

**MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING
HELD: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2023 AT 10:00 A.M.
WALTHAM CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL**

A motion was approved to make Chandler Ancil the acting Traffic Commission Clerk of the February meeting in Frank Lombardo's absence. The Chair accepted a motion to approve the minutes of the January meeting. Another motion was approved to take agenda items out of order.

1. PETITIONED ITEMS:

A. Main Street Westbound Pavement Marking Review – Mayor McCarthy

Mayor McCarthy requested a review of pavement markings along Main Street westbound, just west of Linden Street and approaching Elm Street. The Mayor is concerned about the present markings and the amount of confusion and potential danger the painted/hatched islands create for motorists, forcing cars to abruptly merge into a single lane before splitting off into a continuous through lane and two consecutive, but separate, exclusive left-turn only lanes for Townsend Street and Newton Street. The Mayor believes that the first painted island (heading in the westbound direction) from Linden Street is too close to the intersection and is dangerous for motorists unfamiliar with the area. **Voted to keep the Main Street at Elm Street painted island the same, while removing the other two yellow, painted islands (at Newton and Townsend) and replacing them with gradual, channelizing white dashed lane lines, to not only remove the abrupt merges that the yellow painted islands create, but to also indicate to drivers that the left lane is a dedicated left-turn only lane. It was also encouraged to include more painted arrow/only pavement markings and increased signage to alert motorists.**

B. Adams Street Speed and Safety Study – Councillor Harris

Councillor Harris is requesting a new speed study of Adams Street, with recommendations for traffic calming. Councillor Harris voiced her concerns, on behalf of her ward's constituents, about speeding and poor pedestrian visibility on Adams Street. According to the Councillor, many people are using Adams Street as a cut-through street to bypass traffic on Crescent Street. Councillor Harris also stressed the importance of having a comprehensive solution that takes into account pedestrian safety considerations. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to conduct a comprehensive speed and safety study on Adams Street to address apparent speeding and pedestrian safety. It was also encouraged for Mr. Kelly to investigate if increased lighting is necessary on Adams Street, as portions of the street are poorly lit.**

C. RRFB Request for Dale Street and Caughey Street – Councillor LaFauci

Councillor LaFauci is requesting a warrant analysis for a new RRFB at the existing crosswalk crossing Dale Street at Caughey Street. Councillor LaFauci expressed concerns about excessive speeding on Dale Street, as it is apparently one of the most heavily ticketed streets in Waltham. At an on-site meeting attended by Councillor LaFauci, Captain Rodley, Sergeant Gallant, Traffic Engineer Garvin, and a few Dale Street residents, concerns of speeding and lack of pedestrian visibility were addressed. Another major concern is that motorists are ignoring the pedestrians' right-of-way at various crosswalks, especially the crosswalk at the intersection of Dale and Caughey. The fact that there is a noticeable number of kids in the area who cross Dale Street and walk to the Thomas R Plympton Elementary School raises a pedestrian safety concern. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to conduct a warrant analysis for a new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon on Dale Street at Caughey Street and to also paint "shark teeth" on each approach to this crosswalk.**

D. Watch City Steampunk Festival, Saturday May 13th

The annual Steampunk Festival is planned for Saturday May 13, with operating hours between 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM (and the associated Carter Street closure from 6:00 AM to 6:30 PM). Melissa Honig, Lead Organizer of the Steampunk Festival, spoke on behalf of the event and requested permission to hold the event again this year. The Mayor spoke and expressed her full support for the continuation of this event in 2023. Chief O'Connell mentioned that the City has never had any issues with the folks of the Steampunk Festival before, and that they have been great to work with in the past. The Festival's "footprint" will be the same as previous years which includes the closure of Carter Street at both ends, free use of parking spaces in the Carter Street Lot (47 spaces total) and the upper deck of the Central Square Deck for Festival Staff, Volunteers, Performers, and Exhibitors, and the free use of the parking spaces along Elm Street adjacent to Waltham Common (west side) to accommodate additional space for parking vehicles with trailers, as well as to better define a dropoff point for a shuttle bus to Alewife Station. **Voted to approve this request to hold the Watch City Steampunk Festival on Saturday, May 13.**

E. Waltham Farmers' Market, Marc Rudnick

Marc Rudnick is requesting approval for the Waltham Farmers' Market (WFM), in the Embassy Parking Facility, for 2023. Leo Keightley spoke on behalf of the Farmers' Market. The Mayor expressed strong support for the continuation of the Waltham Farmers' Market in 2023. The WFM requested the same items as last year which includes the following:

1. Grant WFM exclusive use of NW Lot on Saturdays, 7:30AM-3:30PM, June 3 to October 28, 2023.
2. Permit WFM to block off the stairway from Embassy Pocket Park to the NW Lot during market hours.
3. Permit WFM to block off one vehicle exit of parking garage with traffic cones during market hours.
4. Permit oversize vendor vehicles to enter via "one-way exit only" driveway during morning load-in.
5. Grant free parking for 28 identified market vehicles on the upper deck and 3 in Cooper Lane lot area.
6. Permit 24/7 emplacement of WF equipment shed in the 2 parking spaces closest to the market location, abutting the north wall of the stairwell from May 20 to November 11, 2023.
7. Permit 24/7 emplacement of the equipment shed in the zebra-striped area under the ramp of the parking structure, as permitted last year, from November through May.
8. Permit use of A-Frame signage on sidewalks and in Embassy Lot.
9. Permit banner across Whitney Ave. pedestrian passageway.
10. Facilitate relocation of the "In A Pickle" box truck to another parking area.
11. Allow musicians to perform (as part of City-sponsored program) on sidewalk plaza between 2 west side garage exits, one of which is closed to traffic during the market operation. Pedestrian and handicapped access will be maintained. There will be no seating area.

It should also be understood that all vendors' vehicles are to be parked on the upper level of the Embassy Parking Deck, or the Cooper Lane parking lot area, and to display approved parking placards on their dashboard, in order to obtain free parking and avoid receiving parking tickets during the event. Anyone not displaying the placard without paying to park may receive a ticket violation.

Voted to approve the Farmers' Market request to use the Embassy Parking Facility parking lot in 2023, behind 200-300 Moody Street, with each of the individual requests listed above. In case Whitney Avenue does not restrict vehicle traffic this summer, request number 9 would be denied.

F. Bentley University Sigma Chi Road Race for Cancer Research, Saturday April 22nd

Liam Hotaling is requesting approval for a road race on Saturday, April 22, at 10:00 AM with a rain date of Sunday, April 23. The race will start and finish at Bentley University campus, using Forest Street. They have received a letter from Police Lt. Cavallaro approving their route and requesting Police Detail. **Voted to approve the Sigma Chi Road Race for Cancer Research.**

G. National Brain Tumor Society Ride, Sunday May 21st

Ms. Annie Zampitella is requesting permission to hold this annual bicycle ride. The event will be held on Sunday, May 21, at 8:30 AM. The race will start and finish at 200 West Street in Waltham. This is an annual event, and the route is the same as last year. They have received a letter from Police Lt. Quaranto approving their route and requesting Police Detail. **Voted to approve the National Brain Tumor Society Ride.**

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

- A. Elson Rd. Parking Study (6/19) (10/19) – Councillor Durkee
- B. # 80-86 Orange St. – Whalen Housing Authority (9/19) – Councillor Harris
- C. City Wide Speed Study - (5/20)
- D. Wyman St. – Proposed RRFB (5/21)
- E. Adams St. at Crescent St. – Proposed All-Way and Corridor Study – Councillor Harris (11/21) (11/22) (12/22)
- F. Trapelo Rd at Clocktower Rd – Proposed Traffic Signal – Mayor McCarthy (12/21)
- G. *Bedford St – Speeding Issues – Mayor McCarthy (12/21) (9/22)**
- H. Willow St – Speed Limit Signage, Sidewalks, and Parking – Councillor LaCava (12/21)
- I. Lowell St – Proposed Traffic Study for Pedestrian and Public Safety – Councillor Harris (12/21) (9/22) (11/22)
- J. Main Street at Newton St & Lyman St – Traffic Signal Coordination (1/22) (11/22)
- K. *Harrington Road Speed Study (Mayor McCarthy) (3/22) (9/22)**
- L. *Villa Street: Speed Bumps (Mayor McCarthy) (4/22) (9/22)**

M. Banks Square Improvements (Mayor McCarthy) (5/22) (9/22) (12/22)

At the October meeting, Mayor McCarthy requested that we investigate the use of vertical posts placed in the pavement on the Main Street westbound approach to the intersection at Banks Square, to assist in designating the left lane as being exclusively for traffic turning onto South Street. Observations indicate that many vehicles in that left lane continue straight onto Weston Street. The Mayor has been continually advocating for the use and installation of vertical posts. However, the Traffic Engineer, Mr. Garvin, does not recommend this solution and advises against it. Firstly, there is a major likelihood of the posts being continuously knocked over by vehicles changing lanes (or by snow plows). Secondly, the presence of the posts will not achieve the intended effect, and will most likely make the intersection less safe by encouraging more lane changes in the middle of the intersection (after the stop bar), effectively increasing the potential number of side swipe accidents here. Furthermore, adding vertical posts in the middle of the intersection would significantly affect the successful turning movements of all large trucks in the intersection as the vertical posts would prohibit the large

turning radii that trucks require to turn onto perpendicular streets. Alternatively, Mr. Garvin, has been in support of the installation of scored concrete in lieu of the painted yellow island on the westerly side of the intersection as it would deter motorists from driving over it and would allow large trucks to successfully make wide-turning movements onto Weston Street from South Street. **Voted to approve the motion to make a suggestion to the Consolidated Public Works Department to have scored concrete installed in place of the yellow painted island on Weston Street just west of South Street.**

- N. *Elm St/River St Signal Warrant (Mayor McCarthy) (5/22)
- O. Lexington Street Bike Path (Councillor Darcy) (9/22)
- P. Charles Street Traffic Calming – Grant Street and Harvard Street (Councillors LaCava and Paz) (9/22) (11/22) (12/22)
- Q. Everett Street Signage and Speed Study – Councillor Katz (11/22)
- R. 240/265 Beaver Street Traffic Safety Analysis – Councillor Bradley-MacArthur (11/22)
- S. Bright Street Improvements – Councillor LaCava (12/22)
- T. Brandeis Crosswalk on South Street, Improved Visibility – Councillor Katz (12/22) (1/23)
- U. MBTA Better Bus Project Update (1/23)

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

A. Parking Meter Report – Collections through the end of January 2023 totaled approximately \$41,000. At the same time in 2022, the total parking revenue at the end of January was approximately \$21,000, effectively showing an approximate increase of \$20,000 from 2022 to 2023. In January, there were 3,753 PayByPhone transactions made in the Waltham lots.

B. Traffic Commission Status Report – The Traffic Commission has asked Traffic Engineering to better track various projects and assignments voted on by the Commission. Traffic Engineering has therefore developed a new Traffic Commission Status Report which lists all votes made by Traffic Commission that have not been completed/resolved. This list includes votes, presented chronologically (going back to 2019), with the specific direction provided by the Traffic Commission, the current status of each outstanding project, and the specific items left to complete for each assignment. Traffic Engineering will routinely update this report and present it at each Traffic Commission Meeting.

C. List of Traffic Signals in City – Traffic Commission asked for a list of all traffic signals in the City. Currently, there are 77 active traffic signals throughout Waltham, with 10 additional intersections that are in the process of becoming signalized. Moreover, there are 3 intersections that Traffic Commission is considering warrants for new signalization and 3 other intersections mentioned in the Transportation Master Plan as candidates for new traffic signals.

Traffic Commission would like Traffic Engineering to conduct periodic inventories of the traffic signals on this list and report any locations with deficiencies. Traffic Engineering will plan to review one traffic signal per week and prepare a report for each signalized intersection. Specifically, Traffic Engineering will perform current turning movement traffic counts at each location and compare the traffic volumes to the volumes collected for the Transportation Master Plan to quantify a background traffic growth rate at each intersection across the City. Traffic Engineering would only conduct these studies during weeks where public schools and the two Waltham-based colleges are in session, which would effectively qualify 7 available weeks during the timeframe between the February and June Traffic Commission meetings. Of all the signalized intersections, the following were deemed to be a priority: 6 (Elm St/Carter St), 10 (Lexington St/Trapelo Rd), 16 (Lexington St/Totten Pond Rd/Bacon St), 26 (Main St/Weston St/South St), 30

(Main St/Moody St/Common St), 31 (Main St/Lexington St), 32 (Main St/Church St/Elm St), 34 (Main St/Lyman St/Heard St), 35 (Main St/Newton St/Cravens Cir), 38 (Main St/Gore St/Barbara Rd/Warren St), 44 (Newton St/River St), 49 (Prospect St/Felton St/Highland St), and 57 (South St/Bedford St). Traffic Commission has allowed Traffic Engineering to select 7 of these 13 intersections to inventory first, with the remaining 6 becoming secondary priorities. After these intersections are studied and inventoried, the next group of intersections can be prioritized at a future Traffic Commission meeting.

D. Additional Funds for PayByPhone Fees – For the current fiscal year, Traffic Engineering allocated \$12,000 to pay for PayByPhone transaction fees throughout the year. When a customer pays for a parking spot using the PayByPhone app, the customer pays an additional \$0.25 transactional fee on top of the cost of the parking space. The money, in its entirety, is initially collected by the City and then the City subsequently pays PayByPhone \$0.25 for every transaction that took place in our lots. Because the City increased the parking rates in all lots in November 2022, Traffic Engineering has seen a trend of more customers using PayByPhone than in previous months prior to the rate increase. Therefore, the \$12,000 originally budgeted to account for the PayByPhone payments during FY2023 will soon become insufficient due to the unforeseen increased usage of PayByPhone transactions. Using current projections, Traffic Engineering believes \$16,000 is needed to satisfy all of the PayByPhone transaction fees through the end of the fiscal year. Therefore, Traffic Engineering is wishing to submit a request for \$4,000 of additional funding (to be transferred from the General Parking Revenue Account into the account for the PayByPhone fees) to satisfy the rest of the PayByPhone transaction fees for the remainder of the fiscal year. **Voted to approve this request.**

AND ANY LATE FILED ITEM(S) THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE TRAFFIC COMMISSION.

4A: FY2024 Traffic Engineering Budget – Voted to accept the FY2024 Traffic Engineering Budget.

**Attendance: All members present, Traffic Commission Clerk Lombardo absent
Adjourned @ 11:30 AM**

**Respectfully Submitted,
Chandler Anctil, Acting Clerk**

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