

Traffic Commission Special Meeting
Minutes
July 21, 2015

The meeting was held at the Somerville Police Department, 220 Washington Street, Academy Room

Attendance

Members: Stan Koty, Thomas Graney, Robert McWatters, Lt. Polito

Staff: Laura Accaputo, Suzanne Rinfret, Terence Smith

Aldermen: William White, Mary Jo Rossetti

Public: David Tauro, Herv Vargas, John Elefterakis, Ed Tauro, Gary Collins, Weider Souza, Izais Dosreis, Jose Medeiros, Ron Tauro, Paul Bizarria

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:20 pm

Thomas Graney made a motion to go into recess until Alderman McWatters arrives, seconded by Lt. Polito. Motion passed: 4-0.

The Chair called the meeting back to order at 5:25 pm

Item #1 - Request for No Parking Any Time

McGrath Highway, both sides, from Washington St to Somerville Av (beginning as necessary for construction requirements for the duration of the construction associated with McCarthy Overpass Project)

- The Chair explained to those in attendance that this meeting was called to rescind the original regulation and replace it with a new one that takes effect on September 1, 2015. He stated the Ward Alderman and the Administration will hold a neighborhood meeting, prior to the start date of September 1st, to discuss the concerns of the residents and businesses. He also explained the construction is part of a State Contract and began on June 1, 2015; it has been made clear to the contractor that the work on this section of McGrath Highway must begin on September 1, 2015. He also noted if the City delays the State they will have to pay penalties.
- The Chair stated he was aware of the petition submitted to the Traffic Board to overturn the regulation and recommended the originator of the petition submit a letter requesting the Traffic Board not convene until after the neighborhood meeting.
- The Chair called for a motion to suspend the rules and withdraw the prior regulation.

Robert McWatters motioned to withdraw the prior restriction, seconded by Lt. Polito. Motion Passed: 4-0.

Thomas Graney motioned to approve No Parking Anytime on McGrath Highway, both sides, from Washington St to Somerville Av effective September 1, 2015, providing the neighborhood meeting with the Ward Alderman, Administration, and residents and business owner's if held prior to this effective date, seconded by the Chair. Motion Passed: 4-0.

- Alderman McWatters asked if there was any indication of when this meeting would be held and the Chair stated Brad Rawson, OSPCD, will work with the Ward Alderman to set a date. Alderman McWatters stated he would like to be included in the neighborhood meeting.
- Alderman McWatters informed the Chair that he would like to sponsor anyone in attendance to speak for the record on this issue.
- John Elefterakis asked what the intentions were on this street and the Chair stated he was not involved in the meetings and that OSPCD was putting together a presentation for the neighborhood meeting.
- Gary Collins asked if they would consider a rolling restriction and the Chair explained the State Contract dictates how work is to be performed and that the total range until the project is complete is five years with a goal to take down the overpass.
- Paul Bizarria asked about the possibility of restricting parking only on the side where the work is being performed and allowing parking on the opposite side and the Chair explained they need the full width of the roadway to perform the work.
- David Tauro asked if the work was being performed by the MBTA or the State and the Chair stated it was Mass DOT.
- David Tauro asked if the MBTA would consider renting out the lot that he used to own and the Chair stated that question would be best answered at the neighborhood meeting.
- Alderman Rossetti asked if any State Representatives would be at the neighborhood meeting and the Chair stated he didn't know.
- Alderman Rossetti recommended someone from Mass DOT be in attendance.
- Alderman White asked if the Traffic Commission is prepared to consider alternatives such as allowing parking on other public streets to serve as parking for these businesses and the Chair stated they will be happy to entertain any ideas that result from the neighborhood meeting.
- David Tauro asked if the rumor about the bike path is true and the Chair stated he doesn't have the state plan.
- John Elefterakis stated the cars drive fast on this street now and this looks like a smoke screen for a bike path. He said the City and State has to consider the impacts on residents and business owners. The Chair stated it is his understanding there have been many discussions between OSPCD and other City Departments and that many questions will be answered at the neighborhood meeting.
- Alderman White stated they shouldn't jump to conclusions about a bike path and that he heard there may be a community path behind the auto parts store.
- Gary Collins stated there was enough room to have one sided parking and a bike lane.

- Ron Tauro stated Representative Toomey told his son that this is being done by the City and not the State. He also wanted to go on record stating he is not in favor of the overpass coming down because he didn't want this section of the street to look like the other end of McGrath Highway. He also has concerns regarding safety when crossing the street if the overpass is removed. He asked why it was being torn down after all these years and especially after the extensive and costly repairs that were made. He also stated after the Alderman Meeting it was ordered that the signs be removed on both sides within 30 days and asked why they weren't removed from the left side yet.
- The Chair stated there were prior meetings and discussions regarding this well before the Traffic Commission regulations were passed.

Robert McWatters made a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6pm, seconded by the Chair. Motion passed: 4-0.