

Traffic Commission Meeting
November 21, 2013

Meeting was held at the Tufts Administrative Building, 167 Holland St, 2nd floor

Meeting was called to order @ 6pm

Item #1 – Acceptance of minutes from October 24, 2013 Traffic Commission Meeting

Attendance: Thomas Graney, Stan Koty, James Polito, Robert Trane

Staff: Laura Accaputo, Suzanne Rinfret, Terence Smith

Other: Lauren Clayton, Costa Chitouras, Peter Clemons, Frances Canina, Sarah Spicer, Dennis Sullivan

Polito made a motion to suspend the rules and go to Item #3 - Request for Handicapped Parking (99 Heath St)

- Frances Canina, 99 Heath St, stated the property does have a driveway but it is only 9ft wide and goes uphill making access to the home difficult from the driveway.
- Traffic Engineer Smith stated Traffic and Parking does not support the request because the property has a driveway which the property owner uses for a commercial truck that cannot be parked on the street.
- Dennis Sullivan stated that the driveway is still inadequate for the applicants use due to the incline.

Trane motioned for approval for a 90 day trial period, 2nd by Polito, unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.

Item #2 – Request for Handicapped Parking

21A Malvern Av

10 Otis St

Trane motioned for approval of both requests, 2nd by Polito, unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.

PRIOR BUSINESS

Item #3 – Request for Handicapped Parking

45 Baystate Av

Trane motioned to table pending further review, 2nd Polito, unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.

89 Cedar St

16 Princeton St

- Traffic and Parking does not support these requests as the applicants own the properties and have driveways.

Trane motioned for approval for a 90 day trial period (89 Cedar and 16 Princeton), 2nd by Polito, unanimous. Motion passed 4-0.

Item #4 – Traffic Calming on Kidder Av

- Peter Clemons stated same points as last month. Asked how other streets have a no truck policy and Kidder Av does not.
- The Chair stated Smith and Polito were asked to look at this last month and inquired if they had any recommendations.
- Smith explained they had not had a chance to discuss it however at the last meeting Mr. Clemons concerns were discussed. A request has been filed with Mass DOT for a reduction to the speed limit. Mr. Clemons submitted a request at the end of the last meeting that Summit St be changed from two way travel to one way travel from Billingham St to College Av and Francesca St be changed from one way travel west bound to one way travel east bound. Mr. Smith explained that Traffic Regulations require any changes to traffic patterns be requested by petition signed by 2/3 of impacted residents. Once a petition has been submitted and verified by the Traffic Commission Secretary, it will be reviewed by Traffic and Parking and placed on the agenda for consideration by the Traffic Commission.
- Polito stated he had the police conduct a speed study on Kidder Av in an unmarked vehicle and the results showed vehicles are not speeding on Kidder Av.
- Trane suggested Mr. Clemons sit with the police during a speed study so he can see the results for himself.
- The Chair stated the speed study showed an average speed of 22mph. This information was gathered by the police and given to the Traffic Engineer to support a request for a reduced speed limit of 25mph through Mass DOT. In reference to your request for a stop sign on Kidder Av at Powderhouse Terrace, the state has a Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) governing traffic patterns, stop signs, etc. Mr. Smith must refer to this manual as to what he can legally do with signs in the neighborhood; although your request sounds reasonable it cannot be honored because it is not in compliance with the MUTCD.
- Mr. Clemons asked why there was a stop sign at every intersection on the west end of Kidder Av.
- The Chair answered because of the elementary school.
- Mr. Clemons asked about a crosswalk or speed bump at the location.
- Mr. Smith replied a crosswalk across Kidder Av at Powderhouse Terrace does not meet the requirements for installation of a crosswalk. You need 80 to 100 pedestrians crossing at the location, which has not been observed. You need ADA ramps and there are none at this location. This would be a mid block crosswalk which are only found in central business districts. Studies have shown that accidents increase with a mid block crosswalk as pedestrians do not take proper awareness to cross the street.
- Mr. Clemons then questioned why Morrison Av has a truck restriction and is considered less major than Kidder Av.
- Smith replied it was approved by Mass DOT based on a study was presented. To have one on Kidder Av you need a truck study showing 10% of vehicles on Kidder Av are trucks; you also need an alternate route for trucks starting and ending in the same area with same characteristics of road. Due to the restriction on Kidder Av there is no other alternate route for trucks.

- The Chair asked why the alternate couldn't be Broadway or Davis Square. If we can apply for it citing the school, worse case scenario is the state says no.
- Smith stated we could do a study but it would require us to hire a consultant and we would have to secure funding.
- Chair recommended we request a study pending availability of funding.

Trane motioned to place on file after being answered by Traffic Engineer, application submitted to Mass Dot to lower speed limit to 25mph, and taking into consideration police studies and applicable laws in regards to this area, seconded by Polito. Motion passed 4-0.

Item #5 – 48 Hour Parking Rule

- Trane stated he discussed this with his colleagues and has not found anyone in favor of changing this rule. He recommends it be left alone. Traffic and Parking does not steadfastly enforce this rule unless responding to a complaint and it is usually 72 hours before a ticket is issued. It is also important to have this rule during snow emergencies for public safety reasons.
- Polito stated the police department does not look for this violation only by complaint and issue warning first and then tow 48hrs later. He believes we are asking for problems if we don't have people move their vehicles.
- Costa Chitouras spoke against the regulation. He stated the original intent was to prohibit disabled cars from parking on the street. No other reason to require a person to move their car. During summer street cleaning automatically catches cars that haven't moved and in the winter you have snow plowing. Requiring cars to move every 48 hours pollutes the air.
- Trane stated the number one complaint he gets from residents is that cars aren't moving.
- Mr. Chitouras asked the Commission to consider extending the regulation to seven days.

Graney motioned to make no alteration or changes to the 48 Hour Parking Rule, seconded by Polito. Motion passed: 4-0.

Item #6 – Amendment to Do Not Enter (abutters and drop offs only) on Franklin St @ Pearl St by adding the following hours: 7am-9am and 2pm-3pm

Trane motioned to approve, seconded by Polito. Motion passed: 4-0.

Item #7 – Request from Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee (SBAC) to allow bicycles use of streets during restricted periods when Do Not Enter Regulations are in effect at the following locations:

- Cherry St from Summer St
- Concord Av from Beacon St
- Sartwell Av from Cedar St to Cherry St
- Lincoln St from Broadway
- Myrtle St from Washington St

- Tufts St from Washington St to Cross St
- Greenville St from McGrath Highway Southbound
- Prospect Hill Av from McGrath Highway Southbound
- Raymond Av from Curtis St

Sarah Spicer on behalf of the Bike Committee stated this was being requested to increase access to schools and throughout the City for bicyclists. All temporal Do Not Enters were for the intent of decreasing the amount and motion of traffic at schools and bikes are not part of these traffic issues.

- Lauren Clayton stated bicycles should not have special privileges and urged the Commission to reject treating them special.
- Trane stated if bikes are allowed to go against traffic flow it can be confusing and you risk the safety of pedestrians.
- Graney asked if Traffic and Parking had a position on the request.
- Smith stated they defer to the Traffic Commission.
- Polito noted that bikes are required to follow the same rules and regulations as motor vehicles and therefore the police do not support this request.

Trane motioned to deny and keep rules the same for bicycles as motor vehicles, seconded by Graney. Motion passed: 4-0.

Trane motioned and Polito seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.