

Traffic Commission Agenda
May 15, 2014

Attendance: Stan Koty, James Polito, Thomas Graney, Robert McWatters
Staff: Laura Accaputo, Austin Faison, Suzanne Rinfret, Terence Smith
Other: Alderman Neidergang, Tom Conery, Lauren Clayton, David Webster, Russell Joyner

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6pm

Item #1 – Minutes from April 17, 2014 Traffic Commission Meeting accepted unanimously.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to suspend the rules and reorder the agenda to take up Item #4, seconded by the Chair. Motion passed: 4-0.

Item #4 – Request for No Parking Anytime

Vernon St at Lowell St, south side, first two spaces in an easterly direction

- Alderman Neidergang explained the reason he made this request is the traffic backs up on Lowell Street whenever cars are parked in these spaces. He spoke with the resident and they do not mind losing the spaces.

Alderman McWatters motioned to approve as requested, seconded by Lieutenant Polito. Motion passed 4-0.

Item #2 – Request for Handicapped Parking

a) 28 Sydney St

- Terence Smith stated the applicant is requesting the space be located across the street in a location that runs along the side of an apartment building. The applicant made this location request in consideration of snow emergency regulations which restrict parking to the odd numbered side of the street. Mr. Smith stated Traffic and Parking does not support locating the space across the street but has no objection to locating the space in front of the applicants' house.
- The Chair agreed with Mr. Smith and stated his concern of setting a precedent of locating Handicapped Spaces on the odd side of the street when the applicant lives on the even side.

Lieutenant Polito motioned to approve at the location of 28 Sydney St, seconded by Alderman McWatters. Motion passed: 4-0.

b) 32 Vinal Av

- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking has no objections with this request.

Lieutenant Polito motioned to approve, seconded by Alderman McWatters. Motion passed: 4-0.

Item #3 – Request for Valet Parking
Assembly Row

- Russ Joyner, Vice President, General Manager, Assembly Row addressed the Commission. He explained the request is for 3 Drop Off and 3 Pick Up spaces on Great River Road during mall hours, beginning one hour prior to opening and ending one hour after closing, beginning in July.
- Alderman McWatters asked if the Traffic Engineer has any concerns and Mr. Smith stated his concern for crossing safety. Mr. Joyner stated there will be three parking attendants and there are two crosswalks at each corner. The Chair asked why anyone would pay for valet service and then walk to the crosswalk and stated they need a crosswalk at this location. Lieutenant Polito also noted the SPD will not allow valets to cross people. Mr. Webster stated they will not cross people just direct them to the crosswalk. The Chair asked if there was a problem with a crosswalk in this location and Mr. Smith stated there could be a potential sight line problem and he would have to look at it. The Chair directed FRIT to have their Traffic Consultants prepare a Traffic Memo stating that a crosswalk at the Valet Service Area would meet the minimum requirements of the MUTCD and have said report delivered to Mr. Smith for review and approval.
- Mr. Joyner explained there is a contingency plan to pick up the cars inside the structure.
- Mr. Smith stated Traffic and Parking has no problem with valet parking just safety concerns for crossing the street. He believes the contingency plan is better and noted that it must be ADA compliant.
- Mr. Graney asked for confirmation that the valet parking zone would not obstruct fire hydrants or fire lanes and Mr. Webster replied there are still two lanes of travel and will be no obstructions.
- Lauren Clayton stated he believes the inside plan is better and will offer protection from the elements.

The Chair motioned to approve pending the Traffic Engineers approval of an additional crosswalk or the contingency plan to be located inside the structure, seconded by Alderman McWatters. Motion passed: 4-0.

The Chair advised Mr. Joyner and Mr. Webster to set up a meeting with Mr. Smith.

Item #5 – Informational Item regarding Truck Restrictions in Medford

- Terence Smith explained in July 2012 the City of Somerville became aware that the City of Medford had posted/installed truck restriction signs on several streets adjacent to or in the vicinity of the Medford/Somerville city line. The locations where these truck restriction signs were posted are Harvard St @Mystic Ave, Harvard St @ Willis St and Harvard St @ Main St (all four corners). In order to install truck restrictions on roadways throughout the Commonwealth, the provisions of the Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion of the Mass DOT 2009 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, amended in 2012 must be followed. These provisions require an Engineering Study be prepared and submitted to Mass DOT for review and approval prior to the installation of any truck

restriction signs. These truck restriction signs installed by the City of Medford allegedly prohibit trucks from traveling on Harvard St and detour all trucks onto Main St to Somerville specifically Magoun Square. These trucks not only are causing accidents and infrastructure damage at Magoun Square but are also adversely impacting the quality of life for all residents in Somerville due to the increased exhaust emissions and noise and sight pollution from the increased amount of trucks now forced into Somerville. Pedestrian and vehicle safety has also been lowered due to the increase amount of trucks in Somerville as a result of the installation of these signs. Mr. Smith had previously spoken with both the Mass DOT District #4 Traffic Office and the Regulations Unit in Boston. The No Truck signs installed by Medford do not have the necessary truck exclusion study/permits required by Mass DOT and Medford has not filed any paperwork to obtain the required permits from Mass DOT. As such these signs had no proper legal standing or authority. Stanley Koty also spoke with various City of Medford officials and urged that these signs be removed. The signs were not removed. As these signs were installed without the proper procedural engineering study and subsequent authorization by Mass DOT, the City of Somerville via written communication requested that Mass DOT take all appropriate actions to have the City of Medford remove these truck restriction signs forthwith. Mass DOT requested that the City of Medford remove these signs. The City of Medford did not respond to Mass DOT's request to remove the truck restriction signs. Mass DOT staff then removed these signs.

LATE ITEM

Item #6 – Item for Discussion

Properzi Way/Tyler St

- Tom Conery, General Manager, Ames Park addressed the Commission. He asked they reconsider the recently approved parking restriction changes in the area by extending the timed restrictions from 8pm to 9pm. He stated they have 204 parking spaces in their lots which are shared by 45 tenants and hundreds of clients and members. He noted some of the businesses are open 24/7 and all of the houses on the street have driveways except one.
- Alderman McWatters asked if he spoke with his Alderman about this and Mr. Conery replied he was not aware these changes were proposed and approved until after the fact and therefore did not have the opportunity to speak with her.
- Mr. Smith stated with the addition of new businesses in the area both Traffic and Parking and the Ward Alderman received inquiries to review the parking in this area. In an effort to balance the needs of both businesses and residents, while also addressing public safety concerns, they came up with the plan that was approved last month and had the support Alderman Heuston. He also explained to the Chair that this is not a voting item at this time.
- The Chair stated he has not heard any new information that would make him consider changing anything. The Alderman and Traffic and Parking worked hard and he is happy with the actions taken.

- Ms. Rinfret explained the Business Parking Program which is available for employees to Mr. Conery.
- Mr. Conery stated he is also concerned with safety due to cut through traffic on the street.
- The Chair stated he hears his concerns and there are problems with parking all over the city. He suggested Mr. Conery speak with the church in the neighborhood about the possibility of arranging for after hours parking in there lot. He also suggested he speak with the Ward Alderman regarding his concerns.

Motion to adjourn at 6:30pm was made by Alderman McWatters, seconded by Lieutenant Polito. Motion passed: 4-0.