

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2008

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

Absent: Ald. Fischman and Harney

Also Present: Ald. Baker and Mansfield

City Staff: Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Sandy Pooler (Chief Admin. Officer), Marie Lawlor (Assistant City Solicitor), Candace Havens (Chief Planner) and Jay Babcock (Newton Police)

#132-08 ALD. LENNON requesting discussion of Ordinance Sec 19-32., **Field Trials**, re providing notice to persons within the vicinity of a trial. [3-26-08 @10:54 PM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-0 (Ald. Danberg and Ciccone not voting)**

NOTE: Ald. Linsky stated that the Committee had completed their work on this item but due to the fact that this item was originally created as a discussion only item, the Committee created 132-08(2).

Ald. Vance moved No Action Necessary.

#132-08(2) PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE requesting amendments to Ordinance Sec. 19-32., **Field Trials**, so as to provide notice to persons within the vicinity of a field trial; to provide an update to Board members and the public as to the status of field trials; and to provide for the return of original street conditions as soon as practicable in instances where new conditions subject to trial are not adopted. [11-5-08 @ 9:45 PM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 4-0 (Ald. Danberg and Ciccone not voting)**

NOTE: Marie Lawlor, Assistant City Solicitor, provided the Committee with a draft Ordinance, after the Committees review of the Ordinance they had no further questions.

Ald. Vance moved to approve this item.

REFERRED TO PS&T AND PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEES

#391-08 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting Board of Aldermen approval to
(#122-92(3) petition the General Court for an amendment to the legislation that governs the appointment of a Police Chief in the City of Newton in order to add two members to the Committee: an additional representative of the Newton Superior Officers Association and an additional citizen member. [11-4-08 @12:31 PM]

ACTION: HELD 6-0

NOTE: Sandy Pooler, Chief Admin. Officer, Marie, Lawlor, Assistant City Solicitor and Jay Babcock, President of the International Brotherhood of Police Officers/Local 478, joined the Committee on discussion of this item.

Ms. Lawlor indicated that the original item petitioned from Mayor Cohen asked to add two additional members to the Committee that was delineated from Sec. 5 of Chapter 279 of the Acts of 1992. Ms. Lawlor indicated the original petition asked to add one representative from the Newton Superior Officers Association and one additional citizen member to the Police Search Selection Committee.

Since that time, Dan Funk, City Solicitor was asked to render an opinion on what they are calling the case of the perplexing comma. Specifically in clause seven of Chapter 279 of the Acts of 1992. Mr. Funk recommended amending this act by removing this comma. Ms. Lawlor provided the Committee with the original board order #122-92(3) attached to this report, indicating this board order did not contain the comma, which she believes was an error by the State. Ms. Lawlor stated that Section 5, clause 7 of the board order there was only comma, not two and the proper wording shall read “One member of the Massachusetts Police Chief’s Association, except a former Police Chief from the City of Newton”.

Mr. Pooler indicated the intent is to move forward with the immediate selection process under the existing special act. The unions have worked together in the past to allow representation on the search Committee.

Mr. Pooler stated it is the concern of the Chief, Mayor, and Police Department to have a Chief contracted before January 1, 2009 for continuity and morale reasons within the department.

Ald. Coletti also stated his concerns regarding the role of the search Committee, the Public Safety & Transportation Committee and the Board of Aldermen in order to recommend a Chief.

Officer Babcock asked Committee members that the search Committee has the opportunity to move forward and that the process not be interrupted. He stated the concerns of the Newton Superior Officers Associations to the Mayors office to add another member from the Police Department to the search Committee. He also stated most importantly that a Chief should be hired prior to January 1, 2009. Officer Babcock indicated a number ranks candidates before being referred to the mayor for selection.

Ald. Coletti asked Mr. Pooler for a “gentlemen’s agreement” with the Mayor’s office that the selection Committee continue with the proper number of people being able to serve on the Committee, which would allow the Public Safety & Transportation Committee time to make changes to this act.

Ald. Coletti asked Mr. Pooler that an updated job description, budget and evaluation form be provided to the Committee before the Committee discusses this item in the future.

Ald. Vance made the motion to hold suggesting that the Board and Committee have the opportunity to take a comprehensive look at this legislation in order to consider making amendments. Ald. Vance suggests the search Committee that exists in the legislation at the current time be able to continue their search and work in order to make a recommendation to the Mayor.

#366-08 ALD. LINSKY AND DANBERG requesting the Public Safety & Transportation Committee be provided the authority to initiate trial or pilot programs relating to parking and/or traffic control. [10-14-08 @ 12:53 PM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 4-0 (Ald. Danberg and Ciccone not voting)**

NOTE: Marie, Lawlor, Assistant City Solicitor once again joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Ms. Lawlor provided the Committee with a draft Ordinance which would authorize the Committee to initiate trial or pilot programs relating to parking and/or traffic control in all circumstances. Presently, the Committee has authority to initiate trials only on items that have been appealed from the Traffic Council.

As it had been originally docketed with the misunderstanding that it would be necessitated by the employee parking trial.

Ald. Vance made the motion No Action Necessary.

#390-08 TRAFFIC ENGINEER requesting discussion of a consultant's 2008 recommendation for traffic flow and safety improvements at three Newton Centre intersections: Beacon at Centre Streets, Beacon at Langley/Sumner, and Centre at Cypress Streets. [11-7-08 @ 3:57 PM]

ACTION: **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0 (Ald. Coletti not voting)**

NOTE: Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer joined the Committee on discussion of this item.

Mr. Schuckel presented the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation (portion of which is attached to this report). A copy of the full report will be posted on the City's website when finalized.

Mr. Schuckel indicated what the consultant's proposal and recommendation was after the completion of their study. Mr. Schuckel stated a consultant was hired because of having

mitigation money from Hebrew College and believes the board order indicated that monies could not be used for a physical improvement but could be used for a study. Mr. Schuckel stated what the consultant is proposing has been used in Boston, Cambridge, and Walk Boston and has worked. The consultant is promoting simple changes in these areas of how the Traffic Department can make changes to accommodate pedestrians at major signalized intersections.

The study covered three major intersections in Newton Centre with minimal changes recommended by the consultant.

Beacon at Centre Streets

- To make changes from exclusive to concurrent pedestrian phasing which would indicated the walk button lights up, the red signal will be red in all other directions
- Install pedestrian signals with a countdown timer
- Closing the size of the right turn lane
- Shorten length of crosswalk
- Striping improvements
- Remove exclusive pedestrian phase and have pedestrians cross with the traffic

Currently the traffic trade off stop for each car is approximately thirty-five seconds when one person wants to cross which influences traffic congestion.

Beacon at Langley/Sumner Streets

- Striping improvements
- Roundabouts (rotaries)
- Re-timing the lights
- Remove exclusive pedestrian phasing and have pedestrians cross with the traffic

Centre at Cypress Streets

- Striping improvements
- Right angle "T" intersection
- Right turn lane out onto Beacon Street
- Warning sign

Making any of these changes would make Centre Street the main road. The study also showed that Cypress Street has the most traffic.

Mr. Schuckel informed the Committee any changes and recommendations from the consultant could be pursued further and would best be docketed in Traffic Council Committee.

Ald. Danberg made the motion No Action Necessary with the understanding that specific action items are brought before the Traffic Council Committee.

The following residents attended the meeting for the discussion of the next three items (#34-06, #33-06 and #32-06)

Irwin Jungreis, 31 Norwood Avenue, Newton Centre

Carol Birkestrand, 15 Norwood Avenue, Newton Centre

Ruth Neiberg, 72 Dalton Road, Newton Centre

Adam Peller, 28 Dand Street, Newton Centre

Lisa Gordon, 76 Elgin Street, Newton Centre

ITEM COMMITTED TO PS&T BY FULL BOARD ON 7/10/06:

#34-06 CANDACE HAVENS requesting to change 37 short-term metered parking spaces to long-term parking spaces in the Pelham Street Parking lot. Request to change 12 short-term metered parking spaces to long-term parking spaces in Pleasant Street parking lot.

Traffic Council Approved as amended on 4/24/06

ACTION: NO ACTION NECESSARY 6-0

NOTE: Candace Havens, Chief Planner, and Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer joined the Committee and presented them with a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Schuckel's PowerPoint presentation is attached to report. Unfortunately, Ms. Havens PowerPoint presentation will be provided in next week's packet.

Ms. Havens stated the existing long-term spaces are better utilized than the short-term spaces in these lots recommending some short-term spaces are converted to meet the needs for long-term parking in the area. Currently there are eighty-nine parking spaces in the Pelham Street lot of which twenty-one are long-term spaces and seventy-seven spaces in the Pleasant Street lot of which forty-three are long-term spaces.

Ms. Havens noted that license plate studies of the lot were inconclusive; although most cars parked in the long-term spaces are from Newton, the local employees, and commuters could not be distinguished from each other in the study. To address this concern; she suggested keeping long-term parking rates or creating long-term lots in which priority pricing could be offered to local users and regular monitoring of parking behaviors.

Mr. Schuckel observed full usage of existing long-term spaces and less use of 3-hour meters in the lots. Mr. Schuckel suggested changing seven long-term spaces to short-term spaces in the Pleasant Street and converting nineteen short-term to long-term in the Pelham Street lot, for a total increase of twelve long-term parking spaces.

Mr. Schuckel indicated the Traffic Council voted to recommend:

- Converting seven long-term spaces to short-term spaces in the Pleasant Street lot.
- Changing nineteen short-term spaces to long-term spaces in the Pelham Street lot.

Ald. Danberg made the motion for No Action Necessary.

ITEM COMMITTED TO PS&T ON 7/10/06:

#33-06

CANDACE HAVENS requesting consideration of

1. "Live Parking" zones on Union Street and Braeland Avenue (approximately 12 spaces total) in front of Newton Centre "T" Stop from 4:30-6:30 PM to eliminate double-parking and improve drop-off and pick-up of transit riders; includes relocation of handicap parking space on Union Street to opposite side of street
2. 12-hour parking meters in unmeted section of Braeland Avenue from Herrick Road to Langley Road.

Traffic Council Approved as amended on 4/24/06

ACTION:

1. **APPROVED AS AMENDED, SUBJECT TO 2ND CALL 5-0 (Ald. Ciccone not voting)**
2. **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0 (Ald. Ciccone not voting)**

NOTE: Candace Havens, Chief Planner, and Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer once again joined the Committee and presented them with a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Schuckel's PowerPoint presentation is attached to report. Unfortunately, Ms. Havens PowerPoint presentation will be provided in next week's packet.

Ms. Havens described the area surrounding the Newton Centre "T" stop. Cars double-park on the Union Street side while they wait for passengers. At the same time of day on Braeland Avenue, there are very few cars due to the 4-6 pm parking restriction.

Ms. Havens recommended a "Live Parking" zone in front of the station on Union Street to give drivers a place to wait for passengers without obstructing the flow of traffic and another zone on the Braeland side of the tracks to allow for pick-up of passengers arriving on that side. Ms. Havens expects these changes would result in less traffic and congestion on Union Street.

A turnover and license plate study of the cars parked on Braeland Avenue showed that six one-hour metered parking spaces are used periodically and the unrestricted parking spaces are well used mostly for short periods. Ms. Havens indicated these spaces are closest to the "T" and slightly farther from the activity centers and could provide employee or commuter parking, but the afternoon restriction discourages such use. Ms. Havens also noted that employee's park on Union Street and Langley Road and take up convenient customer spaces.

Mr. Schuckel indicated the Traffic Council voted to recommend:

- Four “Live Parking” spaces on Union Street between the entrances to the Newton Centre “T” stop from 4:30 to 6:30 pm
- Four “Live Parking” spaces on Braeland Avenue behind the Newton Centre “T” stop east of the stairway/crosswalk
- 12-hour metered parking on the entire north side of Braeland Avenue to replace six 1-hour meters and approximately twenty-three unrestricted spaces.

1. Ald. Danberg made the motion for approval, as amended indicating “Live Parking” zones are allowed on Union Street only from 4:30-6:30 PM and the entire day on Braeland Avenue.

2. Ald. Swiston made the motion for No Action Necessary.

ITEM COMMITTED TO PS&T BY FULL BOARD ON 7/10/06:

#32-06

CANDACE HAVENS requesting consideration of long-term parking meters

1. On the west side of Centre Street between Tyler Terrace and Bowen Street
2. On the south side of Lyman Street between Centre Street and Willow Street.

Traffic Council on 4/24/06:

1. APPROVED AS AMENDED 4-0-1 (Koses abstaining)

2. APPROVED 5-0

ACTION:

1. APPROVED 5-0 (Ald. Ciccone not voting)

2. APPROVED AS AMENDED 5-0 (Ald. Ciccone not voting)

NOTE: Candace Havens, Chief Planner, and Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer once again joined the Committee and presented them with a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Schuckel’s PowerPoint presentation is attached to report. Unfortunately, Ms. Havens PowerPoint presentation will be provided in next week’s packet.

Candace Havens, Chief Planner, and Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer joined the Committee and presented them with a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Schuckel’s presentation is attached to report. Unfortunately, Ms. Havens will be provided in next week’s packet.

Ms. Havens stated the study showed that the number of public and private parking spaces in the center appear to be adequate, but that public parking is in higher demand and that the parking lot at Langley Road approaches 100% occupancy at peak times.

Additional long-term parking on the edges of the center will provide an alternative for those who now feed meters in the most convenient customer spaces. It is hoped that this will also reduce traffic that is generated by customers in search of parking spaces at midday when parking demand peaks.

Mr., Schuckel reviewed the conditions of the Centre and Lyman Streets where new meters are proposed. On Centre Street, he noted the width of the southbound lane is 24’ and

there is room for eight to twelve parking spaces on the west side; he also recommended no parking on the west side of Centre Street where the street curves nearest Bowen Street to allow proper merging of traffic. On Lyman Street, there is a two-hour restriction on the south side and no restriction on the north side. Mr. Schuckel stated the street could support parking only on one side and recommended seven to eight meters on the south side and no parking near the driveways or on the north side.

Ms. Havens also noted that the north side of the street has no sidewalks and the grade changes quickly, so it may be easier for people to put coins in meters from southerly spaces.

Mr. Schuckel stated Traffic Council voted to recommend an approval of 12-hour meters with the final layout being approved by the City Traffic Engineer:

- eight to twelve spaces on the west side of Centre Street from Tyler Terrace to the crosswalk
- seven to eight spaces on the south side of Lyman Street between Centre and Willow Streets.

1. Ald. Coletti made the motion for approval.
2. Ald. Vance made the motion for approval, as amended.

Friendly Amendment

Ald. Danberg offered a friendly amendment to change the current meters to be up to three hours instead of twelve hour meters.

Ald. Vance move to approve this item as amended and the committee voted in favor.

At approximately, 11:20 pm Ald. Vance moved for adjournment, which was approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen M. Linsky, Chairman