



**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 as a **virtual meeting** on Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 10:00 am. Members present: Chairman - Police Chief David Giorgi, DPW Commissioner John Ghiloni and City Clerk Steve Kerrigan. Also present: City Engineer Tom DiPersio, Assistant City Engineer Tim Collins, Assistant Commissioner of Operations Ted Scott, Officer Andy Larose from the MPD Traffic Services Unit, City Councilor Laura Wagner and City Councilor Katie Robey. Also present: local residents Jan and Keith Verricho.

Minutes taken by Karen Lambert, MPD Records Clerk.

John Burke from the IT Dept. started recording the meeting at 10:04 am. Chief Giorgi welcomed everyone and made introductions.

1- Minutes

The minutes of the Traffic Commission meeting of Wednesday, February 26, 2020.

Steve Kerrigan advised as to a typo on page 4, second to last paragraph, says "Bigelow" Street but should be "Brigham" Street.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED:

TO APPROVE as amended – All in Favor - Accept and Place on File.

2 - New Business –

2a) Public Safety Concerns – Wilson Street.

Chief Giorgi advised that this started with conversations he had with Councilor Wagner and emails going back and forth regarding speed concerns, lack of stop signs and the

request for speed bumps. Councilor Wagner also included several letters and emails from concerned residents in her email to the Chief. (Copies of which are attached.)

Chief Giorgi turned the meeting over to Councilor Wagner to present the concerns directly as relayed by her constituents. She began by explaining how a local resident advised that back in April of 2016 they had requested a stop sign at the corner of Hemenway before turning left onto Wilson Street in order to slow traffic. This request was denied, and repairs were done instead which included widening the intersection and installing a rumble strip. She said the rumble strip is even with the pavement and simply added a new problem of noise. The rumble strip has not solved the problem. Cars are not going around it but rather over it and it is very loud.

She said that speed alone is not actually the primary concern. The main concern is the danger to residents created when vehicles fail to negotiate the turn and the subsequent accidents that result especially for those who live on the west side of Wilson Street. She feels that the addition of speed monitoring equipment and assessing the number of vehicles does not address the main issue. The speed of one vehicle can cause a tragic accident. There are many elderly people from New Horizons that walk in the area and it is extremely dangerous. She said that there used to be a fire hydrant near the intersection that was hit six times and noted that the City finally gave up trying to fix it and removed it instead. She feels this is evidence of a flawed design and clearly sends a message that this is dangerous. She noted another serious accident on 4/6 where the Tivnan's property at 274 Wilson Street was damaged again.

She went on to discuss possible solutions that she would like to present. She said that adding a stop sign on Hemenway wouldn't help either. She doesn't think that drivers would honor it, therefore, making it ineffective. A more effective remedy would be to install several speed bumps at the end of Hemenway where it approaches Wilson Street which would force cars to slow down prior to negotiating the turn onto Wilson Street. She said that considering the lawsuits that would occur if there was a fatality here, the cost of speed bumps is a much cheaper option.

She said that the residents on Wilson Street are terrified to get their mail or be outside shoveling or doing yard work. Residents of Hemenway are afraid to take a walk from their homes. She has received more calls on this issue than any other issue in the City. She wants to see the issue understood from a public safety standpoint not simply from a data collection standpoint. An effective solution is desperately needed. Residents have described fighting for a solution for the past twenty years.

Mr. Verricho spoke next and talked again about the terrible crash on April 6th. Fortunately, he was inside but he is one of the people who can't even safely get his mail from his mailbox or put out his trash. He also said that the buzzing sound from the rumble strip is annoying. It is just very unsafe. It gets worse when all the college kids are home and now is worse than ever with everyone being home. He also mentioned the number of octogenarians who walk here and one in particular who does not stay walk safely. Mrs. Verricho mentioned that there have always been issues with people not stopping at Wilson to turn onto Hemenway but now with the wider turn from Hemenway cars swing out so far to make the turn that they almost come into her driveway. She's always yelling at people to slow down. Mr. Verricho said the traffic has increased

everywhere and it reflects with the amount of traffic on Wilson and Hemenway. It got quieter for a few weeks but it's not quiet anymore.

Chief Giorgi advised that Officer Larose put the electronic speed monitoring signs out at several locations and dates. The speed limit for this area is 25 mph. Officer Larose pulled up an interactive map he created showing icons for accidents over the last 10 years and the times that the speed sign has been out. You can click on the icon and it will bring up the speed summary data at that location for the specific date. He clicked on the one for 3/2019 and it showed an average speed of 29mph. He then clicked on the next icon which showed an average speed of 28mph on 3/2020. It also shows the speed of the 85th percentile of vehicles, which is one of the warrants the State uses to calculate speed limits. He noted that obviously there are people that go over the speed limit, but the speed signs show that the majority of cars are actually not speeding.

Councilor Wagner said that even though it shows that the majority of cars aren't speeding then why was the hydrant not replaced? Officer Larose said that he looked over all the accidents in the last 10 years and he only found 1 that involved the hydrant. Chief Giorgi said that he is not denying that there is speeding but just trying to show what the data reveals. The data shows that the 85th percentile is not speeding. He asked if Tim Collins could speak to the history with the hydrants. Mr. Collins advised that the main reason for not replacing the hydrant was because there is another one located 40 feet from that one. The City didn't need to have two so close together. Also, several of the accidents involved impaired drivers rather a speeding issue. Chief Giorgi commented that the recent accident on 4/6 was also an OUI accident. The Chief asked if Engineering could speak to the interim reconstruction.

City Engineer, Tom DiPersio, said that he is well aware of all the issues and how cars speed from Hemenway onto Wilson Street. He has spoken to Mr. Tivnan, of 274 Wilson St., many times. The theory behind the new design was to tighten up the intersection. There was a big radius curve that cars would roll through. The City looked into a raised island, but it didn't fit properly. The new rumble strip was a way to visually show that it is a turn and not just an area to roll through. Officer Larose said that more than half did turn properly but the other half went right over it. Now the design is getting some feedback. He also talked about moving the existing stop sign to create a stop at Hemenway before turning left onto Wilson Street. He thinks that a stop here plus the rumble strip, will help.

Tim Collins went on to explain that this intersection does not meet the warrants for an all-way stop. In 2002 a stop sign was installed on the dead-end section of Hemenway. That portion did meet the warrants at that time. For an all way stop, the major approach needs to have 300 cars per hour with the minor approach having 200 cars per hour. If we simply eliminate the stop sign on the dead-end side and move it to the East bound approach, so when cars are traveling up from Hemenway to Wilson they would need to stop at the stop sign before making the left turn onto Wilson Street. Even if they didn't come to a complete stop it would cause them to slow going through the turn. A warning sign could then be placed on the dead-end side indicating that there is a stop situation ahead. Initially there would also need to be signage indicating that the traffic pattern has changed in both directions.

Tom DiPersio went on to discuss speed bumps in “general terms.” He said that:

- 1) They are not placed at intersections.
- 2) Vehicles tend to accelerate between speed bumps, which causes even more of a noise issue. Speed bumps may be effective to slow on the approach but then cars speed up.
- 3) It would set a precedent to place speed bumps on a side road to slow traffic.

He mentioned that he lives on Concord Road and has the same issue with speed in front of his house. Mrs. Verricho asked if the City does move the stop sign what sign would be put up to demonstrate the change? She said that current signs are obscured by brush growth.

Tim Collins advised the signs would be yellow and black and would indicate something to the effect of “Traffic Pattern Changed Ahead”. This is similar to what was done on Bigelow Street when several of the stop signs were removed. Also, the sign indicating that there is a turn ahead would come down and the new sign would be placed here. Mrs. Verricho said again that drivers can’t see this sign because it is obscured by brush. Mr. Collins said that he would have the Street Division come out and cut back the brush. He also advised about the “SeeClickFix” website where residents can request things like this.

In summary, Chief Giorgi said that the Traffic Commission would recommend moving the existing stop sign from the dead-end side of Hemenway to other side and cut back the brush. The hope is that the stop sign will cause cars to slow at the turn onto Wilson St. Councilor Wagner noted again that it’s the issue of speed in combination with the 90 degree turn that creates the problem.

Another local resident from 285 Hemenway also joined the call. She lives 3 houses down from the stop sign and has lived there for 53 years. She said that cars go past her house at 45 mph. She has two dogs and can’t even use the sidewalk. She also had 2 accidents at her property. One was a very bad accident more then ten years ago where a car went up and over her stone wall and dragged her mailbox. She noted that drinking was involved in this accident. She said that construction trucks and many cars do speed up. She said they need volunteers to watch the traffic and get the plate numbers. The speeding has gotten worse and worse over the years. She doesn’t agree that 85% of cars are traveling the speed limit. Chief Giorgi advised that he doesn’t want to see residents watching the traffic, however, he can send the Traffic Unit down to step up enforcement here.

Chief Giorgi does agree that as the City has developed over the years, many areas have changed. He said that he grew up on West Hill Road and has seen the same thing here. The resident asked about the possibility of a blinking speed sign. There is no speed limit sign in the area of Wilson Street and Hemenway. She said there is an empty spot out in front of her house (#285) that they could use.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to Engineering to move the existing stop sign from the dead-end side of Hemenway to the other side to create a stop condition before the left turn onto Wilson Street.

And

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to the POLICE DEPARTMENT for continued enforcement.

3-Old Business

3a) Poor Streetlight Conditions – West Main St./Winthrop St.

3b) Request for Crosswalk Warning Signage – West Main St. @ Winthrop.

Update on 3a) and 3b)

Tim Collins advised that the request has been made to the Street Division to repaint the crosswalk and install the advance warning signs. They are both on the list but have not been done yet.

Clarification: On 5/28 I received an email from Tim Collins advising that he spoke with Jim Dascoli – Streets Division General Foreman. The crosswalk signs have not been installed yet because the crosswalk on West Main Street at Winthrop Street and Orchard Street are not ADA complaint. Handicap access ramps need to be built. This is a DPW – Streets Division scheduled project and the signs will be installed as part of this project.

3c) Parking Issues on Lakeside Ave.

Update: The Fix Restaurant has been closed during the Covid 19 Pandemic. The parking issue was due to overflow/employee parking on Lakeside Ave.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to TABLE for now. Chief Giorgi will be talking to the Owner now that the restaurant is reopening.

3d) Crosswalk Request from Meadowbrook Child Garden– Concord R. @ Mosher Ln.

Update: Tim Collins provided an aerial view of the intersection of Concord Road and Mosher Lane near Meadowbrook Child Garden. Parents are using Mosher Lane to park and then cross their children over to the school for drop off. The big issue is at the north westerly sideline of Concord Road at the corner at Hemenway Extension. He showed photos of a row of arborvitaes that are large and overgrown and causing a sight distance problem. He advised that it might be appropriate to have Code Enforcement get in touch with the Owner to have them cut back. He said that the trees are considered a “living fence” and are subject to the requirements of the City’s fence ordinance. This ordinance includes a height limitation of 3 feet.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to Chief Giorgi to reach out to Pam Wilderman of Code Enforcement for assistance.

3e) Brigham Street Concerns.

Update: Tim Collins advised that he had been holding off on doing the traffic count until he received the new equipment. The old traffic count program was on it's last leg. The new equipment has come in but now he was holding off during the Covid 19 pandemic to get realistic counts. With Covid and people trying to stay home he would not get a true picture. He does have counts done from 2016 so he can use this information for comparison.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to TABLE until accurate traffic counts have been completed.

Councilor Robey asked for a follow up on an item that was no longer on the agenda.

Crosswalk warning signs at the crosswalk on Stevens Street and Lodi Road.

Councilor Robey said that there were no signs there yet. Tim Collins advised that this was put on the Street Division's "To Do" List over the winter. There is a new person, however, working in this department. He will check to make sure it's still on the schedule.

Further Update: On 5/28/20 I received an email from Tim Collins. As he suspected, there was an oversight with the change in personnel in the Sign Shop. He advised that the "double-backed crosswalk sign at the crosswalk on Stevens Street at Lodi Road is up – the downward arrows were not installed and the advance warning signs (with the AHEAD plaques) are missing." They will go up tomorrow.

Steve Kerrigan asked for a follow up on an item that was no longer on the agenda.

Request for "No Right on Red" sign at the intersection of Farm Rd./Boston Post Road East/Mustang Avenue.

Mr. Kerrigan recalled that we were waiting to hear back on the response from the State. Tim Collins had sent an email but had received a message back that his contact was on vacation. Chief Giorgi said that he had asked that this item be removed from the agenda as there were plans to reconstruct the roadway. Mr. Collins pulled up a diagram of the proposed changes to the intersection. The changes would eliminate the confusion. He did, however, receive a reply from the State.

Mr. Collins pulled up a memo he prepared outlining the guidelines from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on Intersection Safety and additional information from the FHWA Transportation Engineer – Operations Technical Service Team. He then presented his observations and comments and his response. See the attached memo for specifics.

His conclusion was that "there is a definite need to determine how traffic movements through this intersection should be allowed and how this information should be presented to the public". In the interim, prior to the reconstruction, it is his recommendation that "the eastbound traffic on Farm Road should not be allowed to proceed through this

intersection against the red light. A sign should be erected at the STOP line of Farm Road which states "NO MOVEMENT ON RED." He also provided a photo of the proposed sign. Since this intersection is controlled by MassDOT, State approval would be needed to modify the signage and operation of this intersection. He also advised that the DPW would be willing to install the proposed sign. Chief Giorgi agreed that it would be the appropriate action to install this signage in the interim.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to ENGINEERING to obtain approval from the MassDOT and install the signage as proposed.

That there being no further business of the Traffic Commission held on this date, the meeting adjourned at 10:57 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Lambert
Records Clerk
Marlborough Police Department

List of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting:

- City of Marlborough Meeting Posting for Traffic Commission Meeting on Wednesday, May 27, 2020 including meeting agenda.
- Draft of Traffic Commission Minutes from Wednesday, February 26, 2020.
- Email chain between Councilor Wagner to Chief Giorgi, dated 3/10/20 through 4/22/20, re: Public Safety Concern, Wilson St.
- Follow-up email from Officer Larose to Chief Giorgi, dated 3/12/20, re: Public Safety Concern, Wilson St.
- Email from Councilor Wagner to Chief Giorgi, dated 5/27/20, re: May 27 Traffic Commission Mtg. which included letters and emails from constituents.
 - o Letter from Meagan McLean, dated 5/21/20
 - o Letter from Andrew and Nancy Tivnan, dated 3/14/20
 - o Letter from Catherine LaJeunese, dated 5/13/20
 - o Letter from Jeremiah Encarnacion, dated 5/13/20
 - o Letter from Jan Leefleman, dated 5/13/20
 - o Letter from Mary Uyleman, dated 5/13/20
 - o Letter from Jane and George O'Brien, dated 5/13/20

Additional Handouts:

- Follow up information from Tim Collins re: New Business Item 2d) Request for "No Right on Red" sign at intersection of Farm Road – East/Mustang Ave.", includes guidelines and response form Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- Aerial graphic and photos from Mosher Lane and Concord Road Area near Meadowbrook Child Garden.
- Diagram of proposed intersection realignment at intersection of Boston Post Road East, Farm Road and Wilson Street.

