciccone and Coletti not present and voting)

NOTE: Ald. Johnson requested the matter be held.

Ald. Danberg made the motion to hold.

REFERRED TO PUB. SAFETY & TRANS. & FINANCE COMMITTEES

#80-08 **ALD. SALVUCCI & DANBERG** requesting creation of a parking permit program for employees of Newton businesses to allow long-term parking in municipal parking lots. [1-23-08 @1:15 PM]

ACTION: **HELD 6-0 (Ald. Coletti and Harney not present and voting)**

NOTE: Mr. Schuckel once again joined the committee for discussion on this item.

Mr. Schuckel prepared and presented a slide show of the streets involved (attached to this report). Mr. Schuckel stated this item was docketed because employees have suggested to Ald. Salvucci the need to create a parking permit program for Newton employees.

Mr. Schuckel posed a number of questions relating to the goal of creating and reserving long-term parking for the employees who work in the City for the Committee's consideration, including issues relating to: (a) site location, (b) setting of fees, (c) eligibility, and (d) administration.

Citywide there are two hundred seventy seven spaces that are designated for long-term parking in the municipal parking lots. If the City used half of the spaces for permits, you would have approximately one hundred and forty permits through out the City. Un-metered parking spaces could also be considered.

Prior to July 1, 2006, Newton charged \$.25 per hour in the municipal lots and \$.50 per hour on the streets. This has changed to \$.25 per hour for long-term meters that are away from commercial areas and \$.50 for short-term meters in closer proximity to the businesses. Newton is compatible to the prices they charge to other cities and towns in close proximity. Boston and Cambridge are at the top of the list where Boston charges \$1.00 per hour, Brookline charges \$.25 more than Newton for short and long-term parking. Other cities and towns in close proximity still charge \$.25 per hour for short and long-term parking.

Mr. Schuckel suggests a permit charge of at least \$2.50 per day and suggested not charging more than the MBTA rate, this is \$3.50 - \$4.00 per day. Most cities and towns are charging approximately \$80.00 per month.

Mr. Schuckel suggested that a draft ordinance be prepared before the next discussion. Ald. Danberg and Ald. Vance offered to consult with the City's law department for a recommendation, including the ability to implement a one-year trial. In the meantime, the Traffic Engineer will be reporting back to the Committee his recommendations for trial(s).

Ald. Danberg has spoken with Newton employees and they stated they would be willing to pay up to \$8.00 per day for permits with a strong desire for twelve-hour meters. Mr. Schuckel stated the permit parking would end at 6 pm.

Ald. Danberg made the motion to hold.

Chairman's Note: Walking School Bus Program

At the Chair's request, the City's Transportation Planner, David Koses joined the Committee to inform the members about the Walking School Bus Program. Mr. Koses presented and distributed information from Walk Boston (attached to this report). A key element of the program involves the establishment of multiple routes for 'walking buses' (parent volunteers walking a specific route which children join along the way).

Mr. Koses stated that the City has been awarded a \$6,000.00 grant from Walk Boston for an eight-hour per-week position for a coordinator, chosen as coordinator was Ms. Jean Fulkerson. Ms. Fulkerson will be working with the Transportation Department, Planning Department and Newton Safe Routes Task Force in this program. This grant will expire in December 2008. Newton was selected for this program out of the four cities who were awarded grants.

Thus far, there is not a coordinator for each school.

Committee members stated their concerns, including the condition of sidewalks and crosswalks, the availability of crossing guards, and guidelines to assist volunteers.

The committee decided to consult with the City's law department to seek further advice and guidance regarding liability and responsibilities relating to this program.

Ald. Swiston suggested perhaps holding a fundraiser each year to enable the City purchasing an insurance policy and be able to continue this program by paying for the coordinators salary.

Mr. Koses also stated that bicycle racks were purchased last year for schools. Mr. Koses commented, that this year the schools are more receptive to bicycle racks and have already requested them or are asking for additional ones to be installed.

It is the Committee's desire to assist in providing visibility to this program. The Chair suggested the committee might consider sponsoring a resolution to this effect at a Board of Aldermen meeting in the near future for their input.

At approximately 9:50 pm, Ald. Ciccone moved for adjournment, which was approved 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen M. Linsky, Chairman