



Thomas F. Rocca
Chief of Police

CITY OF WATERTOWN

TRAFFIC COMMISSION



David Sampson
Sergeant
Tel: 617-972-6547

Thomas F. Rocca, Chair
Ryan Nicholson, Provisional Fire Chief
Gregory St. Louis, Superintendent of Public Works
Steven Magoon, Community Development and Planning
Ms. Kelly Gallagher
Mr. Robert Airasian

April 11, 2023

March 29, 2023 Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Thomas Rocca, Ryan Nicholson, Steven Magoon, Gregory St. Louis, Kelly Gallagher, Robert Airasian

Traffic Commission members addressed the following items:

Item 1 – Ms. Gallagher made a motion to approve the January 25, 2023 Traffic Commission meeting minutes; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 – The Commission received an informational presentation by Mr. Ted O'Hagan of Vanasse & Associates, Inc. on behalf of their client Elm Street Partners regarding proposed improvements for Elm Street at Arlington Street and Elm Street at Arsenal Street intersections.

Mr. O'Hagan explained that the traffic mitigation efforts were being presented due to the new laboratory space being developed at 23 Elm Street. The presentation focused on pedestrian improvements on Arlington Street at Elm Street, and a new traffic signal at the intersection of Arsenal Street at Elm Street.

Mr. O'Hagan explained that the currently unsignalized intersection of Arsenal at Elm Street will be signalized and incorporated into the Arsenal Street signal system. The intersection will provide fully actuated pedestrian crossings.

The location of the crosswalk spanning Arlington Street by Elm Street will be adjusted slightly, and will include curb bump-outs, and a rectangular rapid flashing beacon. Although the length of the parking restriction on the east side of Arlington Street will increase, the change will not result in the loss of parking.

Mr. O'Hagan responded to Mr. Airasian's question regarding parking on the west side of Arlington Street – No change in regulation is necessary on the west side.

Mr. O'Hagan responded to Chief Nicholson's question regarding signal preemption for the proposed new signal at Arsenal Street – Preemption will be incorporated into the new signal.

Mr. Magoon reported that off-site traffic work related to the Watertown Mall development may include a right only lane exiting Elm Street at Arsenal Street; Elm Street could be widened at some point in the future. Mr. Magoon wanted to ensure that the traffic signal equipment is placed outside of any potential road/sidewalk widening.

Item 3 – The Commission reviewed a request by Mr. Ted O’Hagan of Vanasse & Associates, Inc. on behalf of their client Elm Street Partners to make the following changes to Arlington Street:

- a. Restrict parking on the east side of Arlington Street from a point 32’ north of utility pole #12 to a point 90’ north of utility police #12.
- b. Install a rectangular rapid flashing beacon on Arlington Street for the crosswalk at Elm Street.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to restrict parking on the east side of Arlington Street from a point 32’ north of utility pole #12 to a point 90’ north of utility police #12 and install a rectangular rapid flashing beacon on Arlington Street for the crosswalk at Elm Street; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4 – The Commission received an informational presentation by Mr. Ted O’Hagan of Vanasse & Associates, Inc. on behalf of their client, Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc, regarding proposed bus stop relocations on Arsenal Street as part of the Arsenal Street Corridor Improvement project associated with the Arsenal on the Charles development project.

Mr. O’Hagan reported that the Arsenal Street Corridor Improvement project includes elements such as improving signals and sidewalks from west of Louise Street to Upper Greenough Boulevard. Vanasse & Associates, Inc. has coordinated with the MBTA to consolidate bus stops and install bus shelters. They have also coordinated with the City to provide “far side” bus stops. Far side bus stops are more ideal for bus operations and safer for pedestrians. Because parking is prohibited on this section of Arsenal Street, there are no parking impacts associated with the bus stop relocations.

Mr. Magoon commended his staff who have worked diligently with abutting property owners to secure easements to accommodate the bus shelters. Mr. Magoon supported the bus stop relocations.

Mr. O’Hagan answered District B Councilor Lisa Feltner’s questions regarding bicycle lanes on Arsenal Street and the rectangular rapid flashing beacon slated for Arlington Street.

Item 5 – The Commission reviewed a request by Mr. Brian Glaser of Grove Street for the installation of a crosswalk spanning Coolidge Hill Road at Grove Street. Sgt. Sampson reminded the Commission that a similar request was recently approved for the intersection of Kondazian Street at Grove Street.

Mr. Magoon reported that tactile strips were in place at this location and that he would support the request.

Mr. St. Louis reported that the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) does not require marked crosswalks at every intersection.

Mr. Airasian made a motion to install a crosswalk spanning Coolidge Hill Road at Grove Street; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 6 – The Commission reviewed a request by Mr. Brian Glaser of Grove Street for the installation of a crosswalk at 149 Grove Street spanning Grove Street to the rear entrance of the Mount Auburn Cemetery. Sgt. Sampson reported that he spoke with City Engineer Mr. Shuman about this request. Both Sgt. Sampson and Mr. Shuman advise against a crosswalk at this location. This is a mid-block location with no crossing aids, lines of sight issues, no finished sidewalks on the east side, and would not be ADA compliant. Any crosswalk installed in this area would terminate in the driveway of the Mount Auburn cemetery.

Mr. Magoon stated that although some people may cross at this location, it is the City’s responsibility to install crosswalks where it is deemed safe to cross the street. Installing a crosswalk for convenience could

be problematic for the City if a collision occurred at that location. Mr. Airasian agreed that this location would not be appropriate and noted that an established crosswalk is available further north of this location.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to deny Mr. Glaser's request for a crosswalk at 149 Grove Street spanning Grove Street to the rear entrance of the Mount Auburn Cemetery; Mr. St. Louis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 7 – The Commission reviewed a request by Mr. Gideon Schreiber of the Watertown Department of Community Development and Planning to restrict parking on both sides of Taylor Street from Arsenal Street to Mount Auburn Street.

Mr. Schreiber reported that Taylor Street is slated to become a segment of the Watertown Community Path. The Path is required to be at least 8 feet wide, but a buffer zone for utilities, hydrants, etc. is also needed. The buffer zone will be in front and back of the proposed path. To accomplish this project on the east side of Taylor Street and maintain an appropriate travel lane, Mr. Schreiber requested to restrict parking on both sides of the street. Mr. Schreiber reported that abutters have been notified, and that grant funding has been secured to complete this segment of the path. The awarded grant funding may only be used for this segment.

After discussion regarding the affected businesses and licensing requirements, Mr. Magoon reported that the area businesses were put on notice many months ago.

District B Councilor Lisa Feltner reported that the Council has discussed the Watertown Community Path for many years. The former railroad bed was always the Council's preferred location for the Path, and Councilor Feltner is concerned about the Path's impact on local businesses. Regardless of the final location of the Path, Taylor Street is in poor condition. Ms. Feltner was not sure the Bike/Ped Committee has weighed in on this proposed location.

District C Councilor Vincent Piccirilli reported that the proposed development of 33 Mt. Auburn Street plans to have their property entrance on the west side of Taylor Street. If this development is completed, most of Taylor's Street's current available parking would be lost. In terms of the rail bed, MassDOT still owns the portion by Patten Street. The former bridge was removed, and a concrete embankment has been installed. The likelihood of getting MassDOT to now install a bridge is very low. Councilor Piccirilli stated that the only way to connect the Path is by using Taylor Street.

After discussion concerning whether adequate notice was provided to abutters, Mr. Magoon made a motion to restrict parking on both sides of Taylor Street from Arsenal Street to Mount Auburn Street; Mr. St. Louis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 8 – The Commission reviewed a request by Sgt. Sampson of the Watertown Police Department to install an in-street "Yield to Pedestrian" sign on Main Street at Edward Road. Sgt. Sampson reported that a similar request was recently approved for the Main Street crossing just east of Evans Street. Main Street at Edward Road is very wide, and this location is a source of ongoing complaints of motorists failing to yield to pedestrians. Sgt. Sampson thanked Mr. St. Louis and the DPW staff for posting a sign at this location prior to the meeting to ensure the sign would not be a hazard.

Ms. Gallagher made a motion to install an in-street "Yield to Pedestrian" sign on Main Street at Edward Road; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business –

Mr. St. Louis learned that MassDOT may be planning to conduct improvements in the area of Main Street at Bacon Street – This is also the proposed location of the City’s bike path connection to Linear Park. The DPW will reach out to MassDOT to try to coordinate efforts.

Sgt. Sampson reported that he is compiling new bus lane related language for the Traffic Rules and Orders and hopes to present the language at the April, 2023 meeting.

Sgt. Sampson reported that missing regulatory speed limit signage has been replaced on Evans Street. This is not a new effort in the area. The City has an approved special speed regulation for Evan Street and the signage had been missing for quite some time.

Mr. Magoon reported that he is still working on language regarding parking regulations at City owned properties such as parks and playgrounds. He sees the new wording as potentially an amendment to the City’s Code of Ordinances and hopes to present the language at a future meeting.

District B Councilor Lisa Feltner inquired about the traffic signal for Parker Street at Mt. Auburn Street. She also inquired about a No Left Turn sign that was on Arsenal Street facing Louise Street (this may have been posted during road construction and the installation of the new traffic signal).

Mr. St. Louis reported that the Mount Auburn Street Project continues to progress, and the website will be updated. They hope to schedule another meeting and have a 100% design in April; this will allow the project to go out for bid in September, 2023.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to adjourn; Mr. St. Louis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sgt. David Sampson
Assistant to the Traffic Commission