



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Present: Councilors Ciccone (Chair), Blazar, Harney, Lipof, Yates and Cote

Absent: Councilors Fuller and Norton

City Staff: David Koses, Transportation Coordinator; Sgt. Jay Babcock, Newton Police Department and Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation

Referred to PS&T, Programs & Services, Public Facilities and Finance Committees

#59-17 Appropriate \$350,000 for construction of a Parks & Recreation/Police building
HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to appropriate three hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000) from Overlay Surplus for the purpose of funding the construction of a new combined Parks & Recreation and Police Department facility to be located at the Elliot Street DPW yard. [02/17/17 @ 9:29 AM]

ACTION: Public Safety & Transportation Held 5-0, Councilor Yates not voting

NOTE: The Public Safety & Transportation and the Programs & Services Committees *did not* meet jointly on this item. The administration asked that this item be held without discussion pending additional information.

Without discussion, Councilor Cote made the motion to hold this item as requested. Committee members agreed 5-0, Councilor Yates not voting.

#366-16 Requesting a review and update on Traffic Council responsibilities
COUNCILORS NORTON, SCHWARTZ AND AUCHINCLOSS, requesting a review and update on Traffic Council responsibilities by shifting certain areas to the executive branch, including the installation of stop signs and safety upgrades. [10/17/16 @ 9:15 AM]
HELD 5-0 on 12/07/16, Councilor Cote not voting
HELD 8-0 on 02/08/17

ACTION: Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 6-0

NOTE: David Koses, Transportation Coordinator; Sgt. Jay Babcock, Newton Police Department and Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

On February 8, 2017, this item was held pending the Traffic Division review the Traffic and Parking Regulation (TPR) headers to determine if there are sections of the TPR that can be completed

administratively with special attention addressing parking issues and to meet with Sgt. Babcock to address any safety concerns.

Mr. Koses provided Committee members with a detailed memorandum, attached to this report.

Mr. Koses stated that any issue of immediate public safety is currently handled without delay by the Police Department, and are subsequently handled by Traffic Council in a timely manner.

Mr. Koses then stated that **staff recommends no change to the process of making changes to the TPR at this time.** It is recommended that all requests for stop signs, parking regulations, and every other element of the TPR continue to be handled through the current Traffic Council process that is working well. The TPR is currently up to date allowing staff to locate errors and improve various sections of the TPR through the current process. Recent staffing changes have allowed staff to take action on certain items that have been delayed, such as requests for four-way stop signs. This has been a staffing issue, not a process issue.

Mr. Koses then stated that traffic calming is not included as a specific section of the TPR. **It is suggested that requests for traffic calming may be more efficiently handled outside of the Traffic Council process.** Many other requests for Traffic Calming have not arrived to the attention of staff through the Traffic Council process, but rather through email communication, phone calls, in-person meetings, or through the WebQA/311 system. To handle all the requests for traffic calming that staff receives, the Traffic Division has been working on the development of a scoring system, to be used to review and prioritize requests against one another. **Staff suggests that requests for traffic calming be removed from the Traffic Council docket, and directed to a different process, to be developed, but which will include an administrative scoring system.**

Committee members asked the following questions:

- How will traffic calming requests on the current Traffic Council agenda be handled?
- Because Traffic Council does not have a funding source, how will studies be determined?
- Please explain the process on how traffic calming requests will be handled in the future and is there adequate staff to review traffic calming requests?

Mr. Koses answered that Traffic Council could vote no action necessary on the six traffic calming requests that are on the agenda in Committee. After the items are voted out, the request would be placed on an internal list with other requests received. The Traffic Division needs to determine the best process on how the items should be handled by using a scoring system including crash data, speeding, proximity to schools and input from the Fire Department. The Traffic Division also has to determine how the request for funding should be incorporated. There are some special permits in the city, which require funding fully or partially to fund a site-specific traffic calming project.

Ms. Freedman answered that data received would be pre-screened, prioritized internally and rated to determine funding sources. If the study shows that crash data and speeding are not an issue, the request would not be a high priority. Some simple solutions include road painting; difficult solutions include curbing.

Ms. Freedman explained that the Traffic Division is fully staffed most recently with a Traffic Engineer. The department is in the process of purchasing equipment to measure traffic speed and volumes.

Mr. Koses explained once a traffic council petition form is complete requesting traffic calming the request would be forwarded to the Traffic Division for evaluation rather than placed on the Traffic Council agenda in the section titled "Items to be reviewed for preliminary eligibility".

Committee members agreed that traffic calming requests should be removed from Traffic Council responsibilities authorizing Traffic Division to handle such requests.

Committee members agreed to docket an item removing traffic calming measures from the City Ordinances. Committee members agreed on the following language:

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, proposing to amend
Sec. 19-29. Docketing of petitions; determination of eligibility for hearing. by deleting section (c) (3). [03/10/17 @ 4:54 PM]

Clerk's Note: This item has been placed on the March 20 docket for consideration.

Without further discussion, Councilor Lipof made the motion for no action necessary. Committee members agreed 6-0.

#41-17 Resolution requesting the speed limit on Quinobequin Road be reduced to 25 mph.
COUNCILOR YATES, requesting that the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation reduce the speed limit on all sections of Quinobequin Road to 25 mph in conformity with the speed limit in the City. [02/09/17 @ 9:28 PM]

ACTION: Public Safety & Transportation Held 6-0

NOTE: Nicole Freedman, Director of Transportation joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Ms. Freedman stated that she has spoken with MassDOT regarding the truck exclusion sign. She intends to speak to DCR about the reduction of the speed limit on Quinobequin Road. She suggested the Committee send a resolution to the DCR regarding the speed limit reduction request.

Councilor Yates agreed to prepare a resolution to present to this Committee for the approval to forward to the communication representative at DCR. Ms. Freedman supports this idea; she will provide contact information to forward the resolution.

Without further discussion, Councilor Yates made the motion to hold this item. Committee members agreed 6-0.

#137-11 **Possible changes to long-term meter fees to discourage short-term use**
ALD. DANBERG AND FULLER, requesting possible changes to City Ordinance 19-191, Parking Meter Fees, to require a minimum purchase at long-term parking meters in order to discourage short-term use. [04/26/11 @ 9:52 AM]

ACTION: **Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 6-0**

NOTE: Chair Ciccone stated that he spoke with Councilors Danberg and Fuller agreeing that a vote of no action necessary is appropriate because the Transportation Division is conducting a Newton Centre parking study this year, and will be proposing changes similar to this.

Without discussion, Councilor Lipof made the motion for no action necessary. Committee members agreed 6-0.

REFERRED TO PUB FACIL, PROG & SERV, AND PS&T COMMITTEES

#46-15 **Discussion of parking options and permits at municipal and school parking lots**
ALD. JOHNSON & CICCONE, requesting a discussion with the Commissioner of Department of Public Works and the School Department to determine and discuss parking options including use of school properties based on the current municipal parking lot programs including the issuance of permits. [02/11/15 @ 1:35 PM]

ACTION: **Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 6-0**

NOTE: Chair Ciccone stated that the Executive Department has asked him to join a working group to discuss issues prior to the next winter season regarding residents who do not have parking available during the winter months. The school parking lots are not available to residents because the City Ordinance states private vehicles may not park on public property.

A Councilor recommended eliminating the overnight winter parking ban in certain areas of the city.

Without discussion, Councilor Lipof made the motion for no action necessary. Committee members agreed 6-0.

#240-12 **Request Chapter 19 Motor Vehicles & Traffic be amended, Sec. 19-224 and 19-226**
RECODIFICATION COMMITTEE, requesting that **Chapter 19 MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC** be amended to determine who has jurisdiction for parking on municipal land, the owning department as described in **Sec. 19-224. Parking prohibited on city grounds.** or the Traffic Council as described in **Sec. 19-26. Authority and role of Traffic Council.**

ACTION: **Public Safety & Transportation No Action Necessary 6-0**

NOTE: Chair Ciccone stated that the City would be undertaking recodification of the ordinances this year. Since this item is from the last recodification and no action has yet been taken, he suggests a motion of no action necessary.

Without discussion, Chair Ciccone made the motion for no action necessary. Committee members agreed 6-0.

At approximately 7:40 p.m., Councilor Yates made a motion to adjourn. Committee members agreed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Ciccone, Jr. Chair

City of Newton



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

110 Crafts Street
Newton, MA 02460

DATE: March 1, 2017

TO: Members of the Public Safety and Transportation Committee

FROM: Nicole Freedman, Transportation Director
David Koses, Transportation Coordinator

RE: #366-16 COUNCILORS NORTON, SCHWARTZ AND AUCHINCLOSS,
requesting a review and update on Traffic Council responsibilities by shifting
certain areas to the executive branch, including the installation of stop signs and
safety upgrades.

MEMORANDUM

This memorandum responds to a request made members of the Public Safety and Transportation Committee at your February 8, 2017 meeting. Staff was to provide a recommendation to Committee members in terms of any potential changes to how particular traffic and parking requests are handled by the Traffic Council.

Traffic Council's primary function is to examine and vote to make changes to the Traffic and Parking Regulations (TPR). At least 60 requests are handled every year over the course of 10-12 meetings. Traffic Council is also charged with advising the mayor and/or City Council on matters concerning traffic and parking issues affecting the city, upon request.

Staff recommends no change to the process of making changes to the TPR at this time. It is recommended that all requests for stop signs, parking regulations, and every other element of the TPR continue to be handled through the current Traffic Council process. The recommendation to make no change is based on the following:

- Staff suggests that that our current practice allows requests to be handled efficiently and effectively, and does not call out for a change. Any change is vetted through a fair public process, which provides for citizen input and voting by staff representing various City departments as well as a resident and an elected official. An appeals process to the City

Council is currently in place, although rarely used. All changes to the TPR are made by the Clerk's office, which maintains the document.

- Any issue of immediate public safety is currently immediately handled by the Police Department, and are subsequently handled by Traffic Council in a timely manner.
- The TPR is currently up to date. This has allowed staff to locate errors and improve various sections of the TPR through the current process.
- Recent staffing changes have allowed staff to take action on certain items that have been delayed, such as requests for four-way stop signs. This has been a staffing issue, not a process issue.
- Staff is concerned that a change to the current process, albeit with the best intentions, may result in unforeseen consequences.

Traffic Calming is not included as a specific section of the TPR. **It is suggested that requests for traffic calming may be more efficiently handled outside of the Traffic Council process.** The following requests for Traffic Calming are currently being carried on the Traffic Council long docket:

- COUNCILORS FULLER, BAKER AND LAREDO, requesting an analysis of speeding on Grant Avenue (between Commonwealth Avenue and Ward Street) and potential traffic calming procedures. (Ward 8)
- COUNCILOR ALBRIGHT, requesting traffic calming measures on Lowell Avenue. (Ward 2)
- WARD 2 COUNCILORS, requesting traffic calming measures on Central Avenue, Newtonville. (Ward 2)
- BARBARA BRUSTOWICZ, 12 Radcliff Road, requesting a) a traffic study be conducted for the purpose of analyzing high speed and traffic volume on Radcliff Road and Tamworth Road and b) implementation of traffic control devices, such as stop signs and/or traffic calming measures to deter speeders and address safety concerns. (Ward 5)
- ALD. SANGIOLO, requesting traffic calming measures or a reduction in speed limit on Washington Street between Aspen Avenue and Beacon Street. (Wards 4 & 5)
- ALD. LAPPIN, requesting traffic calming measures on Dudley Road. (Ward 8)

Many other requests for Traffic Calming have not arrived to the attention of staff through the Traffic Council process, but rather through email communication, phone calls, in-person meetings, or through the WebQA/311 system. To handle all the requests for traffic calming that staff receives, we have been working on the development of a scoring system, to be used to review and prioritize requests against one another. Staff suggests that requests for Traffic Calming be removed from the Traffic Council docket, and directed to a different process, to be developed, but which will include an administrative scoring system.