



Thomas F. Rocca
Chief of Police

CITY OF WATERTOWN

TRAFFIC COMMISSION



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

October 5, 2023

September 27, 2023 Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

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

Traffic Commission members addressed the following items:

Item 1 – Mr. Magoon made a motion to approve the June 28, 2023 Traffic Commission meeting minutes; Chief Nicholson 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 post No Parking Here to Corner signage on Hillside Road 20 feet north and south of Hillcrest Circle. Mr. Moscaritolo did not attend the meeting. Sgt. Sampson reminded the Commission that Mr. Moscaritolo attended the June, 2023 meeting with other requests regarding Hillcrest Circle. During his presentation Mr. Moscaritolo added the request to post No Parking Here to Corner signage on Hillside Road on both sides of Hillcrest Circle. The Commission noted that this new request would be addressed at the September, 2023 meeting.

Sgt. Sampson and Traffic Officer David Cobe assessed the intersection of Hillside Road at Hillcrest Circle. Due to the wide radius of the intersection, posting signage 20' south of Hillcrest Circle would provide no line-of-sight improvement for vehicles exiting Hillcrest Circle. The granite curbing used to define the intersection terminates at a point 36' south of Hillcrest Circle. Sgt. Sampson believed that restricting parking within 36' of the intersection with Hillcrest Circle would provide better lines of sight. To the north of Hillcrest Circle, the radius of the intersection is smaller – Sgt. Sampson felt that posting a No Parking Here to Corner sign at 20' north of Hillcrest Circle would provide sufficient lines of sight and preserve a parking space in front of 129 Hillside Road.

Mr. St. Louis agreed with Sgt. Sampson's assessment of the area.

Mr. Airasian agreed and noted that the south side of the intersection is more critical and could use a longer parking restriction.

Chief Rocca also agreed and noted that vehicles traveling northbound are going downhill and posting a sign 20' to the north should be sufficient.

Ms. Gallagher noted the benefit of maintaining the parking space to the north of Hillcrest Circle.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Hillside Road, east side from a point 36' south of Hillcrest Circle to Hillcrest Circle, No Parking. Also, to post No Parking Here to Corner signage on the east side of Hillside Road, 20' north of Hillcrest Circle. Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3 – The Commission reviewed a request by Tess Baker and Archy LaSalle of Hillcrest Circle to restrict parking on both sides of Hillcrest Circle for a distance of two car lengths from Hillside Road.

Ms. Baker reported that there have been long-standing access issues because there is only one way in and out of Hillcrest Circle. Ms. Baker described Hillcrest Circle as a tight knit neighborhood with many toddlers. She was also concerned about the ability of emergency vehicles to access the homes. In June 2023, the neighborhood requested a No Parking restriction on both sides of Hillcrest Circle for the distance of two car lengths; the Traffic Commission voted to post No Parking Here to Corner signage 20' from the crosswalk. Although motorists abide by the new signs, access for recycling trucks, etc. did not improve.

District A Councilor Nicole Gardner noted that she attended a recent block party on Hillcrest Circle; the residents that she spoke to supported parking restrictions to improve access to the street.

Sgt. Sampson reported that he and Officer Cobe assessed the area. After measuring multiple sections at the start of Hillcrest Circle, it was determined that extending the parking restriction on both sides of the street for an additional 20' would not improve emergency access. The roadway does not begin to sufficiently widen to allow 2-sided parking until the residence at 12-14 Hillcrest Circle. Sgt. Sampson suggested maintaining the current No Parking to Corner signage on the south side of Hillcrest Circle. On the north side of the street, parking could be restricted from Hillside Road to 12-14 Hillcrest Circle. [NOTE: Sgt. Sampson incorrectly referenced the driveway to the west of 12-14 Hillcrest as belonging to 12-14 Hillcrest Circle. The driveway actually belongs to 8-10 Hillcrest Circle. If approved, the first available public parking space on the north side would be in front of 12-14 Hillcrest Circle.]

Mr. Magoon inquired about the logic of allowing parking on the south side as opposed to the north side. Sgt. Sampson reported that allowing parking on the south side would preserve more available parking, and by keeping the outside of the curve open, emergency vehicles would be afforded more space for turning movements.

Mr. Airasian made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Hillcrest Circle, north side from Hillside Road to a point 116' east of Hillside Road (to the driveway of 8-10 Hillcrest Circle); Mr. St. Louis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Yekta Zahed of the Iranian Association of Boston to restrict two parking spaces on the north side of Nichols Avenue in front of 17 Nichols Avenue to Handicap Only Parking. Former IAB president Ms. Soheila Shafai represented the Iranian Association of Boston at the meeting. Ms. Shafai explained that the building is used primarily as a cultural and educational center with the intent to bring the community together. Many more seniors now attend functions at the IAB and the addition of Handicap Only spaces would better accommodate access to the building. Ms. Shafai also noted that other entities on the street could benefit from these spaces.

Sgt. Sampson noted that the spaces in front of the IAB are metered spaces.

Mr. St. Louis noted that the Department of Public Works identified the Nichols Avenue area as a potential location for vehicle charging stations. If the plan moves forward, the DPW will also create one or two Handicap Only spaces as well. The time frame for this project has not been determined.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to restrict one space to the left and one in front of the center as HP Only spaces. This motion was not seconded.

Mr. Glode reported that there may be an option to provide temporary signs in front of the IAB while the DPW project is developed.

Chief Rocca asked whether the Commission could consider one space now and then determine the need for a second space. Mr. Magoon agreed that the Commission could create one space now and then create additional capacity when the DPW completes their project.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to restrict one parking space in front of 17 Nichols Avenue (closest to the driveway) to Handicap Only Parking; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Ellen Isenstein of Williams Street to allow parking on the north side of Williams Street adjacent to 10 Williams Street. Ms. Isenstein reported that additional No Parking signs were installed on the street. Although there were always signs scattered up and down the street, there seemed to have been confusion about where people could and could not park. The parking lot of 10 Williams Street is under repair and people have been scrambling to find parking. In addition, healthcare workers, cleaning personnel, etc. need parking near the building. Ms. Isenstein believed that the roadway was wide enough to accommodate one-side only parking. She suggested that perhaps some No Parking areas could be replaced with one-hour parking.

Sgt. Sampson provided some background information; it appears that the current Williams Street parking regulations date back to 1972. Although Sgt. Sampson could not find Select Board minutes to fully understand the reasoning behind the regulation, he noted that the high-rise building was built in 1973. Sgt. Sampson believed that the restriction may be related to fire department emergency access because larger vehicles cannot access the parking deck of 10 Williams Street.

Chief Nicholson reported that the roadway is narrow, and the issue is the lack of access to all sides of the building. Because the fire apparatus cannot access the parking deck, ladder truck access is limited. Chief Nicholson stated that it is imperative to be able to have a clear area to set the ladder truck's jacks and extend its ladders. There have been no changes to the area since the building was built and access is still an issue. Because of these facts, Chief Nicholson supports leaving the parking restrictions in place.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to deny the request for parking on the north side of Williams Street adjacent to 10 Williams Street; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion to deny passed unanimously.

Item 6 – The Commission received a presentation by Mr. Drew Talcoff of Vanasse & Associates, Inc. on behalf of their client, Nordblom Company regarding proposed off-site traffic safety improvements associated with the redevelopment of the former Sterritt Lumber Yard at 148 Waltham Street. Mr. Talcoff reported that there are four main traffic improvements that will be completed as part of the off-site plans.

- Speed humps – Two speed humps will be installed on both Edward Road and Rutland Street. One speed hump will be installed on Evans Street; this speed hump will be in addition to the current raised intersection near Bemis Park. All speed humps will be installed in areas that will not negatively affect drainage and driveways.
- Speed Feedback Signage – Permanent speed feedback signs will be installed on Waltham Street; one sign for westbound traffic will be installed near Falmouth Road, and one sign will be installed west of Stanley Avenue for eastbound traffic.
- Pedestrian Crossing on Main Street – Crossing improvements will be made to the existing crosswalk spanning Main Street between Evans and Essex Streets. Improvements include the

installation of rectangular rapid flashing beacons, restriping of the crosswalk, rebuilding of curb ramps, and the removal of the grass strips to provide 8' sidewalks.

- Signage - MBTA bus stop signage will be replaced with new signs and advance warning signage will be installed. The improvements to Main Street have been reviewed and approved by MassDOT.

New Business

- a. Sgt. Sampson reported that he received notice from Ms. Peg Doherty of 15 Thurston Road that as of October 27, 2023 the HP Only parking space in front of the residence will no longer be needed. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to remove the HP Only space in front of 15 Thurston Road as of October 27th; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion.
- b. Sgt. Sampson reported that the WPS Central Office and High School administration are concerned about student safety on Main Street near Westminster and Edenfield Avenues. The school has an open campus policy for upperclassmen; this leads to many students crossing Main Street to go to Dunkin' Donuts. Although the Schools encourage students to cross at the signalized intersection at Lexington Street, students cross Main Street mid-block without the aid of a crosswalk. The Schools would like the area assessed to determine whether a crosswalk could be installed west of Westminster Avenue, prior to Lexington Street. Sgt. Sampson cautioned the Schools that due to the multiple business driveways in this area the curbs do not align on each side of the street. In the one or two areas where curbs align, there appear to be utilities on the sidewalk that would prohibit ADA accessibility to a crosswalk.

Mr. Magoon reported that the City is still investigating a potential crosswalk for the Community Path which would be slightly east of the area. This would provide another location for the Schools to direct students to cross Main Street. Unless there were more analysis and engineering design work done, he would not be comfortable approving a crosswalk in this area.

Chief Rocca felt that it would be premature to approve a crosswalk in this area without some assessment by the City Engineer.

- c. Mr. St. Louis reported that the Mount Auburn Street project successfully went out to bid on 9/10 MassDOT awarding the contract this fall or early winter.
- d. Mr. Magoon introduced the City's new Transportation Planner Mr. Zeke Mermell. Mr. Magoon is happy to have the new planner on board.

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