



CITY OF WATERTOWN

TRAFFIC COMMISSION



Mr. Robert Airasian, Chair
Justin Hanrahan, Police Chief
Ryan Nicholson, Fire Chief
Thomas Brady, Director of Public Works
Steven Magoon, Community Development and Planning
Tyler Glode, City Engineer
Ms. Kelly Gallagher

February 26, 2025 Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Robert Airasian, Justin Hanrahan, Thomas Brady, Tyler Glode, Kelly Gallagher

The Traffic Commission addressed the following items:

Item 1 – Ms. Gallagher made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2024 Commission meeting; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 –The Commission reviewed a request by Margaret Wong and Michael Cutillo of Forest Street to install a Multi-Way Stop Control at the intersection of Forest Street and Fayette Street, and to restrict parking on the south side of Fayette Street adjacent to the intersection.

Ms. Wong has lived at 74 Forest Street since 2013. She explained that the intersection is currently controlled by Stop signs on Forest Street; Fayette Street motorists are not required to stop. Ms. Wong noted that the intersecting streets are not perpendicular to one another, and there is a building on one corner that limits visibility of oncoming traffic. Ms. Wong requested an all-way stop at the intersection and restricted parking near the intersection.

Senior Transportation Planner Mr. Zeke Mermell addressed the Commission and explained the City's Complete Streets Priority Plan. He noted that Forest Street was included in the plan for a potential project. The plan includes potentially reconstructing Forest Street to provide a connection between the Moxley Field area and the Lowell School area. From a traffic planning perspective, Mr. Mermell explained the term "day lighting" as a best practice at intersections. In this case, the practice of "day lighting" would remove parking from the intersection to improve visibility of cross traffic and increase safety for vulnerable users and pedestrians.

City Engineer Mr. Tyler Glode reported that the project that Mr. Mermell referenced would be at Forest Street at Springfield Street and may take another two years to complete. Improvements through the project will incorporate improvements on Forest Street at Fayette Street. The project is currently under coordination for design. The building on the corner of Forest Street at Fayette Street causes Forest Street motorists to nose out into the intersection of Fayette Street; signage improvements can be made prior to the project slated for Forest Street at Springfield Street. Mr. Glode stated that signage modifications and options can be presented at the next Traffic Commission meeting.

Ms. Gallagher made a motion to delay action until the March, 2025 meeting; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3 –The Commission reviewed a request by Mr. Peter Centola of Thurston Road to review future improvement plans for Victory Field. Mr. Centola explained his background as a Watertown resident and former Recreation Director for the City. Mr. Centola reported that he has been involved with Victory Field since the 1960's. Mr. Centola explained that the first phase of the Victory Field renovation was completed in 2011. Phases two and three are expected to include a press box, field house, and elevator. Mr. Centola felt that the final design approved by the Ad Hoc Committee had many deficiencies such as, no additional parking, no bus parking, the proposed storage unit is not located directly next to the track, and many other concerns. Mr. Centola felt that if the design isn't changed now, there is no opportunity to increase parking, handicap accessibility, and bus accommodation in the future. Mr. Centola felt that additional parking would also benefit the neighborhood by adding additional public parking for the City's all night parking ban.

Mr. Airasian explained that the project is on a confined site and is outside the purview of the Traffic Commission; there is no mitigation work onto the public way. The Ad Hoc Committee was assembled to put together a plan, and had engineers help design the field and facilities.

Chief Hanrahan noted that most of the listed concerns were not traffic related.

District C Councilor Vincent J. Piccirilli who chaired the Ad Hoc Committee reported that the 2014 plan supported by Mr. Centola was unanimously rejected by the City Council. There was a robust process for the redesign of the facility. The Committee weighed the pros and cons of many issues and had to balance the needs of the Schools and the public. Measured decisions were made to try to accommodate as many needs as possible and make the area safer. The roadway is a shared street and there were many discussions on how to make it safer. In terms of additional parking, the Council did not want to pave approximately an acre of land for parking. In 2018, the City Council unanimously accepted the new plan, and voted unanimously in 2019 for a construction design project by CDM Smith. Every year, the Council voted to proceed with construction. The project will go out to bid in April, 2025 with construction beginning in June. Councilor Piccirilli noted that park plans have never been in front of the Traffic Commission.

Mr. Airasian thanked Mr. Centola for his presentation but noted that there was nothing actionable for the Commission. Mr. Airasian accepted the presentation as an informational item.

Item 4 –The Commission reviewed a request by Sgt. Sampson of the Watertown Police Department to install No Parking Here to Corner signage on the north side of Mt. Auburn Street, 35' west of Summer Street. Sgt. Sampson stated that the City's parking enforcement officers often find motorists parking in this non-designated area. The parking restriction is listed in the Traffic Rules and Orders, but there is no signage. For budgetary reasons and justification for additional signage, Sgt. Sampson requested a No Parking Here to Corner sign.

Mr. Glode made a motion to install No Parking Here to Corner signage on the north side of Mt. Auburn Street, 35' west of Summer Street; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

New Business

Ms. Samantha Garwin of Summer Street addressed the Commission concerning traffic issues on Summer Street. Ms. Garwin reviewed the 2018 Prioritization Plan and asked that the Commission review what progress has been made to address the concerns on Summer Street.

Mr. Glode asked to take the matter under advisement in order to bring information to the next Traffic Commission meeting. Although Summer Street is not on the list for improvements in 2024, it is on the list for future improvements in the DPW's five-year plan.

No other new business was brought to the Commission.

Mr. Glode made a motion to adjourn; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

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