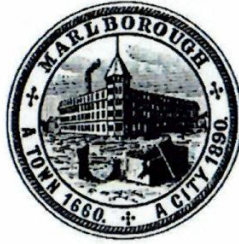


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September 27, 2023
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**CITY OF MARLBOROUGH
OFFICE OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION
140 MAIN STREET
MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS 01752**

Traffic Commission Minutes

The Regular Meeting of the Traffic Commission was held on September 27, 2023, at 10:00 am. (The meeting was also recorded and is available to view online at the City of Marlborough's website www.marlbrough-ma.gov). Members present: Chairman - Police Chief David Giorgi, Fire Chief Kevin Breen, Interim DPW Commissioner Ted Scott (not present at start of meeting) and City Clerk Steve Kerrigan. Also present: City Engineer Tom DiPersio, Assistant Civil Engineer Ashley Miller, Officer Andrew Larose from the MPD Traffic Services Unit, Code Enforcement Officer Pam Wilderman, City Councilor Christian Dumais, City Councilor Kathleen Robey, and residents from the Church Street area: Rob Veneziano, Bill Downey, Jodi Trombetta, Bill Burke, Paul Gauch (Spelling ??), Barbara Sharkey, William Judy, Gil Boaventura and Phil Burton. Also present: resident from Rice Street Nelson Rivas.

Minutes taken by Karen Lambert, MPD - Public Safety Administrative Assistant. (Note: Not present at meeting – minutes taken from recorded meeting.)

Chief Giorgi started recording the meeting at 10:00 a.m. and began by welcoming everyone and making introductions.

1- Minutes

Review of the minutes of the Traffic Commission meeting of July 26, 2023.

VOTE TO APPROVE. All in Favor - Accept and Place on File.

2 - New Business

2a) Crescent Street Parking Issues

Chief Giorgi received an email from local resident David Kirkpatrick on this issue. Crescent Street is currently under reconstruction. He included a diagram showing the

houses and parking situation. All of the homes and the apartment complex have parking on their property, however, many residents park on the street. One of his main complaints was about vehicles parked on the sidewalks, especially delivery vans and heavy trucks that have been a big factor in cracking the sidewalk pavement over the years. Parking is allowed on both sides of the street. One side has sidewalks. It's only a minor issue when cars park on the side without the sidewalks. Parking on the sidewalk side is the main problem as it restricts travel on the street. He is requesting that parking only be allowed on one side, the side without the sidewalks. He also said that there are many young children in the area. When cars are parked on the sidewalk side, they block the view of the children, who occasionally go into the street after a basketball or soccer ball. He also mentioned the speed on Crescent St., especially from the top of the hill down to Rte. 20, usually late afternoon to 7:00 pm. He also said he would like to see "a standard type sidewalk with regular height and stone facing" installed.

Tom DiPersio advised that they are reconstructing the sidewalk but not using granite curbing as it is difficult to get right now. They are using a more consistent 6 inch reveal now that may discourage parking on the sidewalk. The old sidewalks were lower. Engineering has not had a chance to review a possible parking restriction here, but can take measurements and report their findings back at the next meeting.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to ENGINEERING to look into the roadway width and feasibility of restricting parking to one side.

2b) Continued Speed Concerns on Church Street

Rob Veneziano sent a follow up email to Chief Giorgi. Chief Giorgi briefly reviewed the discussion from the meeting in July where Officer Larose went over the Extended Speed Summary reports from the electronic speed signs. It was concluded that a permanent electronic speed sign would be installed on Church Street. It took a while, but eventually a grant was available with funding to purchase the new electronic sign. It was placed SB on Church Street at Warren Avenue and has been there for six months.

Mr. Veneziano thanked the Chief for the new speed limit signs and the permanent electronic speed sign; however, he feels that very little has changed with regard to speed. Several other residents of the Church Street area were also in attendance. He reviewed that he had 200+ signatures from neighborhood residents with speed concerns at the initial meeting, some of whom have lived in the area for over 20 years. The number of cars and speed has all been increasing. More and more traffic uses GPS and he expressed concern that this will only get worse as the downtown area is more and more developed. The two new speed limit signs and the permanent electronic sign do not appear to be doing much good. It is the "outliers", those outside the 85th percentile, that are the problem. He was questioning the placement of the electronic signs at the top of the hill on Church Street at Greenwood St. Not a lot of speed is picked up here at the top of the hill. The other was placed near the curve where people naturally slow down. He is questioning if the results of the speed reports are a true indication of speed. He said that some residents are purposely parking their cars in the street in staged areas to slow traffic. Those cars could get damaged, and this has happened in the past. Another car has been egged. He is requesting that speed tables be installed on Church Street. He knows that other cities and towns are using them, and they are working. They don't seem to have any issue with plows, which he knows was a concern for the City. He mentioned that

Boston is set to put in about 150 speed tables. He said that Cambridge and Somerville are using them, and that speed has been cut by 50%. He mentioned a "Vision 1 Plan" for streets that a lot of cities use but he wasn't sure if Marlborough was part of this and suggested that the new mayor can look into these funding programs. They also had an issue with fire trucks speeding back to the station. Word was passed to the Fire Chief and this issue seems to be much better.

Several residents of the Church Street area were in attendance and voiced their concerns:

Bill Downey – Now that school is in session, Church Street is one of the busiest bus travel routes in the city. There is a bus stop at almost every intersection with large numbers of parents driving to pick children up. There is a bus stop right outside of his house. Last year he watched a driver back up and drive around the school bus while children were getting off and the bus had its lights flashing and stop sign out. Something more needs to be done about speed. The current situation is an accident waiting to happen.

Jodi Trombetta – She walks her dog in this area all the time and uses the crosswalk at Shawmut Street and Church Street. Cars come flying around the corner and it is very dangerous. She can't even tell how many times she has almost been hit. She often sees people on their phones and it's getting darker earlier.

Bill Burke – He lives on lower Church Street and has owned the property for 40+ years. He moved away for a time but has now been back for 18 years. The neighborhood has changed over the years and many young families are moving in now. Between the HS, Middle School and Elementary School, there are 35 to 40 kids that get on the bus in front of his house. It's also very busy during the week from 4:30 to 7:30pm and Saturday and Sunday afternoon until 7:00 pm with people coming up from Rte. 20. It's the same down to Hildreth Street, no one is going 25 mph, it's more like 40 mph. It's very noticeable when he is sitting on his front porch. This will only get worse with all the new development in the city.

Paul Gauch (?? On Spelling)– The data from the speed signs are nowhere near where he lives on Church Street. The permanent sign at Warren Avenue shows an average speed of 18.59. He said that no one goes 18 mph unless they are on a bike. He has the 25-mph speed limit sign right outside of his house and cars come down from Essex Street and fly by his house. He would never put his car out in the street because it would get hit. In England, where he grew up, they have speed tables. He mentioned a family near the sandwich shop that moved away because of all these issues.

Mr. Veneziano said that the Chief has mentioned speeding all over the city, but he wants to know what we are supposed to do about it. How do we combat this? He's heard feedback about Farm Road and said the electronic speed signs aren't working over there either. He thinks that speed tables could be used in other areas of the city as well. They are a known effective way to slow traffic.

Barbara Sharkey – She asked what data was used to install the new permanent sign? Of all the places it could have gone, why did the PD put it there? There needs to be consequences for speeding on Church Street. They need to see a police presence on

Church Street while they are waiting for speed tables. There are near misses all the time. Waze sends more and more people this way.

Bill Judy – He is a relatively new resident to the neighborhood but wanted to express the same concerns. Cars fly up the hill and around the turn at the Downey's residence. The visibility is very poor, there are lots of children, cars are parked on the road, and it is just a very dangerous spot.

Gil Boaventura – He has lived on Greenwood Street for 20 years. He asked, "What if this was your street? What would you do?" Action needs to be taken. He has put his car in the spot where he would like to see people slow down and it has gotten egged. He saw an accident at Greenwood Street and Church Street, where only 30 minutes before, 20 kids were waiting for the school bus. He also saw a police officer get hit. We need to come together as a community to set an example of how to fix this. He suggested speed bumps a couple of years ago and was told it would never happen.

Chief Giorgi advised that the electronic speed signs were put back out but moved to a different spot. Officer Larose pulled up a map with red dots indicating all the locations where the speed signs have been placed and there have been many different locations over time. It's been near Greendale Ave. 6 times. He said that the permanent sign was placed in its current location because that is the area where he received the most complaints. He advised that it can still be moved. The portable sign was just out at Church Street & Essex Street NB for 13 days, 9/7/23 to 9/19/23, heading toward the crest of the hill. It was at Church Street and Greenwood Street SB from 9/19/23 to 9/24/23 from It shows the average speed and volume and also breaks down the maximum speed per hour. He also had a spreadsheet showing dates, locations, days on scene, average speed, 85th percentile, max speeds and volume over 100+ days. He also sent an email to the Chief outlining average speed, 85th percentile and volume over several years. He noted that average speed and 85th % have dropped even with the volume doubling. The most recent data shows an average volume per day of 519 cars per day on the NB side and 548 cars per day on the SB side. Officer Larose reviewed some of the numbers on his spreadsheet. The last 6 days, NB near Greenwood, the max speed was 40 mph, and the average speed was 21 mph. See spreadsheet attached.

Chief Giorgi said that we also see other areas in the city that are used as a cut through. Mr. Veneziano said again that speed and volume are due to the repaving of Church Street, GPS and the fact that it's a known cut through. All agree that 4:00 to 7:00 pm is the busiest. Officer Larose agrees that it is the "outliers" that make enforcement difficult. Chief Giorgi said that this was the consensus at the last meeting. The big issue is volume, which has gone way up. An officer could sit there for 8 hours and maybe get 2 people speeding. Officer Larose has collected a large amount of data, on the SB side the speed of 366,379 cars has been recorded.

A resident said that in an area as densely populated as this, even 30 mph is too fast. Officer Larose explained again that the State determines the speed limit, and they use the 85th percentile to establish speeds. In the case of Church Street, 85% of cars are traveling the speed limit or less. Mr. Veneziano asked how this volume compares to other areas. They knew the #'s wouldn't say that everyone is going 50 but what if they were? What would the city do? Chief Giorgi said that the average speed has dropped even though the volume is higher, the speed is not increasing with volume. He sees this as a volume

problem and he assumes it is consistent with other streets, i.e., Stevens Street or South Street. He doesn't know how we can control volume. Another resident said that if we can control the speed maybe it won't be used as a short cut. The Chief said we've tried things in the past that just end up deferring traffic somewhere else. A volume problem is something we can't address.

Chief Giorgi also said that we try to get the speed signs out as quickly as we can, but they have to be out in the location for a while to collect accurate data. We have a waiting list of at least 5 streets looking for the signs and we are down to 3 at the moment as one was hit by a car and destroyed. The Church Street residents continue to be very concerned and feel that it is only a matter of time before a child is hurt. Chief Giorgi said that he has to look at the whole city. If we did something on Church Street, next comes Hemenway Street or South Street for example. Officer Larose asked the group where they would like to see the permanent sign installed. They would like to see it in the area of #25, SB, between Shawmut Ave, and Greendale Ave. There also needs to be a reasonable spot, on a pole, to put it. He will talk to the DPW and figure out the best location. He can put the other one at the bottom of the hill with the flashing #'s blacked out to get a more accurate reading. The DPW can also cut back trees/brush that is causing the visibility issue near the 25-mph speed limit sign.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to the POLICE DEPARTMENT for sign placement and continued enforcement and to ENGINEERING/DPW to cut back brush blocking visibility.

2c) Commercial Vehicle Parking Issues

Officer Larose sent an email to Chief Giorgi asking if this issue could be addressed. He said that the Mayor's Office, City Councilors, Code Enforcement and the Police Department have been receiving an increasing number of complaints about commercial motor vehicles parking on residential streets, especially overnight. He said that "our current ordinances do not regulate commercial vehicle parking in any meaningful way". Pam Wilderman has also been involved and was present for the discussion. Officer Larose found language from another community that was easy to understand and covered most issues. We need to come up with our own language that regulates commercial motor vehicle parking so that we have something that is enforceable.

Officer Larose said that this year there have been a lot more complaints. He just had one on Crestwood Lane that had been there for a few weeks. The only ordinance we have is regarding parking over 72 hours and the area being used as a storage location. He started to look at ECodes in other states to see how they handle commercial motor vehicle parking. We first need to determine what type of vehicle is considered a commercial motor vehicle, i.e., an F250 with business marking and commercial plates, a painter's van with ladders, a weight limit etc?

Pam Wilderman said that city code allows for 1 commercial vehicle, under a certain amount, to be parked in your driveway. She said that the problem is that contractors don't want to pay storage fees, so they bring everything home. If they are parking in their driveway and oversized, she can put it under the blight ordinance. She is responsible for enforcing all city code. If it is in the street, she can use ordinance #551, where you need to have 10 feet in both directions. She mentioned a situation at East

Main & Church Street where there are 2 huge Ryder trucks, someone comes each morning and leaves their own vehicle and takes the truck for the day. Since it is a rental vehicle, she can't determine where it comes from. There are just too many commercial vehicles in residential areas, and it is getting ridiculous. People are bringing their commercial vehicles home at night or running a business out of their house with several vehicles parked in the street. On Brimsmead Street there are landscaping vehicles at the top of the hill, and you can't see when someone is trying to pull out. Ms. Wilderman also brought up a situation on Vega Road where there is paving equipment on the road all the time. She has notified the property owner that he has illegally rented the property.

Chief Giorgi said that we need to draft something to deal with all these specific types of issues, something that "gives us some teeth". It was discussed that Traffic Regulations fall under City Code so they can be enforced by both the Police Department and Code Enforcement. Ms. Wilderman knows of communities near Boston where you can't take home any commercial vehicles to residential neighborhoods. She doesn't think we want to go that far.

Chief Breen has seen in other communities where he worked, that businesses would leave box trucks in the street with graphic signs for the business, which is essentially a sign in their driveway or street being used for advertisement. This had to be addressed as it just didn't look good.

There was a lot of discussion as to how we are going to define a commercial motor vehicle, i.e., is it by type of vehicle, capacity, weight limit, commercial plates etc. We also don't want to penalize someone in a 1-ton truck trying to make a living.

Phil Burton, the resident who made the complaint about commercial vehicles on Church Street was in attendance. He said that he can get the plate # of the vehicle that pulls up in the morning to get the truck. Ms. Wilderman said that would be very helpful. Mr. Burton asked if it would help to start talking about this as a safety issue rather than a parking issue. His neighbors can't even safely pull out of their driveway because of the trucks. They can't see what's coming and there was almost a very serious accident recently. The house with the trucks has a massive driveway that is a least 20 feet wide and maybe 20 yards in back. Pam Wilderman said that this house is actually for sale so that may solve this particular issue.

Chief Giorgi said that we need a regulation that the Police Department can also enforce as the police are out there all the time, not just something regulated by Code Enforcement. It also needs to be easy to enforce with very clear language. For example, someone might not know what a 2-ton truck looks like. Officer Larose often gets complaints but when he goes out to see the situation there is nothing he can do. It might take some work to get the best language figured out but, is definitely worth researching and implementing. The language that Officer Larose included in the agenda packet is a good starting point.

Councilor Robey noted another city ordinance, 551.18 – Obstruction of Public Ways, and asked if this was something that could be used. It says you can't obstruct the public way for more than 1 hour. Officer Larose said that this ordinance does not apply to motor vehicles. It is used for things like a dumpster. A court would say it doesn't apply because we have separate regulations for motor vehicles. Pam Wilderman said that she

uses this ordinance all the time for such things as mattresses left on the sidewalk. She sends 3-4 letters per week citing this ordinance because of things left on the sidewalk. Officer Larose would like something specific that he can print and hand to people clearly explaining the violation and consequence.

The discussion continued as to whether we should be creating a new city ordinance or a traffic regulation. Steve Kerrigan said he would think that a city ordinance would have more teeth than something established by the Traffic Commission. All seemed to agree with this.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to KEEP ON THE AGENDA for further discussion.

2d) Parking Issues on Rice Street

Nelson Rivas, resident of Short Street, sent a letter to the Police Department requesting No Parking signs at the corner of Short Street and Rice Street. Mr. Rivas was in attendance for the discussion. He has lived on Short Street for 32 years. The house at 55 Rice Street is a rental. There are 4 cars that park on Short Street, on both sides, right near the corner making it virtually impossible to fit an EMS or even a garbage truck. At night, this is a very tough corner. It's extremely difficult to make the turn with the cars parked here and it also makes it very tight for his own driveway. He included photos that were taken from his house that show the cars parked right up to the corner, even though there is a sign on the corner saying No Parking Anytime. He is requesting that this area be clearly marked as no parking on both sides.

Steve Kerrigan explained that there is already a city ordinance which prohibits parking within 20 feet on an intersection. Chief Giorgi suggested putting a sign on each side saying No Parking from Here to Corner, making it more visible. Mr. Rivas said there are too many people living at 55 Rice Street on the first floor. Pam Wilderman said that 55 Rice Street is a single-family home so why are there so many vehicles? Cars are parked on the side of the house at both 47 and 55 Rice Street so they are parked on Short Street.

Chief Giorgi said that we need to enforce the No Parking within 20 feet of an intersection before creating any new regulations. If cars are legally parked on Rice Street there is nothing that can be done but they are clearly parked within the 20 feet. If the 20 feet ordinance is enforced, it will at least open up both sides and clear the intersection. Chief Giorgi asked Mr. Rivas to call the station if he sees this happening. It doesn't matter if it is 10:00 or 11:00 pm and then we can send an officer down. The Chief said that he will let the evening and midnight supervisors know to check on this area and enforce the city ordinance. He again asked Mr. Riva to please call when this happening. If he doesn't call, we don't know.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to the POLICE DEPARTMENT to enforce the City Ordinance restricting parking within 20 feet of an intersection. Also refer to PAM WILDERMAN to speak to the residents about the cars.

3-Old Business

3a) Review of unwarranted stop sign locations.

Update: Chief Giorgi did notify the ward councilors about the stop signs that would be coming down on Beach Street and Clinton Street. One is on Beach Street at Clover Hill Street. Four are on Clinton Street at Auburn Street and Old Charter Road. He prepared the regulations to REPEAL these 5 stop signs and they were submitted for a vote.

- Repeal the stop sign on Beach Street @ Clover Hill Street. ALL IN FAVOR.
- Repeal the 4 stop signs on Clinton Street @ Auburn Street and Old Charter Road (North and South). ALL IN FAVOR.

Councilor Dumais asked when they would be coming down. He was advised that notifications still need to go out and warning signs need to be put up. Signs will also be placed on the stop signs. Councilor Robey asked about the crosswalk on Beach Street at the stop sign location. What happens when there is no longer a stop sign there. Engineering advised that it would be changed to a ladder style crosswalk that would make it more visible. Officer Larose pulled up a street view on the area for reference. This is where the flashing stop sign is, and this is the one that will be removed.

3b) Mt. Pleasant Street Traffic Concerns

Update: Chief Giorgi reviewed that the issue was whether or not to make a No Left Turn off of South Street between certain hours. At the last meeting we said we could add the DPW's traffic counter to get more data and that our speed sign would be moved further up the street. Officer Larose had data from the speed study. He said that the volume has increased since 2018 but not really the speed. In 2018, the average speed was 15 mph, the 85th percentile was under 18 mph and the volume was 155 vehicles per day. Now we are seeing an average of 220 vehicles per day. We were looking to do the same thing that was done at Stevens Street and State Street.

Councilor Dumais had asked that we look at the timing of the lights as a better option. He thinks that the majority of the traffic is using the cut through to get to Rte. 495. If the green arrow could be made longer more cars could make the turn. The majority of cars are going right or left onto East Main Street, not straight through the light. The turn from Mt. Pleasant Street onto East Main Street isn't easy either but at least its moving instead of sitting stopped at the light.

The concern is that we don't want to restrict traffic on West Main Street, if the timing is changed. Traffic is already backed up to Granger Blvd. at certain times. Officer Larose said that he thinks Councilor Dumais is just saying to extend the green arrow, not change the timing on East Main Street. All agreed this might actually be a better solution.

The issue was referred back to Engineering to take a look at the lights and see if changing the timing could help. This issue will remain on the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

The Chief asked if there were any additional questions or concerns.

There was one other resident of Church Street area still in attendance. She has lived there for six years, at the lower end near Shawmut Street, and she also wanted to express her concerns about the speed and all the children in the area and cars parked on both sides. She asked if we have seen increased speeding on Bigelow Street now that the stop signs are gone. Chief Giorgi explained the warrants that are required for stop signs and how Bigelow Street did not meet them, and they were not regulated or enforceable. There is not enough volume on the side streets off Church Street to warrant any additional stop signs.

That there being no further business of the Traffic Commission held on this date, the meeting adjourned at 11:37 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Lambert
Public Safety Administrative Assistant
Marlborough Police Department

List of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting:

- City of Marlborough Meeting Posting for the Traffic Commission Meeting on September 27, 2023, including meeting agenda.

- Draft of Traffic Commission Minutes from Wednesday, July 26, 2023.

- Email from David Kirkpatrick to Chief Giorgi, dated 8/31/23, re: Crescent Street Parking, including diagram.

- Email from Rob Veneziano to Chief Giorgi, dated 9/1/23, re: Church Street / speeding.

- Extended Speed Summary Report, Church Street @ Warren Ave, PERM, SB.

- Email from Officer Larose to Chief Giorgi, dated 9/5/23, re: Church Street.

- Email from Officer Larose to Chief Giorgi, dated 9/6/23, re: Commercial Vehicle Parking.

- Anonymous correspondence received by the PD on 9/21/23, re: Marlborough Parking Complaints.

- Correspondence from Nelson Rivas to the PD, received on 9/13/23, re: Parking issue on Rice Street, including diagram and photos.

- Copy of regulation to REPEAL the stop sign on Beach Street, SE, @ Clover Hill.

- Copy of regulation to REPEAL the stop signs on Clinton Street, NB & SB, at Auburn Street and Old Charter Road.

Additional Handouts or Displayed on Screen at Meeting

- Extended Speed Summary Report, Church St. @ Essex St., NB.

- Extended Speed Summary Report, Church St. @ Greenwood St., SB.

- Spreadsheet with Summary of speed sign locations and data collected on Church Street.