

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2008

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

Absent: Ald. Swiston and Coletti

Also Present: Ald. Parker and Lennon

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

#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.[4-8-08 @ 5:17 PM]

**ACTION: APPROVED 5-0 (Ald. Linsky, Swiston, and Coletti not present and voting)**

**NOTE:** This item was recommitted to the committee for the reason that the draft board order language had not been provided for the Board of Aldermen meeting held on June 2, 2008. (A draft board order was provided to the committee this evening and is attached to this report.)

The Committee entertained public comment.

Maryann Amaral of 64 Park Street suggested that the term ‘handicapped person’ be changed to ‘person with a disability’ as it appeared in the draft ordinance as this represented more acceptable terminology. Ms. Amaral indicated she will forward relevant state and federal regulations relating to other inquiries she had relative to how handicapped spaces were determined.

The city’s Traffic Engineer, Clint Schuckel, joined the committee and re-iterated that the ordinance would provide that the Traffic Council would have the final authority on granting, moving, or removing handicap spaces in consultation with the Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities.

Ald. Danberg made the motion to approve.

#421-05(2) TRAFFIC ENGINEER requesting that the following City Ordinance sections be rescinded and transferred to the “Traffic and Parking Regulations” document, which now contains all similar site-specific regulations, per Board approval of docket item #421-05 in December of 2007:

(C) Sec. 19-194 – Areas in municipal off-street parking areas – no time limits

(D) Sec. 19-195 – Areas in municipal off-street parking areas – time limits

**ACTION: APPROVED 5-0 (Ald. Linsky, Swiston, and Coletti not present and voting)**

**NOTE:** This item was recommitted to the committee for the reason that the draft board order language had not been provided for the Board of Aldermen meeting held on June 2, 2008. (A draft board order was provided to the committee this evening and is attached to this report.)

Ald Parker joined the committee for this item. He inquired as to what provisions relating to parking meters would appear in the Traffic Council regulations and what would remain in the ordinances. Ald Parker stated that meters and their changes in any form ought not to be in the hands of non-elected officials. Ald Parker stated the Board should not allow Traffic Council the decision where meters are placed and what the cost should be.

Mr. Schuckel again joined the committee for discussion on this item. Mr. Schuckel stated that the proposed change would allow Traffic Council control over metered parking in municipal lots. Control of on- street meters have already been transferred to Traffic Council. Mr. Schuckel stated if meters stay an ordinance it allows Traffic Council control for on street meters but not off-street meters. Currently almost all of City municipal parking lots have meters.

Mr. Schuckel stated this item maintains the same days and hours that are presently enforced. In order to change the enforcement of days and hours a new item would have to be docketed.

Ald. Fischman made the motion for approval.

**REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANS. AND FINANCE COMMITTEES**

#30-08 ALD. COLETTI requesting a list of current vacancies in the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments, with specific discussion in Committee relative to Police Department vacancies. [01-15-08 @ 11:15 a.m.]

**ACTION:** **HELD 5-0-1** (Ald. Harney abstaining, Ald. Swiston and Coletti not present and voting)

**NOTE:** Ald. Coletti was not present this evening for this discussion, therefore Ald. Ciccone moved to hold the item.

**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 5-0** (Ald. Swiston, Coletti and Ciccone not present and voting)

**NOTE:** City Traffic Engineer, Clint Schuckel, joined the committee for discussion of this item. Mr. Schuckel prepared and presented a slide show of the streets involved .

Mr. Schuckel stated this item was docketed because employees have suggested to Ald. Salvucci to create a parking permit program for Newton employees. The Committee held a public hearing in March of 2008. He furnished the Committee a report (portion of which is attached).

Mr. Schuckel posed a number of questions for the Committee's consideration, including issues relating to: (a) site location, (b) setting of fees, (c) eligibility, and (d) administration, and

relating to the goal of creating and reserving long-term parking for the employees who work in the City.

Mr. Schuckel suggested to initially provide permits in municipal lots. According to Mr. Schuckel, there is currently a mix of short and long-term parking meters in the City. The parking permit program would only be taking the spaces of the long-term meters. Citywide there are two hundred seventy seven spaces that are 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, which is \$3.50 - \$4.00 per day. Most cities and towns are charging approximately \$80.00 per month.

Mr. Schuckel distributed the Brookline Commercial Permit Parking Program information and Somerville Business Permit Parking Application (attached). In Brookline, the employee parking permit goes to the employer. In Somerville, the permit is given to the employee.

Mr. Schuckel suggested that a draft ordinance be prepared before the next discussion. Ald. Danberg offered to consult with the Law Department to answer committee members' questions, including the ability to implement trials.

Ald. Harney inquired as to how people in the community and/or commuters would be contacted for their interest.

Ald. Danberg moved to hold the item.

#272-04      ALD. SANGIOLO AND HARNEY proposing amendment to Sec.19-201, *Resident sticker and visitor permit parking program*, to include streets that are not 100% residential. (Public hearing held on 11/17/04)

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

**NOTE:**      Ald. Harney, as docketer, provided a brief history of the item. When the item was first docketed in 2004, Cheswick Road was a particular concern due to the increase parking from students at Lasell College. The residents living in the neighborhood raised the concern where the students are using Cheswick Road as a parking lot. The residents wanted to know why they could not have resident parking only. The existing ordinance requires streets must be 100% residential, which Cheswick Road is not as Lasell College owns two properties

at the end of the street.

City Traffic Engineer Clint Schuckel joined the committee for discussion. Mr. Schuckel distributed a street map from Newton Geographic Information System (GIS), which depicted the approximately 33% of city streets that are non-residential residential (attached).

Mr. Schuckel suggested having Newton GIS run a more precise map definition of what areas are to be considered. He described the criteria for resident permit parking.

The Committee opened the discussion to public comment. Harold Onis a resident of Cheswick Road, stated that restricted parking made to include tow zones would provide Lasell College with a mechanism for controlling their students and would achieve the desire of the residents.

Neil Epstein, a resident of 44 Cheswick Road, asked what the definition of an institution was. Mr. Epstein stated that Lasell College has a parking lot for approximately one hundred fifty cars which should not be a problem, but with the extension of the school as it has grown, the value of homes have gone down. Mr. Epstein asked the City to help these residents to protect their neighborhoods because right now the residents have no rights.

Mr. Marget, a resident of 37 Cheswick Road, stated that this is not just a Cheswick Road issue but a City of Newton issue. In Boston, residents are using parking permit areas and have designated visitor-parking areas. Mr. Marget suggested designating Lasell College parking areas in front of the college limiting it to one-hour visitor parking. She stated that residents would like to see parking issues resolved in the Cheswick Road area before September.

Ald. Vance moved to hold the item with a directive that the committee supports the basic goal and objective with the directive to Ald. Harney to work with the Law Department to develop a specific proposal responsive to the issues that were identified in the discussion concerning the limits of what the expansion would be and the number of the issues that were discussed.

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

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

**NOTE:** Ald. Lennon joined the committee for discussion on this item. Ald. Lennon stated he has not met with Clint Schuckel, Traffic Engineer, and the Law Department to have a conversation regarding this item. Ald. Lennon will meet with these City employees for a discussion regarding draft language to be written.

Ald Lennon would like to first have the draft language prepared by the Law Department and return to the committee for a discussion. Ald. Lennon asked the committee to hold this item until this is completed.

Ald. Fischman moved to hold the item.

**REFERRED TO PUB. FAC. AND PUB. SAFETY & TRANS. COMMITTEES**

#364-02 ALD. JOHNSON & LENNON requesting on behalf of Bo Ly, 11 Winthrop Avenue, parking study and recommendations on WINTHROP AVENUE. (Ward 1)  
**Traffic Council approved as amended on 3/18/04**

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

**NOTE:** City Traffic engineer, Clint Schuckel, joined the committee for discussion.

Mr. Schuckel prepared and presented a slide show of Newtonville Avenue and Oakland Street, the streets at issue. Oakland Street turns into Winthrop Avenue, is a dead end street that has a vacant lot at the end.

Mr. Schuckel stated this is a unique situation because Winthrop Avenue is a private way which the residents of the street own up to the centerline. Some of these properties do not have off-street parking. The problem is that the street is not wide enough for parking on both sides.

Traffic Council reviewed the situation four years ago, specifically the ability of the Fire Department to access the last few houses in case of emergency. Traffic Council made the recommendation to restrict parking on one side which would eliminate on-street parking for some homes. The recommendation from Traffic Council at that time was to restrict parking on the west side to enable emergency vehicles to access to the last few homes on the west side. Mr. Schuckel stated it is unsafe to park on both sides of the street.

City Traffic Planner David Koses also joined the committee for this discussion. Mr. Koses reviewed the Traffic Council meeting that took place in 2004. He wondered whether west side residents could share parking on the east side of the street without causing neighborly differences. If this did not work, the restrictions could perhaps be changed to the east side.

Ald. Lennon also joined the committee to inform them that he has explored the possibility of allowing the affected homes on the west side to park in a vacant lot. Before any restrictions are put into place he wants to inform the residents of what has been recommended.

The Committee then opened the discussion to public comment.

Gary Neyshtadt, resident of 9 Winthrop Avenue, owner of 10-12 Winthrop Avenue, spoke of him purchasing the vacant lot. The plot plans for sixteen parking spaces were completed, brought before the City and the City decided there could only be eight spaces. Mr. Neyshtadt stated it was not a worthy financial investment. The City wanted him to do more work than just have the parking lot built. The City stated he would also have to install sidewalks, handicap parking spaces and meet zoning regulations. This project became too expensive to undertake, the retaining wall would still be necessary and would cost approximately the same if it were a four or sixteen space parking lot. Currently, Mr. Neyshtadt is still interested in converting this vacant lot and that negotiations are still possible with the City.

Barbara Freer, resident of 11-13 Winthrop Avenue, stated her concerns, which are safety issues of emergency vehicles having access to reach the homes on the top of the street. Another

concern is that recycling is not being picked up. Recently, the City has brought in a small truck for pickup but this is inconsistent. Ms. Freer suggested placing parking restrictions at the curb where Oakland Street meets Winthrop Avenue.

Bo Ly, resident of 15-17 Winthrop Avenue, stated his concern is that trash is not being picked up. After several complaints to the City, the trash is being picked up most of the time. He also stated that the curve is the problem.

Currently, restricted parking is in place on Oakland Street from 7 am to 10 pm on the East side. Ald. Lennon made the suggestion to have no parking on this street from 7 am to 9 am to deter the commuters from parking on the west side.

Mr. Schuckel suggested restricting parking on west side of Winthrop Avenue and on the east side of Winthrop Avenue at the intersection with #30-32 Oakland Street from the driveway at #12 Winthrop Avenue to approximately five feet to the north on a trial basis. He indicated signs could go up in early July.

Ald Danberg moved to hold this item pending a 60-day trial. The committee will discuss this item again in September.

#174-08      ALD. DANBERG, VANCE, CICCONE, LINSKY, MANSFIELD, ALBRIGHT & SALVUCCI requesting discussion with appropriate city staff regarding potential locations for new parking meters citywide. [4-23-08 @ 2:01 PM]

**ACTION:**      **NO ACTION NECESSARY 5-0-1 (Ald. Ciccone abstaining, Ald. Swiston and Coletti not present and voting)**

**NOTE:**      City Traffic Engineer, Clint Schuckel, joined the committee for discussion of this item. Mr. Schuckel presented a slide show for the committee for discussion purposes only.

Mr. Schuckel distributed a map of proposed parking changes in West Newton Village Center and a list of streets where new meters can be installed. (portion of which is attached).

Mr. Schuckel stated that thirty meters can be installed without a special appropriation by the Mayor. The maintenance budget has the funds and spare parts. Recently twenty-seven meters have been installed in Newton Lower Falls. The city currently has 1,764 meters in the with 1,000 collection point areas.

Mr. Schuckel reviewed the pros and cons of the parking meters, including revenue, enforcement costs, and effect on commerce and parking management.

Mr. Schuckel cited to the following facts:

- (1) There are currently ten parking enforcement officers who work six hours per day.

- (2) The parking meter revenue money pays for the salaries for 5.5 employees (3 maintain the streetlights and 2.5 employees who are responsible for meter collection, electricity parts, vehicles, maintenance contracts. The remaining revenue is for special projects, such as traffic calming and pedestrian signals.
- (3) The City takes in about 2 million dollars per year in meter funds.
- (4) The cost to the City is approximately \$200,000.00 (covering three salaries).
- (5) Approximately 85% of the funds collected are turned back to the City. The Police Department statistics indicate that expired tickets or non-fed meters revenue is approximately \$713,000.00.
- (6) The city is at the maximum rate for vehicles tickets and late fees. The state does not have a maximum price of what can be charged for meter violations.

Mr. Schuckel suggested to the committee that there are options to the installation of additional meters. The City could change the rate structure and perhaps change the enforcement hours. If new meters are installed they should be installed where there are high occupancy rates and high turnover locations. City revenue would increase by approximately \$250,000.00 with 20% additional meters.

Ald. Danberg moved No Action Necessary with the creation of #174-08(2) to enable potential action to be taken following a public hearing.

At approximately 11:25 pm, Ald. Vance moved for adjournment, which was approved 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen M. Linsky, Chairman