

Traffic Commission Meeting  
June 15, 2017

Attendance: Thomas Graney, Robert McWatters, James Polito, Stan Koty  
Staff: Laura Accaputo, Terence Smith, Mike Tremblay, Nancy Bacci  
Official: Dennis Sullivan  
Other: Kate Hartkey, Dan Stachurski

The meeting was held at the Tufts Administrative Building, 167 Holland St, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

**Item #1** Minutes from the May 18, 2017 Traffic Commission Meeting accepted unanimously

**Item #2** – Request for Handicapped Parking

School St – requesting one additional space beside City Hall

- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking has no objection to this request

**Robert McWatters made a motion to Approve, seconded by the Chair. Motion passed: 4-0.**

**Item #3** – Request for Do Not Enter, except residents and bicycles, from 7am-9am and 4pm-6pm on Mt. Vernon St from Pearl St to Broadway

- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking does not support the request. He explained the Somerville Police Department has stated the turning prohibitions already in effect throughout the city are unenforceable and confusing and that although the signs may decrease traffic on one street it will increase it on the next street. He also noted the City Solicitor said these signs are legal.
- Alderman Sullivan stated he receives many complaints from the residents on Mt. Vernon St that they are unable to exit their driveways, sometimes for as long as 20 minutes, due to the traffic backups. A video taken by Dan Stachurski showing the traffic backed all the way down to Pearl Street was played for the Commission.
- Alderman Sullivan stated this restriction is already in place for Myrtle Street and he believes this area is much worse. He also stated that while he understands the police cannot effectively enforce this restriction he believes it is worth a shot and sends the right message.
- The Chair stated there was a similar problem in Ball Square and the neighbors got together to change the traffic plan of the entire neighborhood. He suggested the Alderman set up a meeting with Terence Smith to review the entire area as a package.
- Robert McWatters stated that although this problem is not unique to this location there is a need for relief. He liked the suggestion of the Chair. He also stated he would be willing to make a motion for a 90 day trial to see if the restriction works.
- Mike Tremblay of Traffic and Infrastructure noted his department is looking into more permanent solutions and working with Mass DOT for issues with the traffic signal on Mt. Vernon at Broadway.
- The Chair stated he was concerned that the SPD cannot enforce the restriction. Lt. Polito explained they can and do enforce this restriction in other locations throughout the city, but they have to stop every vehicle and this angers most people since they have the right to use a public way. He stated that stopping the vehicles creates a line of traffic as there is typically no place for them to pull over. He also noted the courts throw out the citations when appealed.

- Alderman Sullivan stated he believes the signs will curtail traffic and likes the idea of looking into a new neighborhood traffic plan. He requested this restriction be approved for a 90 day trial period.
- The Chair stated he strongly recommends an effective long term solution and new traffic plan but will support a trial of the restriction.
- Kate Hartkey asked if the enforcement can be streamlined by having the officers look for the residential permits. Lt. Polito explained that would not fit the definition of abutters. Alderman Sullivan pointed out the request indicated except residents, not abutters. Terence Smith stated if the exception is for residents of the entire city than Traffic and Parking has no objections, he also noted the Myrtle Street restriction has an established zone for the indication of except residents. Director Rinfret cautioned that not every resident has a residential permit.
- Alderman Sullivan made a stipulation that any resident of the city can use the street during restricted hours and not just residents of Mt. Vernon Street.

**Robert McWatters made a motion to Approve for a 90 day trial period with the clarification that relative to this restriction, residents are defined as any resident of the City of Somerville, seconded by the Chair. Motion passed: 3-1, with Lt. Polito in opposition.**

- Terence Smith informed the Commission since this was a special sign it could take up to 6 weeks for fabrication.

**Lt. Polito made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:46pm, seconded by the Chair. Motion passed: 4-0.**