

**MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING
HELD: THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024 AT 10:00 A.M.
WALTHAM CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL**

The Chair made a motion and the minutes of the February meeting were accepted.

1. PETITIONED ITEMS:

A. Moody Street 2024 (Mayor McCarthy)

Mayor McCarthy is not requesting to close Moody Street to traffic this year. However, Traffic Commission has the authority to allow dining in the parking lanes, if the Commission is in favor of the idea. Permits can be issued to individual restaurants allowing the use of the parking lanes, from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend, only after obtaining permits required from the License Commission and the State for outside dining. Allowing outdoor dining would mean that the allocated parking lanes would be open for use seven days a week (with active traffic in the travel lanes), and CPW would install concrete jersey barriers to protect the outdoor dining areas. Traffic Engineering recommended that Traffic Commission allow this use for 2024. **Voted to allow restaurants to apply for permission to use the parking lanes in front of their address for outdoor dining in the 2024 season. Requests for permits would be submitted to the Traffic Engineering Department. Traffic will continue to be allowed in the travel lanes at all times (Fire Chief Mullin opposed).**

B. RRFB Request on Newton Street at McDonald Playground (Councillor Logan)

Councillor Logan requested a study to see if an RRFB can be installed at the McDonald Playground, crossing Newton Street from Clinton Street to Chestnut Street. This crosswalk is adjacent to the McDonald Playground (and the Ted Sumner Spray Park), and is used by families during the warmer months to access the playground. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to conduct an RRFB warrant analysis at the crosswalk crossing Newton Street between Clinton Street and Chestnut Street.**

C. Riverview Ave/Woerd Ave/Forest Grove Rd All-Way STOP (Councillor Harris)

Councillor Harris requested a study to see whether an All-Way STOP control is warranted at the intersection of Riverview Ave/Woerd Ave/Forest Grove Rd. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to conduct an All-Way STOP warrant analysis at this intersection, and to conduct a safety analysis along Woerd Avenue.**

D. Moody Street Car Show, Saturday August 17 (Councillor Harris)

Councillor Harris requested approval of closing Moody Street during the day on Saturday August 17, for the Moody Street Car Show. The request involves closing Moody Street between Pine Street and High Street, from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Each of the side streets would also be closed during that time. CPW would be responsible for installing barriers and "Road Closed" signs during this event. Many councillors present at the meeting were in favor of this event. **Voted to approve the proposed Moody Street Car Show on Saturday August 17, which will close Moody Street (and each of the side streets) between 8am and 5pm. The applicants should coordinate with Police and Public Works Department in advance of the event, to ensure safety.**

E. Removal of No Turn on Red Restriction on Smith St at Trapelo Rd (Councillor Hanley)

Councillor Hanley requested consideration of removing the No Turn on Red restriction on Smith Street northbound at Trapelo Road. The initial inquiry came from a constituent. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to study whether the No Turn on Red restriction should be removed on Smith Street northbound at Trapelo Road.**

F. Main St/Barbara Rd/Gore St/Warren St Alternatives

VHB presented various options for the redesign of the intersection of Main/Barbara/Gore/Warren, for selection by Traffic Commission. The various alternatives in the VHB report included the following:

- Alternative 1a – diverts all northbound Gore Street traffic to the channel (east of the island) that aligns with Warren Street; the channel to the east of the island becomes two-way; the lane to the west of the island becomes one-way southbound, leading to a stop sign before turning right to continue south. Main/Warren and Main/Barbara would maintain traffic signals
- Alternative 1b – similar to 1a, except the traffic signal at Main/Barbara is removed
- Alternative 2 – maintains existing geometry; reduces length of raised median; improves placement of traffic signal heads and signal phasing
- Alternative 3a – eliminates the right channelized lane on Gore Street northbound, requiring all northbound vehicles to continue to the signal at Barbara Road (the option presented in the Waltham Transportation Master Plan); raised median on Main Street is removed; westbound Main Street at Barbara Road consists of two general purpose lanes
- Alternative 3b – similar to 3a, except the westbound Main Street approach at Barbara Road consists of an exclusive left turn lane and a shared through/right lane

VHB indicated that the best traffic operations will be realized with Alternative 2 (which mostly maintains the existing geometry). There will be no impact to the stone walls or trees (as there is with Alternatives 1a and 1b). The intersection is projected to operate at LOS D or better. Given VHB's recommendation, the projected traffic operations with each alternative, and the clear cost savings in terms of construction, Traffic Engineering recommended the approval of Alternative 2. **Voted to approve the concept presented as Alternative 2 for the redesign of the Main St/Barbara Rd/Gore St/Warren St intersection. This alternative maintains the existing geometry at the intersection, but reduces the length of the Main Street median, and improves the placement of signal heads and the signal phasing. It was also requested of VHB to look into the feasibility of adding a sidewalk on the southern side of Main Street from the current project limits to the Watertown Town Line.**

G. 1265 Main Street Construction Update

Rob Nagi of VHB presented an update on the construction schedule for the work associated with the 1265 Main Street project. The final traffic signal plans and sign/pavement marking plans are near completion. VHB informed Traffic Commission that the highway and structure reviews are to be completed by MassDOT around April 2024. The Final submittal will optimistically be sent to MassDOT by Summer 2024, pending that they receive comments back from MassDOT in a timely manner. Permitting will most likely take place in the summer, while pre-construction efforts and the ordering of materials will likely occur in Fall 2024. Construction is estimated to begin sometime in 2025 and will most likely last for two years. As part of the draft PS&E plans, Rob Nagi went over high-level signal, pavement marking, and roadway geometry upgrades to Route 20, Green St, various highway on and off ramps, etc. **No vote was taken as this agenda item was for information purposes only.**

H. Speed Bumps on Cove Street

The tenant of the building located at 48 Woerd Ave would like to add speed bumps on Cove Street. Cove Street is a dead-end public street that intersects with Woerd Avenue. Although it is a public way, it functions as the driveway for 48 Woerd Avenue, an office building currently occupied by

Evident Scientific. There are no other properties that are accessed by Cove Street. The street is maintained by the property owner of 48 Woerd Avenue. Traffic Engineering supports the approval of the installation of speed bumps on Cove Street, as this street is, for all intents and purposes, part of the parking lot for this one building. **Voted to approve two speed bumps on Cove Street, in front of the 48 Woerd Avenue building.**

I. Totten Pond Road Redesign Near Ice Rink

The request to release an RFP for the redesign of Totten Pond Road near the Ice Rink has been denied. All design is to be completed by City departments. The Waltham Engineering Department has been designing the Ice Rink parking lot, with the new driveway, in accordance with the initial concept. The parking lot would be expanded and repaved, with the 63 parking spaces (including two accessible spaces) provided. The existing driveway on the west side of the ice rink would be closed, and the new driveway opposite the existing Prospect Hill Park driveway would be created. If completed in-house, Traffic Engineering would design all traffic engineering elements of the project (primarily signal, sign, and pavement markings), and the Engineering Department would be responsible for the topographic surveys, borings in relation to new traffic signal mast arms, soil analysis and design of mast arm foundations, definition of a baseline and curb ties, grading analysis and subsequent stormwater management, utility plans, lighting plans, and roadway profiles and cross sections, among others. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to work with the Engineering Department to provide the traffic engineering elements of the design for the reconstruction of Totten Pond Road in accordance with the concept plan approved by Traffic Commission.**

J. Taxi Rule Modification

Sgt Gallant of the Waltham Police Department requested some modifications to Taxi Licensing Rules Article 21, Section VII (2) – Qualifications, as some of the current qualification requirements seem outdated. Traffic Commission Clerk Lombardo has also provided the requirements for a Boston Taxi license, as a potential guide in revising Waltham’s requirements. Traffic Engineering also recommends considering the reduction of the number of spaces reserved for taxis at the Carter Street Lot, due to the falling number of taxis in Waltham. There has been a heavy decline of medallions (assigned to a vehicle for use as a taxi) in the past 5+ years. In 2019, there were 52 medallions, while there are only 12 in 2024. **Voted to approve Alternative #1 to discuss potential revisions to the Taxi Rules in the Traffic Rules and Regulations, as they pertain to the qualifications to obtain a taxi license. Sgt. Gallant is to work with Mr. Garvin on the specific revisions and come back to Traffic Commission at a future meeting to report the updates. Subsequently, the second part of the vote was to table the discussion about potentially removing two parking spaces reserved for taxis until Traffic Engineering observes and confirms that they’re no longer needed due to the drastic decrease in medallions in the City.**

K. Rivers of Living Waters – Youth Ministry, 5K – Sunday April 21, 2024

Approval is requested for a 5K road race/walk on Sunday April 21. The road race/walk will begin and end at the Waltham Common on Sunday, April 21 at 1:00pm, with a rain date of Saturday, June 1 at 1:00pm. **Voted to approve the proposed 5K road race.**

L. 2024 Farmers Market

Marc Rudnick requested a pedestrian sign on Lexington St during the Farmers Market, as the Farmers Market will relocate to the former Elks property, at 101 School Street in 2024. It is expected that visitors will park in the parking lot at Government Center, at 119 School Street. The portable pedestrian sign will provide a safer crossing environment from Government Center to the Farmers Market across the street. The sign would be purchased by the Farmers Market and put in the street on Saturdays from 9am to 3pm, and will subsequently be stored off-site at all other times. **Voted to approve the use of a portable pedestrian sign to be placed on the double yellow center line**

on Lexington Street between Government Center and the lot at 101 School Street during the hours of the Farmers Market (Saturdays from 9am to 3 pm), with the requirement that the sign be stored off-site at all other times.

2. TABLED ITEMS: (Only items in Bold and Highlighted were discussed at this meeting)

A. Elson Rd. Parking Study (Councillor Durkee) (6/19) (9/19) (6/23)

Elson Road is a two-way street, with parking permitted on both sides. Currently, there is no curb separating the roadway from the asphalt sidewalk. On the western section of Elson Road (from Prentice Street/Prospect Hill Road to about #25 Elson Road), the roadway is 26 feet wide, and there is an approximately 7-foot-wide sidewalk on each side (north and south sides). If cars are parked on each side of the street without encroaching on the sidewalks, that leaves approximately 12 feet, which is not sufficient for two-way traffic. The Waltham Engineering Department presented a design that adds a sidewalk with granite curbing along the north side of the street. However, on the south side of the street, the existing sidewalk (without curbing) will remain between Prospect Hill Road and #25 Elson Road. East of #25 Elson Road, a granite curb will be installed, but no new sidewalk will be installed. Traffic Engineering recommended approval of this conceptual plan. **Voted to table this item, and evaluate the potential no parking restrictions when the area can be visually inspected after the construction is complete, to ensure these new restrictions are appropriate.**

B. Adams St. at Crescent St. – Proposed All-Way and Corridor Study (Councillor Harris) (11/21) (11/22) (12/22)

C. *Bedford St – Speeding Issues (Mayor McCarthy) (12/21) (9/22)

D. Main Street at Newton St & Lyman St – Traffic Signal Coordination (1/22) (11/22)

E. *Harrington Road Speed Study (Mayor McCarthy) (3/22) (9/22)

F. *Villa Street: Speed Bumps (Mayor McCarthy) (4/22) (9/22)

G. *Elm St/River St Signal Warrant (Mayor McCarthy) (5/22)

H. 240/265 Beaver Street Traffic Safety Analysis (Councillor Bradley-MacArthur) (11/22) (6/23)

I. Brandeis Crosswalk on South Street, Improved Visibility (Councillor Katz) (12/22) (1/23)

The Chief of Police of Brandeis University, Chief Rushton, came back to Traffic Commission to propose additional safety enhancements regarding the crosswalk on South St just north of the pedestrian bridge. Chief Rushton ensured that these enhancements would be fully funded by Brandeis (at a cost of \$18,905), which includes automatic activation bollards (which would help detect when a pedestrian enters the crosswalk on either side of the street), In-ground LED light fixtures (five facing each direction with embedded snow plow resistant base plates), and LED border enhanced pedestrian warning signs and push buttons. **Voted to approve the enhancements of the crosswalk crossing South Street, as proposed by Brandeis University, with the stipulation that Brandeis University agrees to service and maintain these enhancements in perpetuity, with an agreement made in writing.**

J. MBTA Better Bus Project Update (1/23) (1/24)

K. Elm Street Northbound Approach to Railroad Crossing (5/23) (6/23)

The Engineering Department conducted a survey of the section of Elm Street just south of the at-grade railroad crossing, and a concept to widen the approach. There is a raised median in the center of the roadway, which was installed to keep Waltham's Quiet Zone designation. According to this concept, it is possible to widen Elm Street enough to reintroduce the second northbound lane over the railroad tracks, and maintain the raised median necessary to keep the Quiet Zone designation. However, this construction would bring the edge of the road closer to the existing

railroad equipment, so the concept was forwarded to MBTA and Keolis for their review and comments by February 29. No comments were received. **Voted to approve the reconstruction of Elm Street northbound to fit two lanes within the City layout, without any takings and without modifying the raised median.**

- L. Review of Parking Regulations on Berkley Street (Mayor McCarthy) (9/23)
- M. Left Turn Restrictions from Fiske Ave and Fairmont Ave onto Weston St (Councillor Katz) (9/23)
- N. RRFB at Crosswalk on Lincoln Street at MacArthur School (Councillor Dunn) (11/23)
- O. Chaffee Ave/Canterbury Rd and Chaffee Ave/Ellery Rd All-Way STOP (12/23)
- P. Radar Speed Sign, South Street at Weston Town Line (Councillor Katz) (1/24)
- Q. Traffic Signal Inventory: Winter Street/West Street (1/24)
- R. Traffic Signal Inventory: Winter Street/First Avenue (1/24)
- S. Traffic Signal Inventory: Winter Street/Second Avenue (1/24)
- T. New STOP Sign – Jennings Road at Prospect Hill Road (Councillor LaFauci) (2/24)**

Councillor LaFauci is sponsoring a request for a new STOP sign on Jennings Road, at the intersection with Prospect Hill Road, in response to an email from a resident. The resident claimed that a fence blocks the view of traffic for a driver of a vehicle on Jennings Road. After review, Traffic Engineering recommends the approval of a new STOP sign at this location due to the fence on the right side of the approach, and the presence of the wide driveway opposite Jennings Road. **Voted to approve a new STOP sign on Jennings Road southbound at its intersection with Prospect Hill Road.**

In Schedule 11 (Stop Signs) in the Traffic Rules and Regulations,

ADD:

Jennings Rd at Prospect Hill Rd, facing southbound traffic

- U. Winter Street Traffic Calming (Councillor Dunn) (2/24)

*** Mayor McCarthy will request a separate Special Meeting of Traffic Commission for the items indicated with an asterisk.**

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

- A. Parking Meter Report: Meter collections for the month of February total approximately \$43.5K, which is a little more than \$1,200 more than the total from February of 2023.
- B. Traffic Commission Status Report:
 - High Street, east of Cedar Street (parking regulation signs installed);
 - 118 Central Street (created a designated 15-minute parking space).
- C. Embassy Parking Facility Closure Update

Traffic Commission approved the closure of the Embassy Parking Garage for a period of approximately 90 days, beginning on July 8, 2024 at the February Traffic Commission meeting. Traffic Commission had a question as to whether the surface lot on the west side of the garage would be available for the public to park, or whether the contractor would need that space for operations during the repair work. It was determined that the parking area will not need to be closed. Therefore, it is available for the public to park throughout the construction project, but it would require

Traffic Commission to make the driveway from Pine Street to this lot a two-way driveway during the duration of the project. It would be the only way for traffic to enter or exit the lot, since cars will not be allowed to drive through the lower level of the garage. **Voted to allow the driveway on Pine Street to the west of the movie theatre to temporarily operate as two-way effective immediately and to be revisited in a year from now to monitor/assess effectiveness.**

D. Traffic Signal Inventory: Winter St/Wyman St/Totten Pond Rd/Third Ave

The detection isn't operational at this intersection and the measured signal timings do not match the approved design. It was recommended to inform MassDOT of Traffic Engineering's findings and recommend for them to update the signal timings at the intersection to reflect the optimized model per the Synchro analysis and ask them to fix the detection at the intersection, as this intersection is under state jurisdiction. Annual traffic volumes are down approximately 1.88% from 4,095 vehicles counted in 2013 to 3,323 vehicles counted in 2024 during the peak hour.

E. Traffic Signal Inventory: Wyman St/I-95 Northbound Ramps

The measured signal timings do not match the approved design at this intersection. Furthermore, signal heads F, G, and J have all been changed to 4-section heads, to allow for split phasing between the highway off-ramp approach and the driveway approach. It is recommended to keep the signal timings at this intersection the same, as the optimized model per the Synchro analysis shows negligible improvement. Lastly, it is recommended to ask MassDOT for the updated signal plan at this intersection as a few things have changed such as updated signal timings, phasing, and signal heads. This intersection is also under state jurisdiction. Annual traffic volumes are down approximately 1.88% from 2,723 vehicles counted in 2013 to 2,211 vehicles counted in 2024 during the peak hour.

F. Request Additional Funding for PayByPhone

For the current year (FY24), Traffic Engineering opened a Purchase Order for \$20,000 for the PayByPhone fees for the year. Through the first seven months of the fiscal year (July through January), we have spent \$19,746.70 of this budget. Therefore, Traffic Engineering requested additional funding in the amount of \$17,000 to cover the expected shortfall in funds available for PayByPhone fees for the remainder of the current fiscal year. There are two primary factors that have contributed to this shortfall: PayByPhone increased their fees from 25 cents to 35 cents, and there are about 15 percent more transactions each month this year as compared to the previous year. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to request additional funding in the amount of \$17,000 to cover the expected shortfall in the account to pay the PayByPhone fees for the remainder of FY24.**

G. Traffic Engineering FY25 Budget

Voted to approve the Traffic Engineering FY2025 Budget.

**Attendance: All members
Adjourned @ 1:04 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,

Chandler R. Anctil

Acting Clerk - Traffic Commission

Date of the Meeting: March 21, 2024

Please Print

Name of Speaker	Address # Street, City	Item of Interest	Affiliation i.e. Attorney Abutter Interested party – Traffic Engineer Petitioner
Cathyann Harris	610 Main St	1C, 1D	City Council
Robert Logan	610 Main St	1A, 1B, 1D, 3C	City Council
Matthew Rushton	415 South St	2I	Brandeis Chief of Police
Doug Waybright	75 3 rd Ave	1D	Sponsor
Eric Darci	48 Woerd Ave	1H	Property Owner
Rob Nagi	VHB - 101 Walnut St Watertown	1G	Traffic Consultant – VHB
Randy LeBlanc	610 Main St	1A	City Council
Bill Hanley	610 Main St	1E	City Council
Sean Durkee	610 Main St	1L, 2A	City Council
Marc Rudnick	65 Lexington St	1L	Waltham Farmers Market
Timothy McIntosh & Elsa Chan	VHB - 101 Walnut St Watertown	1F	Traffic Consultant – VHB
Bob Winn	119 School St	2A	City Engineer