

Traffic Commission Meeting
November 8, 2018

The meeting was held at the Department of Public Works, 17 Franey Road

Attendance: Stan Koty, Thomas Graney, Mark Niedergang, Lena Webb, John Gobiel

Staff: Laura Accaputo, Anna Rebelo, Suzanne Rinfret, Terence Smith, Nancy Salamoun, Mike Tremblay, Emily Monea, Rob Cassano

Other: Alderman Rossetti, Douglas Chini, Mike Wiser, Callie Wiser, Jessica Szubart, Nick Perhanidis

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

Item #1 – Minutes from the October 11, 2018 Traffic Commission Meeting accepted unanimously

Item #2 – Request for the following changes to Article X Section 10-10 “Snow Emergency Tow Zone” with the addition of the following language to paragraph (b) “Upon formal request, for streets that have parking on both sides of the street but that have no houses on one side of the street for the duration of the snow plow route, parking will only be allowed on the side of the street with houses during snow emergencies in both park-even and park-odd seasons. These streets will be listed in Schedule T of the Traffic Commission Rules and Regulation.”

- Emily Monea stated this exception criterion for snow emergency regulations was drafted during the policy change in 2015 but not formally adopted by the commission. The other exception which states on streets where there is only parking on one side during normal conditions, parking will only be allowed on that side during emergency conditions as well, was already adopted with the original snow emergency regulations and remains in effect.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to approve, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 4-0.

Item #3 – Request for an exception to the Snow Emergency regulations:

a) Crocker St, request for odd -side parking only during snow emergencies

- Emily Monea stated there were 3 formal requests for an exception to the snow emergency policy. The request for Crocker St is for odd side parking only during snow emergencies. The even side of Crocker St is entirely occupied by the Somerville Hospital campus and there are no houses on that side. The request therefore meets the exception criterion.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to approve, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 4-0.

b) Whitman St, request for odd-side parking only during snow emergencies

- Emily Monea stated the Whitman St request is for odd side parking only during snow emergencies. Whitman Street satisfies neither of the policy exception criteria as it has parking on both sides of the street during non-emergency conditions and has houses on both sides of the street.
- Mike Wiser, resident, distributed and read a prepared statement into the record which was accepted as Exhibit A. This statement summarized his thoughts on why the situation is unique

on Whitman Street and the importance of considering parking availability as a criterion for exception. His full statement is available upon request.

- Callie Wiser, resident, stated there is clear evidence that there is an abundance of parking on the odd side of the street. She also noted the retaining walls on the odd side of the street limits space to put snow so the odd side is not plowed to the curb. She referenced the winter of 2014-15 with its major snowfall and explained parking spaces were used to store snow and it was unsafe for pedestrians, she believes this policy would have made the conditions even worse. She asked if Whitman St could be made a priority for snow removal.
- Jessica Szubart, resident, stated Whitman St is exceptional and there is a parking crisis. She has a 2 car driveway but supports this on behalf of her neighbors. Not granting this exception will bring the crisis to a new level as losing 6 or 7 spaces will have a huge impact.
- Alderman Rossetti stated there were several emails submitted in support of this request that were not sent to the commission. She stated these emails were from people on both sides of the street. She also noted Mr. Wiser has been very patient as it has been 2 years since this was requested. She asked the commission to consider a pilot program as they have done for other issues in the past.
- Alderman Niedergang agreed with Alderman Rossetti and noted there were very few exception requests and he was not concerned the commission would be overwhelmed with requests. He stated he would support a trial program and they could review if influxes of additional exception requests are received. He also would like to look into other streets in similar situations for next years review.
- The Chair stated he is familiar with the street as there have been many conversations about this request with differing opinions.
- Emily Monea stated a systematic evaluation of similar streets would be very labor and time intensive requiring data collection. She noted expanding the exception criteria to include parking availability would go against the original intent to fairly distribute the burden of snow and ice removal to both sides of the street, and while these residents may be willing to accept this burden every year new residents may feel differently. She believes this would prioritize parking over being equitable.
- The Chair stated he would recommend a motion to table the item until the December meeting he will speak with plow drivers and look into the suggestion made of making certain streets a priority by clearing them within 24 hours of a storm.
- Alderman Niedergang agreed and stated every policy should have flexibility.

The Chair made a motion to Table the item until December, 2nd by Mark Niedergang. Motion passed: 5-0.

c) Dana St, request for odd-side parking only during snow emergencies

- Emily Monea stated the houses are only on the even side of the street and the request is inconsistent with the approved exceptions.

Thomas Graney made a motion to deny, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

**Item #4 – Request for 30 Minute Parking 8am-6pm except Sundays and Holidays
241 Highland Av**

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

Mark Niedergang made a motion to approve, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #5 – Request for the temporary removal of 4 metered parking spaces on the south side of Medford St just east of Broadway for a temporary (approx. 12 months) MBTA bus stop associated with the Green Line extensions closure of the Broadway rail bridge

- Terence Smith explained this request is relative to the Green Line extension project and deferred it to Traffic and Infrastructure.
- The Chair questioned the location and is concerned about safety, he stated the crosswalk at this location is already dangerous and he would prefer the temporary bus stop be located away from this intersection.
- Alderman Niedergang agreed and asked if it could be moved further east and away from the corner.
- Mike Tremblay stated there was time to work out a better location since the bridge closure is not going to happen until February. He agreed to speak to the MBTA about changing the location.

The Chair made a motion to table the item, 2nd by Mark Niedergang. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #6 – Request for No Parking Anytime along the east side of Cedar St, between Highland Av and Hudson St, to accommodate detoured bus traffic and a northbound bicycle lane

- Terence Smith explained this request is relative to the Green Line extension project and deferred it to Traffic and Infrastructure.
- Mike Tremblay explained this request also came from the MBTA. He asked if the commission approves the request to have the advertising period waived as there is striping being done the following week.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to approve, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Prior Business

Item #7– Request for Handicapped Parking (Tabled from October 2018 Meeting)

50 Evergreen Av, City Hall Annex, to be placed on Thurston St

- Terence Smith deferred to Rob Cassano.
- Rob Cassano stated this location will be close to the new ramp and clarified the location of the ramp.
- The Chair expressed his concern as there are a lot of school children using the crosswalk at this location and asked if the space could be located after the crosswalk and asked Terence Smith for his opinion.
- Terence Smith stated he has a problem with both locations as there are sight distance problems with the crosswalk and intersection.
- The Chair requested a sight review with the architects and the public safety officials as he is concerned with public safety and the change of location of the ramp was never discussed with DPW.
- Nancy Salamoun asked for clarification if the concern was with the location of the space or the ramp and the Chair stated he wanted to know the rationale for moving the ramp from the back to the side of the building.

The Chair made a motion to table, 2nd by Thomas Graney. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #8 – Review the Request for a Bike Corral on the east side of Webster Av, just south of Everett Av (approved for a 90 day trial period in July 2018)

- Terence Smith stated this is a Traffic and Infrastructure issue and deferred to Mike Tremblay.
- Mike Tremblay stated there are no concerns.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to approve permanently, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #9 – Review the Request for Do Not Enter restriction, 7am-9am and 4pm-6pm except city residents and bicycles on Governor Winthrop Road at Shore Drive (approved for 90 day trial July 2018)

- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking hasn't received any complaints and has no objection to permanent approval.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to approve permanently, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #10 – Request for Do Not Enter restriction, 7am-9am and 4pm-6pm except city residents and bicycles on Fenwick St at Broadway (approved for 90 day trial July 2018)

- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking hasn't received any complaints and has no objection to permanent approval.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to approve permanently, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:20pm, 2nd by Thomas Graney. Motion passed: 5-0.