



Thomas F. Rocca
Chief of Police

CITY OF WATERTOWN

TRAFFIC COMMISSION



David Sampson
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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

November 8, 2023

October 25, 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 – Ms. Gallagher made a motion to approve the September 27, 2023 Traffic Commission meeting minutes; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 – The Commission reviewed a request by Hosmer Elementary School Principal Ms. Erin Moulton and Assistant Principal Ms. MaryKate Fitzpatrick to modify the traffic rules in the vicinity of the school to reflect current drop-off, pick-up, and bus operations at the school.

Ms. Fitzpatrick provided a brief history of the temporary traffic patterns that were created during construction of the school, and the various times that the school approached the Traffic Commission to request temporary regulatory changes. In September 2022 the school administration worked with the police and fire departments to assess the traffic patterns in the neighborhood and the use of the school's parking lot. On October 11, 2023 the School distributed flyers to the neighborhood to raise awareness of this Traffic Commission meeting.

Ms. Fitzpatrick reported that the school serves 730 students and has two Drop-and-Go areas (Hancock Street and Concord Road). During drop-offs and pick-ups, many parents congregate in the school's parking lot. She further noted that the parking lot was never intended to be a cut-through to Concord Road; it was intended to be a driveway. The school is currently planning the installation of a gate in the parking lot, closest to Concord Road.

Ms. Moulton noted that the school's intent is to align the area traffic signage with the School's current practices. Requested changes to the area include:

- Removing the drop-off/pick-up area on Winthrop Street and returning this area to public parking
- Providing No Parking signs within 20' of the crosswalks at the intersection of Winthrop and Hancock Streets
- Providing signage for drop-off/pick-up and bus area on Hancock Street
- Removing the Do Not Enter signage on Winthrop Street at Mt. Auburn Street that was placed there during construction.
- Removing the bus stop area originally designated for Chauncey Street and returning this area to public parking.

- Removing the HP Only parking spaces on Hancock Street because the HP Only parking spaces are now located in the new parking lot.

Sgt. Sampson reported that he has spent a significant amount of time in the area and has had the opportunity to meet and speak with many of the neighbors on Winthrop and Hancock Streets. Sgt. Sampson has also worked closely with the school to assess the traffic situation and try to determine the safest operations of the school. The high number of students and families that access this area in a very short period of time creates a significant challenge.

Chief Rocca read an email that he received from Rebekah Zincavage who would like No Idling signs posted on the streets surrounding the Hosmer School. Chief Rocca then opened traffic pattern discussion for public comment.

Mrs. Annmarie Cloonan of 14/16 Winthrop Street described the numerous traffic violations by parents during drop-off/pick-up times and the difficulty that residents have trying to access and exit their driveways. Ms. Cloonan reported that Winthrop Street was historically blocked from school related traffic during the daytime, and that the neighborhood supported giving up green space for a parking lot. At O'Connell Park, two walkways were provided from Mt. Auburn Street to the School. Ms. Cloonan noted that the buses should use the parking lot provided and asked the Traffic Commission to not make any decisions regarding the buses in the parking lot.

Mr. Jack Dargon of 46/48 Hancock Street did not feel that the school supports the safety of the students. Mr. Dargon also had an issue with the busses not using the parking lot. Mr. Dargon felt that the school was designed by experts and if there is a problem, the plans should be returned to the experts to fix the issue.

Ms. Maureen Foley of 10 Winthrop Street expressed her frustrations with the past several years of development and felt that the past meetings about the school may have been a waste of time.

Mr. Fred Cloonan reported that the buses have never tried to use the extension of Winthrop Street, and the school has used cones to block the area. Historically, Winthrop Street has been a Do Not Enter area during the school year. Parents are supposed to park on Mt. Auburn Street and walk their children to the school building.

District A Councilor Nicole Gardner asked the Commission to table this matter.

Mr. Airasian noted that the neighborhood's main concerns seem to be centered on the parking area between Winthrop Street and Concord Road. The signage requests before the Commission appeared straightforward.

Chief Nicholson agreed and felt that any issues relating to the parking lot and gate could be addressed at a later date.

Mr. Magoon inquired and was informed that of the 730 students, approximately 104 students arrived by bus, and approximately 25 students arrived by specialized transport vans; the remaining students and families walk or drive to school.

Chief Rocca felt that the Commission's task this evening was to codify the signage. Chief Rocca elected to move forward with the requests.

- a. Mr. Magoon made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Winthrop Street, both sides from a point 44' north of Hancock Street to Hancock Street, No Parking, and Hancock Street, both sides

from a point 35' east of Winthrop Street to Winthrop Street, No Parking; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Ms. Gallagher made a motion to add to Schedule I, Parking, Hancock Street, south side, from a point 35' east of Winthrop Street to Chauncey Street, No Parking from 7:45 am – 2:45 pm When School is in Session; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. Mr. Airasian made a motion to remove from Schedule I, Parking, Winthrop Street, west side from a point 141' north of Hancock Street to Hancock Street, No Parking 8:00-8:30 am, and 2:15-2:45 pm When School is in Session; Ms. Gallagher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. Mr. Magoon made a motion to remove from Schedule I, Parking, Chauncey Street, west side from Hancock Street to a point 82' south of Hancock Street, No Parking 7:30 am – 3:30 pm Except Buses When School is in Session; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- e. Mr. Magoon made a motion to remove from Schedule I, Parking, Hancock Street, south side from Winthrop Street to a point 75' east of Winthrop Street, Handicap Only Parking; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. Chief Nicholson made a motion to table the request to remove from Article VII, Section 26, Do Not Enter, Winthrop Street, from Mt. Auburn Street in a southerly direction, Buses, Staff, and Residents only between 7:30 am and 3:30 pm when school is in session; Mr. Magoon seconded the motion. The motion passed with Chief Rocca opposed.
- g. Chief Nicholson made a motion to remove No Parking 7:00-9:00 am sign at #56 Hancock Street; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Cheryl Rohlicek of Standish Road to install a crosswalk on Common Street at Bellevue Road spanning Common Street and install rectangular rapid flashing beacons at this location.

Sgt. Sampson reported that in 2015 a similar request for a crosswalk was made to the City. At that time, the City's traffic engineering consultant performed a cursory examination of the area and did not support a crosswalk at this location. The report further noted, "should the City determine that existing pedestrian demand warrants a marked crosswalk across Common Street, a full traffic study should be conducted".

Mr. Magoon reported that the initial analysis raised significant concerns. Mr. Magoon would not support a crosswalk at this location unless something says that the area is safe.

Chief Rocca noted that in light of the requests received, he would like to ask the DPW to have the intersection studied.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to have the DPW arrange for a traffic study of Common Street at Bellevue Road for the feasibility of a crosswalk across Common Street; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Paula Farina Pollis of Farina's at 61 Galen Street for enhanced No Parking signage on Galen Street in front of the business. Ms. Pollis reported that the company's three parking spaces on Galen Street are frequently blocked by motorists. Ms. Pollis and other members of Farina's frequently ask people to move their vehicles. Ms. Pollis believes that the problem is caused by factors including the lack of signage, food delivery services, and confusion due to the roadway lines in front of the business. Ms. Pollis requested signage to prevent people from parking in this area.

Mr. Magoon noted that parking is allowed in the area just before the Farina driveway, and that there is a bump out just before Aldrich Road. He believes people may assume that they are allowed to park in front of the business. He suggested possibly installing cross-hatch roadway striping in front of the business.

Chief Rocca believed that the existing road striping and signage creates an inherent confusion in this area and suggested adding an additional No Parking Here to Corner sign prior to the driveway.

Ms. Gallagher suggested that perhaps the business could also add a Do Not Block the Driveway sign on their property.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to work with the DPW and City Engineer to make it clear using signage and/or road striping that there is no parking from the start of the Farina's driveway to Aldrich Road; Mr. Airasian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

- a. Mr. Magoon addressed the traffic regulations around the Hosmer School. Some audience members wanted the issues to be addressed by the City Council. Mr. Magoon clarified that these issues fall within the role of the Traffic Commission and not the Town Council.

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

Meeting adjourned.

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