



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
Mr. Daniel Grieneisen
Mr. Jason Merkin

March 25, 2026 Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Robert Airasian, Justin Hanrahan, Thomas Brady, Tyler Glode, Kelly Gallagher, Daniel Grieneisen, Jason Merkin

The Traffic Commission addressed the following items:

Item 1 – Ms. Gallagher made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2026 Commission meeting; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 – The Commission addressed a request by Mr. Barney Heath of Coolidge Avenue for the installation of a speed bump in the vicinity of 199 Coolidge Avenue.

Mr. Heath has been a resident of Crossroads on the Charles (199 Coolidge Avenue) for one and a half years and walks his dogs many times each day. Mr. Heath observes vehicles traveling at high rates of speed. He noted that after motorists clear the Grove Street intersection, they accelerate rapidly and travel at high speeds past the Condominium driveway. When vehicles are parked in front of the condominium building, it is difficult to exit the property safely due to speeding vehicles on Coolidge Avenue. Mr. Heath feels that motorists entering Watertown from Cambridge also travel too fast. He reported that there are no elements to encourage drivers to slow down. Mr. Heath requested some type of indication that cars are exiting the properties and warn drivers to slow down.

Mr. Airasian questioned whether there was a standardized distance from a signalized intersection to install speed humps.

Mr. Glode reported that the overall area was assessed as part of the 99 Coolidge Avenue redevelopment project; at that time, the Coolidge Avenue/Grove Street intersection was signalized and improved. It is difficult to safely install a speed hump within 1,000 feet of an intersection. There is a possibility to coordinate with the City of Cambridge to install traffic calming measures further down Coolidge Avenue.

District A Councilor Nicole Gardner noted that during the redevelopment of 99 Coolidge Avenue, a sensor was installed at the parking lot of 125 Coolidge Avenue to warn pedestrians of exiting vehicles; she thought that perhaps this could be considered for the driveway of 199 Coolidge Avenue.

Mr. Brady made a motion to work to obtain updated Coolidge Avenue speed data and make initial contact with Cambridge to determine what other steps may be needed; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3 – The Commission addressed a request by Ms. Lindsey Eichinger of Olney Street for the installation of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon on Lexington Street at the intersection of Bemis Street. Ms. Eichinger could not attend the meeting.

Mr. Nick Quaranto and his son Cameron addressed the Commission. Mr. Quaranto reported that he sees approximately 20-30 kids cross Lexington Street each day. With the elimination of a crossing guard at this location (June 2023), he felt that the street would be safer to cross with a rectangular rapid flashing beacon. Cameron reported that he has friends that live west of Lexington Street and they do not feel safe crossing Lexington Street.

Mr. Brady reported that the DPW has many pending requests, but he felt that there was merit to the Quaranto's request. He believed that there may be grant funding opportunities that may be able to provide beacons for this location. Rapid flashing beacons are in high demand and conditions must meet certain standards to warrant a beacon. It will take some time but pursuant to the Traffic Commission's decision, the DPW will look into this area.

Mr. Glode felt that the request was an opportunity to provide a safer route to school. If approved, review and design would take place, and installation may occur in approximately 1-2 years. Because there is already an existing crosswalk at this location, there may be options to raise the crosswalk as well.

Ms. Gallagher supported the request for a flashing beacon at this location.

Chief Hanrahan explained that the City has struggled to fill crossing guard vacancies for many years. Sgt. Sampson reported that due to staffing shortages, a crossing guard has not been at this post for 2-3 years. He will work with the Human Services Department to determine whether any new applications have been received.

Senior Transportation Planner Mr. Zeke Mermell reported that he is working with MassDOT to restart the Safe Routes to School Program. Mr. Mermell will keep this intersection in mind as he works with the schools. The Planning Department is looking at Lexington Street as part of the efforts to improve Citywide mobility.

Mr. Brady made a motion to commission further study and consideration of a flashing beacon and other possible traffic improvements to facilitate safe crossing at the intersection of Lexington Street at Bemis Street; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Leslie Cristello of Lawrence Street for No Parking signage on the south side of Orchard Street to the west and east of Lawrence Street.

Ms. Cristello reported that vehicles on Orchard Street often park too closely to the intersection of Lawrence Street. Because of this, when she attempts to exit Lawrence Street, she cannot see oncoming vehicles. She requested signage indicating No Parking Here to Corner. Mr. Jimmy Cristello reported that he grew up on the street and was struck by a car in this area when he was a child. Parking is prohibited near the DPW property; Mr. Cristello felt that the same rationale could apply to the Lawrence Street intersection.

Chief Hanrahan agreed that cars often park at this location and that it can be difficult to exit Lawrence Street. He reported that officers have been sent to the location, but the violators tend to come back. Signage would make the regulations clear and would enable enforcement without residents having to

report issues. Although the Commission tries to maintain parking, safety takes precedence.

Sgt. Sampson reported that the City's parking enforcement officers have assessed the area several times and vehicles are found to be in compliance with the standard parking regulation (No Parking within 20 feet of an intersection). He further explained that the standard 20 foot parking restriction does not provide significant relief at this intersection due to curvature of Orchard Street and geometry of the intersection with Lawrence Street; this makes it look like cars are very close to the intersection. Sgt. Sampson suggested adding additional distance to the parking restriction on Orchard Street.

Mr. Brady suggested prohibiting 30 feet of parking on both sides of Lawrence Street; this would maintain clear sight lines and help with enforcement.

Mr. Grieneisen made a motion to prohibit parking on the south side of Orchard Street from a point 29' west of Lawrence St to a point 30' west of Lawrence Street; Mr. Brady amended the motion to prohibit parking on the south side of Orchard Street from a point 30' west of Lawrence Street to a point 30' east of Lawrence Street; Mr. Glode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business –

Mr. Brady provided an update to the Mt. Auburn Street Project. He reported that all crosswalks in the project scope are being reconstructed. The crosswalk on Mount Auburn Street at Winthrop Street was not ADA compliant. Although it was likely installed with the best intentions, the crosswalk cannot be made compliant and there was way to prevent people from using that unsafe condition. The crosswalk was removed. Alternative crosswalks are available in close proximity to Winthrop Street.

Mr. Airasian reported that Director of Community Development and Planning and Traffic Commission member Mr. Magoon has retired. Mr. Airasian thanked Mr. Magoon for all of his work on the Commission and for the City. Mr. Magoon was instrumental during a time of rapid growth in the City. Mr. Magoon's knowledge, calm demeanor, and problem-solving skills were invaluable.

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

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