



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

July 13, 2023

June 28, 2023 Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Thomas Rocca, Ryan Nicholson, Steven Magoon, Kelly Gallagher, Robert Airasian

Traffic Commission members addressed the following items:

Item 1 – Mr. Airasian made a motion to approve the May 31, 2023 Traffic Commission meeting minutes; Mr. Magoon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 – The Commission reviewed a request by Mr. Nick Moscaritolo, owner of 121-123 Hillside Rd to add to Schedule IV, Isolated Stop Signs, an isolated Stop sign and stop line on Hillcrest Circle for westbound traffic at Hillside Road. Mr. Moscaritolo is a long time owner of the property; he recently had to modify a bush on his land to improve the line of sight for motorists exiting Hillcrest Circle onto Hillside Road. He noted that although there is a crosswalk on Hillcrest Circle, there is no stop sign or stop line at the intersection. Mr. Moscaritolo has noticed that motorists exiting Hillcrest Circle typically roll over the crosswalk before stopping.

Mr. Magoon noted that Hillcrest Circle is a short street and it does not generate a high volume of traffic. Mr. Magoon did not believe that the intersection warranted a Stop sign.

Sgt. Sampson explained that not every intersection is required to include a Stop sign. Sgt. Sampson summarized the requirements outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices pertaining to Stop signs and their applications. Sgt. Sampson believed that the intersection did not meet the warrants for an isolated stop sign.

During the discussion, Mr. Moscaritolo also reported that parked cars on Hillside Road make it difficult to exit Hillcrest Circle. Mr. Moscaritolo requested that, similar to Hillcrest Circle, a portion of parking on Hillside Road be restricted to help the line of sight issues.

Mr. Airasian believed that the Stop sign and Stop line are not needed, and explained that the parking issue could be addressed at a later time. [NOTE: the request to restrict parking will be addressed at the next Traffic Commission meeting]

Mr. Magoon made a motion to deny the installation of an isolated Stop sign and stop line on Hillcrest Circle for westbound traffic at Hillside Road; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion to deny passed unanimously.

Item 3 – The Commission reviewed a request by District D City Councilor Emily Izzo to add to Schedule IV, Isolated Stop Signs, Sparkill Street for southbound traffic at Madison Avenue. Councilor Izzo received this request from two residents of Sparkill Street; they are concerned about vehicles rolling through the intersection with Madison Avenue. Councilor Izzo noted that many people cut through this street to access Belmont Street, and that there are many children in the area.

Sergeant Sampson reported that the same MUTCD requirements for Hillcrest Circle (addressed above) would apply to Sparkill Street. In Sergeant Sampson’s opinion, Sparkill Street would not meet the warrants for an isolated Stop sign.

Mr. Airasian reported that he appreciates these types of requests, and the request for an isolated stop could perhaps be reconsidered as traffic patterns change. Installing an isolated Stop at this time, could set a precedent for all other streets that intersect with Madison Avenue.

Chief Nicholson believed that Sparkill Street is used more than other adjacent streets and that this may be a good location for an isolated Stop sign.

Mr. Magoon noted that Sparkill Street meets Madison Avenue as a “T” intersection, and that the right of way rules apply.

Chief Rocca noted that all neighborhoods experience cut through traffic.

Ms. Gallagher could see the benefit of a Stop at this location but was concerned about having one at this location and not at the others; this could be confusing for drivers in the area. Ms. Gallagher also noted the longstanding stance that the City does not want to become inundated with signs.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to deny the installation of an isolated Stop sign on Sparkill Street for southbound traffic at Madison Avenue with the understanding that this would be revisited if traffic changes. The motion to deny passed with Chief Nicholson opposing.

Item 4 – The Commission received a presentation by Dr. Deanne Galdston, Superintendent of Schools and the design team for temporary High School located at Moxley Field. The purpose of the presentation was to inform the Commission of the planned operations of the temporary high school and request approval for the traffic plan surrounding Moxley Field. Traffic assessments were conducted by Pare Corporation, and various recommendations were presented to the School Department and various City departments. To help mitigate the anticipated increased traffic volume, the school hours at the Middle School and High School have been adjusted to create distinct arrival and departure times, busing will be provided for high school students, and traffic patterns for arriving and departing staff have been developed.

Chief Rocca provided an opportunity for the public to make traffic related comments.

Mr. Martino of Edenfield Ave was concerned about the estimated number of students that will take advantage of the supplied buses, deliveries to the area, and trash collection. Mr. Martino asked whether there are contingency plans for the traffic pattern.

Madeline who is a resident of Bemis Street reported that her driveway typically gets blocked by motorists picking up students each day.

Ms. Slaven of Dexter Avenue did not agree with the School’s bus estimates and had concerns about the Middle School’s new start time.

Ms. Moynihan of Lexington Street was concerned about students not taking advantage of the buses. She also noted difficulty finding available parking for her crossing guard post on Westminster Avenue at Bemis Street.

Ms. Rose Centola of Linden Street was concerned about the status of the gate from Linden Street into Moxley Field, and the potential increase of motorists trying to drop-off and pick-up on Linden Street.

Ms. Ida Toro of Westminster Avenue was informed that even though a Do Not Enter restriction is proposed for Westminster Avenue southbound beginning at Bemis Street, she would still be able to access Main Street from her residence.

Ms. Marilyn Devaney of Westminster Avenue was concerned about the large influx of traffic to the neighborhood, and no staff access to the high school parking lot from Waverley Avenue.

District C City Councilor Vincent Piccirilli noted that the Linden Street traffic concerns are similar to Carlton Terrace adjacent to the Lowell Elementary School. Councilor Piccirilli suggested a Do Not Enter restriction for Linden Street during school hours, except for residents.

City Council President Mark Sideris noted that the traffic plan was well thought out; although nothing is perfect, conditions will be evaluated and traffic changes can be made if necessary. President Sideris reminded all in attendance that this situation is temporary.

Dr. Galdston responded to Mr. Magoon's questions regarding high school busing. Dr. Galdston estimated that 6 buses could be needed. Busing was offered to all students that live 0.7 miles and beyond from the temporary school. So far, the School Department has received registrations requiring roughly 4 buses. Dr. Galdston reported that in addition to the new busing program for the high school, 2 additional buses have been added to the middle school bus program; this was done to help reduce the number of middle school students dropped off and picked up each day.

Sgt. Sampson responded to Mr. Magoon's question about the location of the proposed dedicated parking space for the school resource officer on Bemis Street at Waverley Avenue. Sgt. Sampson believed there would be sufficient space for a dedicated parking spot.

Mr. Airasian supported Councilor Piccirilli's suggested Do Not Enter restriction for Linden Street. Mr. Airasian asked whether the intersection of Edenfield Avenue at Bemis Street was considered for an All-Way Stop. The design team noted that the intersection was not studied for an All-Way Stop.

Chief Rocca inquired about the proposed crosswalk on Main Street near Bacon and French Streets that was shown on the plans. He was informed that the crosswalk was included because it may be part of the City's bicycle path; it was not studied as part of the high school project. Installation of this crosswalk was tabled.

Ms. Gallagher asked whether any instruction will be given to parents about departing the drop off area and traveling to Lexington Street. Ms. Gallagher also inquired as to whether Edenfield Avenue would be a candidate for time restrictions similar to Westminster Avenue. Sgt. Sampson believed that if Lexington Street is the only option to exit the area towards the south, there would likely be a long queue of vehicles trying to access Lexington Street. It may be more beneficial to have Edenfield Avenue as a turning option as well as Lexington Street.

Chief Nicholson was concerned about the ability to access Moxley Field in the event of an emergency. To accommodate the fire truck turning movements, he requested to restrict parking on each side of the field entrances on Westminster Avenue and on Bemis Street.

- a. Mr. Magoon made a motion to remove from Schedule IV of the Traffic Rules and Orders the isolated stop signs on Bemis Street for east and westbound traffic at Edenfield Avenue; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule IV of the Traffic Rules and Orders isolated stop signs on Edenfield Avenue for north and southbound traffic at Bemis Street; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter Westminster Avenue at Bemis Street in a southerly direction from 7:30AM-4:00PM when school is in session, except residents; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter Bemis Street from Waverley Avenue in a westerly direction from 9:00AM-2:00PM when school is in session, except residents; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- e. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Westminster Avenue, east side from a point 40' south of the crosswalk at Bemis Street to a point 20' south of the crosswalk at Bemis Street, No Parking Police Vehicles Only When School is in Session; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, No Parking Bemis Street, south side from a point 40' west of the crosswalk at Waverley Avenue to a point 20' west of the crosswalk at Waverley Avenue, No Parking Police Vehicles Only When School is in Session; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- g. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, No Parking Westminster Avenue, east side from a point 450' south of Bemis Street to a point 219' south of Bemis Street, No Parking Bus Stop from 8:00AM-3:30PM When School is in Session; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- h. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter Linden Street from Waverley Avenue in a westerly direction from 7:30AM-4:00PM when school is in session, except residents; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- i. Mr. Airasian made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, No Parking Bemis Street, south side from a point 20' west of the Moxley Field entrance to a point 20' east of the Moxley Field entrance, No Parking; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- j. Mr. Airasian made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, No Parking Westminster Avenue, east side from a point 20' south of the Moxley Field entrance to a point 20' north of the Moxley Field entrance, No Parking; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5 – The Commission received a presentation by Dr. Deanne Galdston, Superintendent of Schools regarding traffic changes to support the newly renovated James Russell Lowell Elementary School. As part of the project, the intersection of George Street at Fuller Road was redesigned. Dr. Galdston reported that the school, which is scheduled to reopen in October, 2023 will have two main entrance points. Kindergarten to grade 3 will now enter the building using the George Street doors. Students in grades 4 & 5 will continue to use the Lowell Avenue doors. To accomplish this safely, Dr. Galdston requested a drop-off/pick-up area on George Street in addition to the original location on Lowell Avenue. The goal is to have traffic approach the school from north to south.

Fuller Road resident Michael Glenn had concerns about the proposed parking restrictions at the redesigned intersection of George Street at Fuller Road. Mr. Glenn felt that on-street parking is already tight in this area, and that the length of the proposed No Parking restrictions were too long and unnecessary. He asked the Commission to deny items F, H, I, and J on the agenda.

Sgt. Sampson explained to Mr. Glenn that the parking restrictions were not to support the school; they were proposed in order to accommodate fire apparatus and trash collection vehicle turning movements at

the intersection. Sgt. Sampson noted that just prior to the meeting, he spoke with another resident and explained the same issue to her.

Sgt. Sampson reported that he, former City Engineer Mr. Shuman, and Engineer Mr. Glode met with Dr. Galdston and Lowell School Principal Stacy Phelan on-site at the Lowell School and assessed the proposed traffic pattern and parking restrictions. The proposed parking restrictions were based on engineering judgments, and devised to maximize safety.

- a. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter Lowell Avenue from Carroll Street in an easterly direction from 7:30AM-3:30PM when school is in session except residents and school staff; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. Mr. Airasian made a motion to add to Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter George Street at Lowell Avenue in a northerly direction from 7:30AM-3:30PM when school is in session except residents and school staff; Mr. Magoon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter George Street from Fuller Road in a westerly direction from 7:30AM-3:30PM when school is in session; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. Mr. Airasian made a motion to add to Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter George Street from Orchard Street in a northerly direction from 7:30AM-3:30PM when school is in session except residents; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- e. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Lowell Avenue, south side from York Avenue to George Street, No Parking; Mr. Magoon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, George Street, east side from a point 30' south of Fuller Road to a point 20' north of Fuller Road, No Parking; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- g. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, George Street, west side from a point 77' south of Lowell Avenue to a point 20' north of Lowell Avenue, No Parking; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- h. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Fuller Road, west side from a point 66' south of George Street to George Street, No Parking; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- i. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Walcott Road, south side from Fuller Road to a point 59' east of Fuller Road, No Parking; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- j. Mr. Airasian made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Walcott Road, north side from a point 50' east of Fuller Road to Fuller Road, No Parking; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- k. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add No Parking Here to Corner signage on York Avenue, both sides from Lowell Avenue to a point 20' north of Lowell Avenue; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- l. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, George Street, west side from a point 77' south of Lowell Avenue to a point 177' south of Lowell Avenue, No Parking Drop-Off and Pick-Up Only 8:00-8:30AM & 2:15-2:45PM When School is in Session; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- m. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter Carlton Terrace from Carroll Street in an easterly direction from 7:30AM-3:30PM when school is in session except residents; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 6 – The Commission received a presentation by Mr. Wayne Amico of VHB on behalf of their clients, The Davis Companies and Boston Development Group, regarding proposed roadway and intersection improvements associated with the 66 Galen Street project.

Mr. Amico explained that the traffic plans have been reviewed by various City departments and the development team has received approval from the City Council for a new private way (Technology Way) adjacent to their project. Technology Way will be accessible via a highway easement. The traffic improvement proposal included a new traffic signal at Aldrich Road, bus lanes, road striping, and isolated stop signs.

Mr. Magoon noted that relocation of the MBTA bus yard driveways onto Lower Water Street will be a big improvement to the area.

- a. Mr. Airasian made a motion to restrict parking on the east side of Galen Street from a point 290' south of Technology Way to Nonantum Road; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule IV, Isolated Stop Signs Water Street (Lower) for east and westbound traffic at Technology Way; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule IV, Isolated Stop Signs, Technology Way for northbound traffic at Water Street (Lower); Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule VIII, Must Turn Right or Left, Technology Way (Left Lane) in the west direction from Technology Way to Galen Street, Left Turn Only; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- e. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule VIII, Must Turn Right or Left, Technology Way (Right Lane) in the west direction from Technology Way to Galen Street, Buses and Bikes Left and Right Turn Only; Mr. Magoon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. Mr. Airasian made a motion to add to Schedule VIII, Must Turn Right or Left, Aldrich Road in the east direction from Aldrich Road to Galen Street, Left and Right Turn Only; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- g. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule VIII, Must Turn Right or Left, Galen Street in the north direction from a point 290' south of Technology Way to Technology Way, Right Lane for Buses Bikes and Right Turns Only; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- h. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule VIII, Must Turn Right or Left, Galen Street in the north direction from Technology Way to Water Street (Lower), Right Lane for Buses and Bikes Only; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- i. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule XI of the Traffic Rules and Orders, Bus Lanes, Galen Street, east side from a point 290' south of Technology Way to Technology Way; Right Lane for Buses, Bikes, and Right Turns Only; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- j. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule XI of the Traffic Rules and Orders, Bus Lanes, Galen Street, east side from Technology Way to Water Street (Lower); Right Lane for Buses and Bikes Only; Mr. Magoon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- k. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to the Watertown Street Directory within the Traffic Rules and Orders, Private Ways, Technology Way, from Galen Street to Water Street (Lower); Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 7 – The Commission received an informational presentation by Mr. Ted O'Hagan of Vanasse & Associates, Inc. on behalf of their client, The Davis Companies regarding a proposed traffic signal at the intersection of Galen Street at Aldrich Road and New Water Street, and the Watertown Square Adaptive Signal Control Technology (ASCT) System associated with the 66 Galen Street Project.

Mr. O'Hagan explained that in addition to the new signal on Galen Street at Aldrich Road/Technology Way, a new adaptive signal control technology (ASCT) system will be installed throughout Watertown

Square. This system uses sensors to monitor traffic, and traffic queues. The system can make real time adjustments to optimize traffic signal timing. The intersections included in this project include:

- a. Galen Street at Aldrich Road/Technology Way – This signal will include an exclusive pedestrian phase for Galen Street crossings, and concurrent phases for Aldrich Road and Technology Way crossings. The signal is expected to operate at a level of service B in the mornings and a level of service A in the afternoons.
- b. Galen Street at Nonantum Road – This signal will have camera upgrades and a new signal head which includes a new flashing yellow lens feature.
- c. Watertown Street at California Street – This signal will have detection upgrades.
- d. Main Street at Pleasant Street
- e. Main Street at Church Street – Video detection will be replaced at this intersection.
- f. North Beacon Street at Watertown Square – Watertown Square will have a new detection system and 360 degree video detection which is more reliable than former in-ground loop technology.

Mr. O'Hagan noted that as the system collects more data, it becomes more effective. Mr. O'Hagan responded to Chief Rocca's question regarding system redundancy. When the system is installed, there is a coordinated system as a baseline. If something fails, the system reverts to the acceptable baseline program. Chief Rocca then inquired how the system would respond when two or more intersections call for more green time. Mr. O'Hagan noted that the system looks at overall efficiency. Mr. O'Hagan responded to Chief Nicholson's question, confirming that the signals will include an Opticom system for the fire department.

The Watertown Square ASCT system is part of a larger project that will incorporate Arsenal Street.

New Business

No new business was brought before the Commission.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

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