

**MEETING OF THE
CITY OF WOBURN
TRAFFIC COMMISSION
MAY 18, 2017 – 4:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Attending: Comm. Tina Cassidy, Comm. John Corey, Comm. John Duran, Comm. Lindsay Higgins, Comm. Raymond Mooney, Chair Comm. Joanne Campbell.

Absent: Comm. Myles Collins, Comm. Tim Ring, Comm. Peter Socorelis.

Motion made and 2nd to waive the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting and to accept, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

No. 2016-19

On the petition for review of safety zones and thickly settled area speed regulations. Comm. Campbell stated that the committee has been working on the matter for a few months. Comm. Cassidy stated that the committee has been looking at areas of the city which would be appropriate for reduced speed limits, that they have been using MassDOT guidelines during the review, that they have been working with maps of the areas, that the committee is preparing a report to recommend particular areas where the reduced speed limits may be appropriate and criteria for future changes. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be laid on the table until the meeting on June 15, 2017, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

No. 2016-14

On the petition relative to the request for traffic calming on Beacon Street at intersection with Sturgis Street. Comm. Corey stated that the Engineering Department has been attempting to complete the survey, that the weather has been poor when staff has been available to conduct the site survey, and that a report will be ready for the next meeting. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be laid on the table until the meeting on June 15, 2017, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

No. 2017-4

On the petition relative to Veteran's Agent request to establish Purple Heart parking spaces. Appearing was Veteran's Agent Larry Guisepppe and he offered a communication and photographs to the Traffic Commission for review. Motion made and 2nd that the documents be received and made part of the record, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent). Mr. Guisepppe stated that there is a Purple Heart parking space in the Kohl's parking lot, that he proposes to establish the parking spaces in the Walnut Street area near the Veterans of Foreign Wars Club, one at the back of the Council on Aging building near the Veteran's Agent office and one in the parking lot to be constructed at the site of the former Strand Theater, that a

parking space has been established at the American Legion Club on their private property, that these will be unenforceable parking spaces, that there will be no ticketing, no fines and no towing if someone parks in the space and is not a Purple Heart recipient, that these are courtesy parking spaces, that no police enforcement will be required, that anyone can park in the spaces, that not all Purple Heart veterans have a Purple Heart license plate on their vehicles as that is an option to apply for such a plate from the Registry of Motor Vehicles, that there may be no indication that an individual parking in the space is a Purple Heart recipient, that no current parking spaces will be lost nor will any handicapped accessible parking spaces be replaced, that the intent is for a courtesy parking space for a veteran wounded in combat, that there are approximately 48 Purple Heart veterans residing in Woburn, and that the Registry of Motor Vehicles will not disclose how many Purple Heart veterans residing in Woburn have Purple Heart license plates. Comm. Cassidy stated that she not oppose the proposal but is concerned that other worthy groups may step forward such as expectant mothers or people suffering from different forms of cancer, and that perhaps a veteran's parking space may be requested. Mr. Guiseppe stated that most veterans would defer parking spaces to Purple Heart recipients rather than general veterans. Comm. Corey stated that he is also concerned about other groups seeking similar parking spaces, and that the parking spaces appear to be at veteran related locations and only one other parking space is being requested. Mr. Guiseppe stated that he does not anticipate coming forward to recommend additional parking spaces in the future. Comm. Higgins stated that this is a symbolic gesture, that other communities have established Purple Heart veteran parking spaces, that Woburn is a Purple Heart community, and that she would not object to the proposal. Comm. Mooney stated that the Police Department has not concern as the parking space is not enforceable, and that the Police Department will not challenge anyone's credentials who park in the spaces. Mr. Guiseppe stated that if a Purple Heart veteran complained that someone was taking the parking space who was not a Purple Heart veteran the Police Department could state that the sign is not enforceable. Comm. Duran stated that he fully supports the petition. Comm. Campbell stated that she supports the proposal. Motion made and 2nd that the petition to establish one Purple Heart veteran parking space in the Walnut Street area near the Veterans of Foreign Wars Club, one at the back of the Council on Aging building near the Veteran's Agent office and one in the parking lot to be constructed at the site of the former Strand Theater be approved, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

No. 2017-6

On the petition relative to Traffic warning signs on Richard Circle. Comm. Campbell read the following communication from Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen into the record:

Dear Distinguished Members of the Woburn Traffic Commission:

I am writing today regarding a request for the installation of a "Children At Play" sign on Richard Circle. I recently made this same request to the DPW.

Richard Circle currently has (2) "Children At Play" signs, which I requested a few years ago. The first sign is installed on the pole as you enter the street; the second sign is further down in around #15 Richard Circle. While Richard Circle is not a high traffic street, there are times when people who are unfamiliar with the neighborhood drive too fast for such a densely populated area. The installation of additional "Children At Play" signs on the street would provide warning to people to be mindful that there are children in the area that could run into the street to chase a

ball, or other yard toys. I am fully aware that these signs are not “enforceable” but they do provide a level of “traffic calming”.

I am in full support of the installation of the sign at or around #23 Richard Circle. I would ask that commission also consider installing the same signs on the opposite side of Richard Circle. There are no “Children At Play” signs on the side of Richard Circle between #39-#59. There should be at least 1-2 signs in this area as there are indeed children in that area of the neighborhood. The additional signage will also provide uniformity and act as deterrent to speeding.

Thank you to the board for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely, s/Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Ward 5

Comm. Duran stated that the city is in the process of completing a traffic sign inventory, that the effort is to determine which signs are enforceable, which meet the traffic sign standards and to determine whether the signs are effective, and that the city is waiting for a report from the consultant. Comm. Corey stated that several warning signs have been removed because they are not enforceable and create a false sense of security, and that the presence of a sign should not make people feel as if they do not have to exercise caution. Comm. Mooney stated that this request was received from a resident who is attending the meeting. Karen Dellanno, 23 Richard Circle stated that seventeen children reside on Richard Circle, that the road leads to West Street, that recently she saw a vehicle drive up onto the sidewalk, that she stands outside when her children are playing, that her children understand not to play on the street, and that she wants people to be aware that there are children in the neighborhood and to slow down while driving. Comm. Mooney stated that there is a straightaway section of the street that results in faster speed of vehicles, that it must be determined that a particular sign will be effective and if not then the sign would not be posted, and that if the signs give some sense of comfort to the residents then there is a benefit. Comm. Duran stated that he does not oppose the petition but that there are ten signs in another neighborhood where a request has been made for the same sign, and that they have not helped the situation in the neighborhood. Ms. Dellanno stated that the signs in the neighborhood are facing the wrong direction. Comm. Mooney stated that he ran some license plates from vehicles who were speeding on Richard Circle and the vehicles were all registered to owners residing on Richard Circle. Comm. Duran stated that he would like to meet with a representative of the Police Department in the area to determine an effective plan to address the issue. Comm. Mooney stated that he is willing to table the matter to the next meeting so that a review can be made by the Police Department and the Department of Public Works. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be laid on the table until the meeting on June 15, 2017, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

No. 2017-8

On the petition relative to Traffic control signal timing on Washington Street at Olympia Avenue. Comm. Campbell stated that the City Council sent a letter to MassDOT requesting action on this issue. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be placed on file, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

No. 2017-9

On the communication received from the MBTA relative to bus stop accessibility improvement project on Cambridge Road. Comm. Cassidy stated that she spoke to a representative of the MBTA concerning the issue, and that comments would be received until May 19, 2017. Comm. Higgins stated that she would like to review the comments before submission to the MBTA as the locations are in Ward 7 and Ward 1. Comm. Campbell asked for the opportunity to review the comments as well. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be placed on file, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

Motion made and 2nd to suspend the rules for the purposes of adding the following matter to the Order of the Day, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

No. 2016-17

On the petition relative to posting a “blind child” warning sign on George Avenue. Comm. Campbell stated that Alderman Mercer-Bruen requests a sign reading “blind child” on behalf of a constituent, that George Avenue is located between Washington Street and Salem Street, that there is considerable traffic on the street, that a young child who is visually impaired is resident on the street, and that the child’s mother received a recommendation from the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind that the warning sign be installed. Comm. Cassidy wanted to know if such signs required Traffic Commission approval. Comm. Corey stated that a sign could be installed facing vehicles traveling in each direction, that the Police Department and Department of Public Works could be authorized to review the matter and to take the necessary action. Comm. Duran stated that he has contacted the sign consultant regarding the matter. Motion made and 2nd that the Department of Public Works and the Police Department review in the field the request to install a “blind child” warning sign on George Avenue and to take the appropriate action, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent).

No. 2017-10

Comm. Cassidy stated that she asks the Traffic Commission to consider eliminating the required 5:00 p.m. start time for public hearings, and that this matter should be added to the next Traffic Commission agenda. Comm. Campbell stated that it may be beneficial to review the issue.

No. 2016-16

Comm. Corey stated that he was asked whether a truck route study should be conducted and concluded before taking action on changing the no through traffic signs, and whether such action should be delayed.

Motion made and 2nd to recess until 5:00 p.m., 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent). Meeting recessed at 4:50 p.m.

No. 2016-16

On the petition relative to Resident traffic and through traffic only restrictions Brentwood Road, Colonial Road, Cummings Avenue and Intervale Street. Comm. Campbell stated that this matter concerns resident only and through traffic signs with conflicting restrictions on both ends of the street, and that Alderman Gaffney and Alderman Anderson attended the last meeting at which Comm. Mooney discussed the underlying issues. Comm. Mooney stated that at prior meetings there was discussion concerning liability issues and enforceability issues as to these signs, and that the Traffic Commission is seeking comments from the public as to the preferred direction of travel on these roads. Senior Engineer Brett Gonsalves displayed the city's GIS on a screen to show the signs posted on Brentwood Road. Comm. Mooney stated that there are signs erected at both ends of Brentwood road reading resident traffic between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., that it is not possible to enforce the restrictions, and that if someone driving onto the street when prohibited at both ends from doing so there will likely be liability issues if there is a collision. Comm. Corey stated that the Brentwood Road between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. as well as 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at opposite ends of the street technically means that no vehicle can enter the street during those hours, and that the intention of this effort is to have exclusions from one end of the street at one time of the day and restrictions at the other end of the street at the another time of the day. Comm. Mooney stated that the resident only restriction has to be removed and the time restrictions should be coordinated at opposite ends of the street. Alderman Michael Anderson stated that he spoke to the residents on Brentwood Road, Intervale Street and the area streets, that the residents have concerns given the effort to have the restrictions adopted ten years ago, that the posted signs restrict non-residents from using the streets and act as a deterrent, that they understand that the restrictions are not enforceable, that when the truck survey is completed this may result in other changes to the signs, that residents of Pine Grove Avenue and Rumford Park Avenue have indicated that something must be done with their street due to the traffic conditions, that he received negative comments from the residents concerning the proposal, that the residents want the signs to remain as a deterrent, that there is no unanimity on the direction of travel restrictions, that Brentwood Road is a long road, that it would be difficult for residents to leave their street and then have to go all the way around to get back to their home, that there is also concern about the impact of such a restriction on the school bus route, and that the preference of the residents is to defer action until completion of the truck route survey. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Joan Canario, 10 Brentwood Road stated that she worked on this issue ten years ago because of the number of children walking along the street to the Wyman School, that they never asked for the resident only restriction, that there were also large trucks using the street, that the direction of traffic is greater from Main Street in the morning and greater from the industrial park in the afternoon, and that the topography of Brentwood Road makes certain stretches difficult during snowy weather. Joanne Taft, 18 Brentwood Road stated that her preference is no change in the restrictions because these are unique streets with blind corners and blind hills, that many children reside on the street, that cars encroach on her front lawn when two vehicles are passing, that commuters will take advantage of these streets and will increase the volume and speed of vehicles if the restrictions are removed, and that if she had to choose she would leave the signs on Intervale Street and Brentwood Road at Main Street as this would require drivers to use the double lane Eaton Avenue. Joseph Oser, 19 Brentwood Road stated that the signs act as a deterrent, that he disagrees with taking down the signs whether they are enforceable or not, and that if the signs can remain posted they should remain posted. Comm. Corey stated this is not only an issue of enforceability but also one of liability, and that the conflicting signs cause liability issues. Kristen Cottreau, 21 Brentwood Road stated that she is a

new resident on the street, that she drives towards Forest Park Road in the morning, that it would be more difficult traveling to Main Street to get to Anderson Station, that she would be interested in seeing the impact if the restrictions were removed at both ends of the streets altogether although other residents may disagree with doing so, and that vehicle speed enforcement is an issue on the street. Comm. Mooney stated that it is not unlawful to leave a driveway in the street and travel in either direction, that the issue is vehicles entering the street, that a vehicle cannot come back onto the street in opposition to the signs, that there was a similar issue on Kearsarge Avenue, that the direction of travel was reversed during morning and evening peak hours which was enforceable and helped with the issue, that the speed limit is 30 miles per hour with the exception of school zones where it is 20 miles per hour, that 30 miles per hour appears much faster on Brentwood Road, that although the vehicles appear to be traveling fast at 30 miles per hour it is lawful to do so, that the intent of this public hearing is to obtain input from the residents as to which direction vehicles should travel, that having enforceable signs will eliminate the issue, that the city must have signs that are compliant, that the Traffic Commission has worked on this issue for some time but wants input from the residents, and that the issue is not whether the city will change the signs but which is the preferred direction of travel. Ms. Cottreau stated that based on this information she would prefer the restriction be from where the most traffic travels. Comm. Mooney stated that the restrictions will apply to residents as well. Comm. Campbell stated that the Traffic Commission is reviewing this issue a few streets at a time. Dawn McGee, 28 Brentwood Road stated that she works from home, that traffic is not an issue but the speed of vehicles is high, that there are two school bus routes on the street and a third bus travels along the street, and that she is concerned about the impact on these bus routes. Comm. Mooney stated that there used to be a restriction on the speed of vehicles at the 85th percentile of traveled speed on the road, and that the speed of a roadway can now be reviewed for a reduction to 25 miles per hour. Ms. McGee stated that she would rather have the signs removed and the speed reduced if she had to make a choice. Comm. Corey stated that the restriction would only be in effect for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon to eliminate excessive commuter travel on the streets, and that any resident of the street can exit the street in either direction at any time of the day. Ms. Canario stated that she would not recommend any change on the Main Street restriction, that the afternoon restriction is currently between 2:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. because of students walking home from the Wyman School, that after 6:00 p.m. vehicles can use the road, and that she would prefer to retain the 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. restriction hours. Alderman Gaffney stated that he spoke to a number of residents on Cummings Avenue and Colonial Road, that the direction of travel on Colonial Road is at its peak between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. from Winn Street to Wyman Street and at its peak between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. from Wyman Street to Winn Street, that the restriction would prevent excessive traffic when the new Hurld-Wyman School opens, that there is no queueing of vehicles on Winn Street now but when the new Hurld-Wyman School opens there will be a lot of traffic as students will be coming across Winn Street, that on Cummings Avenue the consensus is to have the direction of travel between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. from Winn Street to Kilby Street and from Kilby Street to Winn Street between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., and that the other option would be making the road one-way from Winn Street to Kilby Street because of the steepness of the hill but the residents do not want a one-way restriction. Comm. Cassidy left the Council Chamber. Sandy Luther, 19 Cummings Avenue stated that her house is at the bottom of the hill, that she is concerned about accidents due to the steep grade of the hill, and that she agrees with Alderman Gaffney that the direction of travel between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. from Winn Street to Kilby Street and from Kilby Street to Winn Street between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Comm. Mooney stated that the school bus routes are an issue, and that the Traffic Commission should hear from the rest of the residents attending this meeting and then consider all factors raised.

Joanne Daggett, 34 Elijah Street stated that she wants to see all the restricted traffic signs removed, that every street could be considered a cut through, that there is no equality when some streets are singled out for restrictions and others are not, that she does not complain that streets are used in her neighborhood as they are public streets, are plowed and received city services, that if the reason for the restriction is that children play on the streets in reality children do not play on the streets, that if the issue is speed of vehicles then there should be radar enforcement, that the traffic control signals in the area have created new cut through traffic on other streets, and that the restricted travel signs have caused a maze of traffic and other issues. Motion made and 2nd that the public hearing be closed, 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 4 absent (Cassidy, Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent). Comm. Mooney stated that some residents want to know why there are these travel restrictions as they cause issues on other streets, that the restrictions are an effort to help a neighborhood but there are some residents who state there should be no restrictions, that he wants to conduct more research on the issue based on the information received at this public hearing, and that all of the streets in the city are used aggressively. Comm. Corey stated that all roads in the city are public ways, that the city receives so-called Chapter 90 money from the Commonwealth for the maintenance of the roads, and that all of the roads in the city are in some way cut through streets. Comm. Mooney stated that reducing the speed limit on Brentwood Road to 25 miles per hour would be beneficial. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be laid on the table until the meeting on June 15, 2017, 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 4 absent (Cassidy, Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent). Comm. Cassidy returned to the Council Chamber.

Motion made and 2nd to adjourn, 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Collins, Ring, Socorelis absent). Meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

William C. Campbell, City Clerk
and Clerk of Traffic Commission