

**MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING
HELD: THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2023 AT 10:00 A.M.
WALTHAM CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL**

A motion to accept the minutes of the March meeting was approved.

PETITIONED ITEMS:

1A. Hastings Street Parking (Councillor LaCava)

Councillor LaCava is requesting a study of the parking regulations on Hastings Street, between Grove Street and Clark Street. Ms. Dawn Gray also appeared on behalf of this request. She mentioned that there has been increased use of the street by large trucks and the increased parking of such vehicles making it difficult for local traffic to exit driveways. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to make recommendations regarding regulations on Hastings between Grove Street and Clark Street.**

1B. Bicycle Parking in Downtown Parking Lots (Councillor Harris)

Councillor Harris is requesting approval for installation of bike racks in municipal parking lots. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to work with the Planning Department to make recommendations regarding bicycle parking structure styles and locations in downtown Waltham both within the parking lots and along Main Street/Moody Street.**

1C. Parmenter Road Comprehensive Traffic Study (Councillor Harris)

Councillor Harris is requesting a traffic study be performed for Parmenter Road, including signs, paint, pedestrian visibility, and school zone designation. She cited the heavy concentration of children in the area and the need for further parking regulations. **Voted to have the Traffic Engineer conduct a comprehensive traffic study of Parmenter Road.**

1D. Updated PayByPhone Agreement

PayByPhone is seeking an increase in costs to the consumer of \$0.20 for an SMS notification fee and a \$0.35 transaction fee (up from \$0.25 currently). Mr. Sang Hwang of Pay-by-Phone explained the request for the increase. The original contract was dated 2017. **Voted to approve the increase as requested.**

1E. Elson Road Redesign

The Engineering Department is in the process of redesigning Elson Road, to include improved pedestrian access and parking. This also incorporates the discussion for tabled item 2A. The Engineering Department has asked to withdraw this item for now, and will return when ready. **Voted to table.**

1F. Scleroderma Foundation 5K Run/Walk Challenge, Saturday April 29

The route for the previously approved race on April 29 has been changed, so the new route needs to be approved. **Voted to recommend a Permit to Issue for this race.**

1G. PTO Annual Fitzgerald Fun Run, Thursday June 1

Approval is requested for the road race on June 1st. **Voted to recommend a Permit to Issue for this race.**

1H. Festa Italiana, Saturday June 10

Approval is requested for the Festa Italiana on June 11th. **Voted to approve this request and**
1: allow amusement vendor's generator to use Elm Street,

- 2: **permission for vendors to park free on the 2nd floor of the Central Parking Deck, and**
- 3: **permission to use City Hall Parking for handicapped parking of vendors and guests.**

1I. Riverfest, Saturday June 17

Approval is requested for Riverfest on June 17th. **Voted to close Moody Street Bridge on Saturday, June 17 from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM and allow free parking on the upper level of the Embassy Parking Facility for vehicles that display the approved placards.**

1J. Employee Parking Placards for Auxiliary Fire Department

Four new volunteers with the Auxiliary Fire Department are requesting Employee Parking Placards. **Voted to approve this request and authorize Traffic Engineering to issue permits. In addition, the Traffic Engineer is authorized to issue permits for the volunteers of the Auxiliary Fire Department in the future without having to come before Traffic Commission.**

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

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

- B. # 80-86 Orange St. – Whalen Housing Authority (9/19) – Councillor Harris
- C. City Wide Speed Study - (5/20) (9/20)
- 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. *Elm St/River St Signal Warrant (Mayor McCarthy) (5/22)
- N. Lexington Street Bike Path (Councillor Darcy) (9/22)
- O. Charles Street Traffic Calming – Grant Street and Harvard Street (Councillors LaCava and Paz) (9/22) (11/22) (12/22)
- P. Everett Street Signage and Speed Study – Councillor Katz (11/22)
- Q. 240/265 Beaver Street Traffic Safety Analysis – Councillor Bradley-MacArthur (11/22)
- R. Bright Street Improvements – Councillor LaCava (12/22)
- S. Brandeis Crosswalk on South Street, Improved Visibility – Councillor Katz (12/22) (1/23)
- T. MBTA Better Bus Project Update (1/23)
- U. Adams Street Speed and Safety Study (2/23)
- V. RRFB Request for Dale Street at Caughey Street (2/23)

W. Moody Street Proposal, Summer 2023 (3/23)

The Commission held a Public Hearing on March 30, 2023 which was attended by approximately 120-130 people. Present were Mayor McCarthy, Councilors McMenimen, Vidal, Harris, LaFauci, Durkee, Paz, Brandley-MacArthur and Paz. Approximately 46 people spoke at the hearing; 37 were in favor of closing Moody Street, in some capacity and 9 opposed the closing at any time.

At the April 20 meeting, the options under consideration were to close Moody Street to vehicles every day (as was done the last three years), closing for just the weekend (Thursday through Sunday), or

denying any closure of the street. Traffic Engineer, Mr. Garvin, spoke of the effects of these proposals.

1. Closing Moody Street to vehicles every day (concept sponsored by Councillor Paz) – this would operate identical to previous years.
 - One variation of this option would be to allow traffic on the one block of Moody Street between Walnut Street and Cushing Street (as we did in previous years)
 - One variation of this option would be to also close the block of Moody Street between Walnut Street and Cushing Street (the block that allowed vehicles in previous years)
2. Closing Moody Street to vehicles only on the weekends (concept sponsored by Mayor McCarthy) – from Thursdays at 4pm until Mondays at 5am, all of Moody Street between Pine Street and High Street. Vehicles would be allowed on Moody Street at other times (from Mondays at 5am until Thursdays at 4pm).
 - One variation of this option would be to limit Moody Street to one-way southbound during the week (Monday to Thursday). This was the original proposal by the Mayor
 - One variation of this option would be to allow two-way traffic during the week (Monday to Thursday), and to have Cushing Street and Chestnut Street (between Hall Street and Moody St) be for residents only during the weekends (but still allow parking on one side). This is the variation that the Mayor is now advocating for.
 - One variation of this option would be to allow two-way traffic during the week (Monday to Thursday), but to allow traffic to cross Moody Street to get to/from the blocks of Cushing Street or Chestnut Street (between Hall Street and Moody Street).
3. Deny all requests to close Moody Street to traffic
 - One variation of this option would be to not allow any use of the parking lanes at all, and to keep Moody Street fully open to vehicles to drive or to park.
 - One variation of this options would be to always allow traffic to drive in the travel lanes, and allow any business to apply for permission to block off the parking lane in front of their business with barriers, for their use.

The Traffic Engineer had concerns that any option that blocks off Cushing or Chestnut Street at Moody Street, those streets would not be wide enough to allow for two-way traffic and parking on one side. Cushing Street is one-way eastbound (Moody St to Hall St.); Chestnut Street is one-way westbound (Hall Street to Moody St). Closing Moody Street will force these streets to have two-way traffic. In the past, Walnut Street could be used to cross Moody Street and enter Cushing Street, but this resulted in an open part of Moody Street, that is not ideal to the pedestrian “mall” concept. Chestnut Street was opened and vehicles could cross Moody St. continuing westbound toward Adams Street. The proposals presented, asked for Moody Street to be entirely closed and a “pedestrian mall” would exist from Hall’s Corner (Pine/Crescent) to Wheeler Square (Maple/High). The two proposals requested would prevent vehicles from using Moody Street.

Mayor McCarthy’s amended proposal was to have Moody Street open to traffic, 2-way from Monday morning at 5:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Thursdays; Councilor Paz’s proposal was to close Moody Street entirely (from Pine/Crescent to Maple/High). Under Mayor McCarthy’s proposal, setup will be made with “Jersey Barriers” set in place to allow a 24-foot-wide clearance, with two-way traffic. Metal grates will be used to block vehicles on all side streets to prevent vehicular traffic from entering Moody Street. Crews from C.P.W. will remove the grates from blocking the street, and place them out of the way when Moody Street is open. The restaurants will not have to remove any tables or chairs etc. (so long as their outdoor dining equipment is enclosed by Jersey Barriers), leaving them in place in the parking lane.

A vote was taken to accept the closing of Moody Street on Thursdays from 4:00PM to Mondays at 5:00AM; starting Thursday, May 25, 2023 and ending Monday, September 25, 2023. No traffic will enter Moody Street from any side street and a “pedestrian mall” will be created. Restaurant owners must obtain permits from the City Council (use the sidewalk), Liquor Commission (serve alcohol outside) and the Traffic Commission (use of the parking lanes for tables/chairs in front of their business). A twenty-four (24’) foot clearance will be kept at all times. Side streets off Moody Street will be posted with “Resident Use Only” and “No Outlet to Moody Street” signs, or something equivalent. Traffic Engineer Garvin reiterated his recommendation to deny this alternative, due to the anticipated traffic problems on Cushing Street and Chestnut Street (both are currently one-way street with parking on one side, and this alternative blocks off access to/from Moody Street). In a Roll Call vote members Mr. Chiasson, Mr. Kelly, Chief Mullin, and Mr. Vizard voted in favor to accept the recommendation, while Mr. Magno voted in opposition. In addition, another vote was taken that this proposal is not to be considered an annual event. Consultation with the City Council and Liquor Board should be made so a mutual agreement for future events can be obtained. The Traffic Engineer was directed to prepare a Request for Proposals for a consultant to create a more permanent set-up for Moody Street in future years.

X. Nathan Road Safety Study – Councillor Katz (3//23) Voted to re-table.

* 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 – Funds are up \$128K over last year.

B. Traffic Commission Status Report – submitted for view

C. Traffic Signal Inventory: Elm Street/Carter Street – detection not working properly and needs to be repaired; Voted to ask the Wires Director to submit a list of all intersections with inoperable detection, and the costs to repair.

D. Traffic Signal Inventory: Main Street/Moody Street – detection not working properly, signal timings need to be re-set; and pedestrian “heads” and “push button” missing; **Voted to seek funding for the proper detection and coordination of various intersections, once Wires Director submits the report**

E. Lexington Street Parking Regulations - Parking on the west side of Lexington Street needs to be amended. **Voted to approve the Traffic Engineer’s recommendation and amend the following:**

Delete on Schedule 1

Lexington St. west side, 200’ south of Lake St to 200’ south of H.S. Entr., No Parking

Lexington St. west side, Curve St to Totten Pond Rd No Parking Exc. Sun, Holi

Lexington St. west side, 205’ south of Dale St to 313’south of Dale St

Lexington St. west side, B&M Railroad to 90’ south of School St. No Parking

Lexington St. west side, 90’ south of School St to 170’ south of School St, 2hr parking 8am-6pm; Exc Sun & Holi

Lexington St. west side, 170’ south of School St to Main St No Parking’

Add: In Schedule 1

Lexington St, west side, from Lake Street to Main Street, No Parking

LATE FILED ITEM(S). Supported by Mayor McCarthy and Councilor McLaughlin

4A: Barbara Road & Chaffee Study Requested

Ms. Diane Hunter, resident of Barbara Road, is requesting this intersection be studied for corrective measures. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to study the intersection for a 4-way Stop.**

4B: Longfellow Rd, Fairfax and Whitman Road

Ms. Jeanne DeBaie is requesting a review for 4-way Stop Signs and a Truck Exclusion in the area. **Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to study the intersection for a 4-way Stop and truck exclusion.**

4C: Whitman & Fairfax 4-Way Stop

Ms. Lisa Simmons is requesting a 4-way Stop at this intersection.

Voted to direct the Traffic Engineer to study the intersection for a 4-way Stop.

4D: Warren at Beaver Street – Pedestrian Crosswalk.

Ms. Hilary Grodon appeared on behalf of this petition requesting consideration to make the crosswalk more visible. She stated that motorists, due to the configuration of the intersection, are having difficulty seeing the pedestrians crossing the street. **Voted to have the Traffic Engineer review what measures could be taken that will increase the motorist awareness that there is a crosswalk at this intersection.**

Voted to Adjourn @ 12:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Frank S. Lombardo, Clerk

Waltham Traffic Commission**Date of the Meeting: April 20, 2023**

Please Print

Name of Speaker	Address # Street, City	Item of Interest	Affiliation i.e. Attorney Abutter Interested party – Traffic Engineer Petitioner
Cathyann Harris	42 Hovey Rd	Moody Street Ward 8 Items	City Council W8
Hilary Gordon	20 Waverley St	Waverley Crosswalk	N/A
Jeannette A. McCarthy			
Jonathan Paz		Moody St	City Council
Joey LaCava		Hastings	City Council
Dawn Gray	224 Grove St	Hastings/Grove	Constituent
John Allen	7 University	Bicycle Parking	
Sara Blumenthal	223 Robbins	Bike Parking	Resident
Sarah Hawkins	103 Seminole Ave	Riverfest	D.W.P.
Chris Hummer	190 Adams	Biking	
Sang Hwang	80 Grove St Hopkinton	Mobile Payments	Pay By Phone