

CITY OF MARLBOROUGH MEETING POSTING

Meeting Name: Traffic Commission

Date: Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Time: 10:00 am

Location: 3rd Floor City Hall – Memorial Hall

Agenda Items to be addressed:

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CITY OF MARLBOROUGH
2021 SEP 24 P 4: 13

1) MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- a) Review draft from 7-28-21

2) NEW BUSINESS

- a) Request for 2 handicapped parking spaces on Laviolette Street
- b) Parking Issues at Stevens Park

3) OLD BUSINESS

- a) Issues with the turn movement at intersection of Boston Post Road West & Ames Street
- b) Traffic concerns on Oakcrest Ave.
- c) Cashman Street – One Way
- d) Reservoir @ Red Spring Road
- e) Commercial traffic and speeding on Farm Road

THE LISTING OF TOPICS THAT THE CHAIR REASONABLY ANTICIPATES WILL BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING IS NOT INTENDED AS A GUARANTEE OF THE TOPICS THAT WILL HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED. NOT ALL TOPICS LISTED MAY IN FACT BE DISCUSSED, AND OTHER TOPICS NOT LISTED MAY ALSO BE BROUGHT UP FOR DISCUSSION TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.



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

DRAFT

Traffic Commission Minutes

The Regular Meeting of the Traffic Commission was held on Wednesday, July 28, 2021 at 10:00 am. The meeting was also recorded and is available to view online on the City of Marlborough website (www.marlborough-ma.gov). Members present: Chairman - Police Chief David Giorgi, Commissioner of Public Works Sean Divoll and City Clerk Steve Kerrigan. Also present: City Engineer Tom DiPersio, Assistant City Engineer Tim Collins, Ashley Miller also from the Engineering Department, Sgt. Zac Attaway from the MPD Traffic Services Unit, City Councilor Katie Robey, City Councilor David Doucette, City Councilor Samantha Perlman and local residents Chris Russ and Ralph Moro.

Minutes taken by Karen Lambert, MPD Records Clerk.

Chief Giorgi started recording the meeting at 10:02 a.m. and began by welcoming everyone and making introductions.

He also acknowledged that this would be Tim Collins' last meeting as he is retiring. Mr. Collins was presented with a gift in recognition of his years of service and dedication to the Traffic Commission. The Chief thanked him for all his hard work and for being his sounding board for all things traffic related. Commissioner Divoll also added that Mr. Collins has 36 years of service to the City and the last 10 years with the Traffic Commission. He also wanted to extend his thanks on behalf of the DPW and Engineering.

1- Minutes

The minutes of the Traffic Commission meeting of Wednesday, June 30, 2021.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED:

TO APPROVE, (with one minor correction noted by Steve Kerrigan on page 1a-5). All in Favor - Accept and Place on File.

2 - New Business –

2a) Commercial traffic and speeding on Farm Road.

Chief Giorgi advised that he has received several emails from residents and City Councilors (copies in agenda packet). Local resident, Chris Russ, was in attendance for this issue. He outlined three specific concerns in his email – 1) commercial vehicles over 2 ½ tons using the roadway 2) increase in speed and 3) crosswalk safety.

He said that commercial traffic has picked up greatly and that many medium duty, 1-ton trucks use Farm Road as a cut through to Route Rte. 20 and Home Depot. He also mentioned a car hauling business that is parking at the recycling center on Rte. 20, the new industrial center at the airport, and landscape yards in the area all contribute to the problem. He said the commercial truck traffic from these locations should be sent to Rte. 20 rather than down Farm Road. He feels there are a lot of loopholes with the weight limit of trucks and understands that it is tough to enforce. The signs are clear, but many drivers may not even realize they are not following the rules. He is asking how drivers can be educated so that the rules can be enforced.

Chief Giorgi said that he agrees that this is a multi-faceted problem. The speed signs were put out there in two different locations to gather accurate data. He pulled up the results for the one westbound at Kane School. The speed limit is 25 mph, the average speed was 33 mph and the 85th percentile was 33.96. The average daily volume was 4,343 vehicles. Sgt. Attaway explained how to read the diagrams and pie chart. They were able to obtain 9 to 10 days of data. On the east bound side, the sign was located near the Pump House. The average speed here was 31.9 mph and the 85th percentile was higher at 35.89. Councilor Robey commented that it is actually hard to drive 25 mph on this road even when you are aware of the speed limit.

Tim Collins explained that the speed limits are set by the State and the speed limit here was set back in the 70's. Back then, the City Council would propose a speed limit and send it to the State for approval. Today, speed limits are set based on what the 85th percentile of traffic is traveling at a certain point. This method assumes that most motorists are prudent and capable of going the proper speed. The speed limit of 25 mph is not what everyone is traveling today. The official speed could actually be closer to 40 mph. Also, when speed studies are done now, you get the first car in a row and the next 5 cars for example, make their own speed. If you asked the State to set the speed limit today, they would say the proper speed limit is 35 mph.

Ralph Moro, retired police officer and longtime resident of Farm Road, was also in attendance. As an officer, he was very involved with traffic control and was a certified crash reconstruction specialist. He has personally walked in the area and agrees that it is scary to try to cross at one of the crosswalks and also mentioned that there is a school here. He crosses with his daughter and granddaughter and said that the speed at the crosswalks is crazy. He thought the average speed was around 40 mph and also commented on the number of motorcycles and pickup trucks with their exhaust.

Councilor Doucette agreed that no one wants to see the speed limit go up, especially with all the construction in the area over the next few years. There will be even more traffic as construction increases. He feels that the City needs to take steps now to put deterrents in place. He asked about the possibility of a speed table near the school. He feels this would really make trucks avoid the area. Chief Giorgi asked if there has been an increase in traffic here over the last couple of months due to construction on Rte. 20. Some of the increase might be coming from people trying to avoid the construction. It is a two-year project. Tom DiPersio said that the State just opened bids for their project on Rte. 20. Councilor Robey said that sometimes the turn onto Farm Road would take several light cycles so she would choose to continue Rte. 20 even with the traffic. Mr. Russ said that there doesn't seem to be especially more traffic at the moment, however, it is also summer vacation and school is not in session. He could see it turning into an excessive situation. For him, the biggest concern is the commercial traffic.

Councilor Perlman has also heard complaints about vehicles not stopping for school buses. Chief Giorgi said that speed and school bus issues come down to enforcement by the Police. He said that Sgt. Attaway also received an email from a parent about the buses. He talked to the mother and advised that they would follow up with an unmarked car when school is back in session.

Councilor Perlman asked if there could be flashing lights for the crosswalks or possibly a 3-D design painted. She said innovative ideas are needed. The discussion continued about how dangerous the crosswalks are. It was also noted that a tree by Pheasant Hill covers the sign and how fast cars fly by Broadmeadow once they come around the corner. Drivers don't even seem to notice people standing in the crosswalk. Also, the visibility from either angle at the crosswalk by Cook Lane was noted. Councilor Robey asked how do you change the state law regarding crosswalks? You have to be in the crosswalk to get cars to stop. People need to realize they can't just run all the way across. You have to get the attention of the driver on the other side and make sure that they are also stopping. The City did look into painting crosswalks with piano keys back in 2015, similar to a 3D effect. Tim Collins said this also means more paint and more maintenance for the City. The City usually uses striping for different reasons. Chief Giorgi asked if we could change the style here.

Commissioner Divoll said the City would take care of any complaints regarding branches. They can cut back brush in areas that need increased visibility. With regard to crosswalk styles, he is new here in Marlborough but brings experience from other communities. He would like to get a sense of the different variations and see what we have and how they function with regard to both drivers and pedestrians. He doesn't see it "as one size fits all across the City". He will do some research and come back to the Traffic Commission with his recommendations.

Councilor Robey asked if we had any historical data showing that traffic has increased. Sgt. Attaway didn't have that information but advised he would go back and check. Tim Collins said that every crosswalk on Farm Road has signs at the crosswalk and advance warning signs also. The City has done all it can so far. He also mentioned the See Click Fix app. If someone sees an issue, they can take a picture and send it to the DPW and they will fix it. This could be a pothole, a trash barrel issue or a tree branch issue. Councilor Perlman asked if the signs are visible at night. Mr. Collins said that they are supposed to be and are checked every 6 years. If someone sees one that is not, they

should send a message on See Click Fix. The same crosswalk issues extend onto Framingham Road. People think it is all one street when they are traveling on the road.

With regard to commercial traffic, Councilor Robey sent an email to the Chief outlining her concerns regarding truck classifications, special permits and commercial vehicle exemptions. Tim Collins explained the history behind the Commercial Vehicle Exclusion on Farm Road. The State needs to give a permit for a Commercial Vehicle Exclusion. When the request was first made back in the 70's, it was denied by the State as they did not like the detour route that was presented. The City later asked the State to reconsider based on special circumstances, i.e., it was a narrow, windy road with an elementary school. The State did then give their approval. He said that if the City were to request a truck exclusion here today, it would be denied. It would not qualify for a truck exclusion as it is no longer a windy, narrow road and it plenty wide enough to accommodate truck traffic. Also, he noted that there is no truck exclusion on Broadmeadow Rd. or Parmenter Road so any traffic coming out Broadmeadow can legally go left or right to travel the rest of their route. A sign could be posted at the end or Airport Dive that states right turn only, however, it would be a suggestion and not enforceable.

Discussion followed regarding truck size. Chief Giorgi pulled up a copy of the exemptions for reference. Mr. Moro noted that gross vehicle weight is listed on the vehicle registration. He said Post Road Auto Parts travels the road frequently with a trailer loaded with cars. Councilor Perlman had a personal experience where she had to drive into a snowbank to avoid one of these. She said that Farm Road is not meant for tractor trailers and the other vehicle crossed over the line. Tim Collins said that dual wheeled vehicles are not allowed. Chief Giorgi said that if specific trucks can be identified as causing an issue, the Police Department can contact the specific companies to address the situation. Mr. Collins said part of the problem is that if a truck is pulled over, they can say that they were making a delivery or pick up in the area. Anyone can also be coming off Parmenter or Farm Road. He pulled up a diagram of FHWA Vehicle Classifications that the MUTCD put together. It showed the type of vehicle and the number of axles and trailers with a diagram. Councilor Robey said this is part of the confusion because the City Code uses tonnage as a description and then it's also subject to the list of exclusions and local deliveries. According to this list, Class 5 and above is not allowed. Chief Giorgi asked if the City Code could be amended to clarify the description. All agreed that this would be much clearer than using "2 ½ tons" as a description. Mr. Moro also said that trucks should also always have a bill of lading that says where they are going or where they went. Sometimes education about the truck exclusion can work as well. The whole idea behind the truck exclusion is to protect residential roads from being beaten up by trucks.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to Commissioner Divoll to work on the crosswalk situation and to ENGINEERING to amend the City Code description for trucks. Also, the DPW will replace missing signage regarding the truck exclusion (at Monti's, on the traffic island and on Walker Street).

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to the Police Department to step up enforcement. Officer Larose and Officer Connors can do this together while also trying to educate drivers.

3-Old Business

3a) Issues with the turn movement at intersection of Boston Post Road West & Ames Street

Update: Chief Giorgi did finally get a response from the State on this issue. He read the email from Lori Shattuck. She said that the second right turn lane does not appear to be utilized as designed. Tim Collins highlighted her recommendation in her email. "To help increase the usage of the middle right turn lane, which would help to reduce the queue that occurs in the outside right turn lane, it's recommended that the striping on Ames Street is extended".

Mr. Collins had an aerial photo of the intersection with turning lanes marked in red and two photos showing the queue in the far-right lane. People don't seem to realize there are two lanes that can be utilized to make the right turn. The State thinks we should paint something to show this more clearly. Mr. Collins noted in his photo that there is a sign about 8 or 9 cars back in the queue that indicates two lanes for turning. He said there are actually three lanes, 2 for the right turn and 1 for straight or left. He also said there is not enough room to mark the pavement further back. If anything, there would be arrows at the top of the lane indicating the turn movement. If right on red were allowed, the stop line would also have to be moved further back to allow enough sight distance for the turn. You can see in his photos that sight distance is blocked by the truck in the far-left lane. Commissioner Divoll asked if there was enough demand to have 2 right turn on red lanes? At this time, the middle lane is almost like nothing and not used, leaning toward Commissioner Divoll's suggestion. Mr. Collins noted that at one time there was a conflict with a green arrow at the same time for both directions, but the timing sequence has been corrected. Mr. Kerrigan asked if we could try the turn arrows and see how it works. Commissioner Divoll said he has seen many people take a right on red here anyways.

The discussion followed as to what was the best solution. Should we appeal to the DOT to eliminate the double right turn? Should we do a trial with barrels and see how it functions. Commissioner Divoll is not convinced that we need 2 right turn lanes. We would then have to allow the right on red and do away with the second lane and see how it works. Maybe there was a reason at one time to have the 2 right turn lanes but we don't seem to need them now. With the Simarano interchange, this area doesn't have the same volume of traffic. Councilor Robey asked when Mr. Collins took the photos showing the queue? Could it have been the lunch crowd or after work? Would a letter from the Commissioner to the DOT possibly carry more weight? MR. DiPersio said that Engineering can draft a letter for the Chief.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to ENGINEERING to draft a letter to the State outlining their suggestions.

3b) Traffic Concerns on Oakcrest Ave.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to TABLE.

3c) Bike Path Flashing Light Request – Hudson St.

Update: Tim Collins reviewed that the Rail Trail is heavily used. A new light will be going in at Lincoln Street and there already is one at Ash Street. It makes sense to make it safe in the middle also. Mr. DiPersio said that with the amount of pedestrian traffic a flashing light is warranted here. Mr. Collins said there also needs to be a warning to pedestrians to watch for traffic before crossing. He also noted that a push button is better than a blinking yellow. The push button will also beep. Councilor Robey said that sometimes you can't see that the light is actually flashing. Mr. Collins noted that the light at Fitchburg is an older style, but the pedestrian is supposed to wait until they can cross safely.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to ENGINEERING. They will take care of the beacons and then all the crossings on the Rail trail will be the same (except for the driveway at Boston Scientific).

3d) Cashman Street – One Way

Update: Mr. DiPersio has not yet been able to test the change in traffic pattern due to all the construction. It was going to be changed to one-way heading north and maybe also one way at Prospect St. They are in the process of reconfiguring the intersection. The thought now is that it would be better if Prospect heading south was all one way. They would add a No Not Enter sign at the corner of Lincoln St. and Prospect St.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER back to ENGINEERING to test the change in traffic pattern.

3e) Reservoir @ Red Spring Road

Tom DiPersio reviewed that the main issue is with the turn movement from Bolton Street onto Reservoir Street. He looked at the width of the pavement on Bolton Street and there is room to fit a right turn lane if the City wanted to move in that direction. There is room to fit two 14-foot lanes. A dedicated right run lane would serve to fix the sight distance problem with Red Spring Road. He pulled up an aerial photo with the proposed layout marked, including blocking the existing turn lane with barriers. The area could be marked with paint as a trial and then going forward the existing right turn area would be removed and vegetated.

Steve Kerrigan asked if we had any idea how many other areas may have a similar turn scenario. Would other areas want the same type of change? He noted, for example, the right turn from Elm St. to Bigelow Street. Mr. DiPersio said that this is certainly a valid concern and is something Engineering would have to look at on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Collins said that it seems we are doing this more to slow traffic down Bolton Street to Reservoir. The previous accident may also have been due to operator error. This is why the MUTCD looks for a history of accidents in a specific area. Once you pass Red Spring Road there is no other outlet. He said that there is no "Right on Red" in all of downtown Marlborough now because of one person that was hit at a turn. Mr. Kerrigan also asked about the cost and noted that this would be a huge factor, even on a temporary basis. It was discussed that Red Spring Road is a private road and the owners were supposed to be taking care of clearing the area of brush.

Chief Giorgi went on to say that part of the issue is the speed on Reservoir Street. If cars had to slow down to take the right turn onto Reservoir Street., it would help with the speed issue. He actually likes the design of the new turn and thinks it makes sense. One of the concerns, however, is once you set it up, how do you take it down? Maybe we should table it for now and come back at the next meeting with speed and accident history. Commissioner Divoll said that he can also have an intern go down and do a turn movement count.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to the POLICE DEPARTMENT for speed and accident history and to ENGINEERING for a turn movement count.

That there being no further business of the Traffic Commission held on this date, the meeting adjourned at 11:51 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 7/28/21, including meeting agenda.

-Draft of Traffic Commission Minutes from Wednesday, June 30, 2021.

-Email from William Shea to the Police Department (& others), dated 7/7/21, re: Commercial traffic and speeding on Farm Road.

-Email from Chris Russ to the Police department (& others), dated 7/14/21, re: Farm Road Traffic Issue.

-Email from Mike Ossing to Chief Giorgi & Sgt. Attaway, dated 7/13/21 – forwarding email from Deborah Jakubowski Russ re: Farm Road Traffic Concerns.

-Email from Councilor Perlman to Chief Giorgi, dated 6/30/21, re: Traffic Related Concerns on Farm Road (including photos).

-Email from Councilor Robey to Chief Giorgi, dated 7/13/21, re: Commercial Truck Classifications (Farm Road issue). – along with infographic

-Email from Lori Shattuck to Chief Giorgi, dated 7/23/21, re: City of Marlborough Traffic Commission Request – Route 20 at Ames Street.

Additional Handouts

-Truck exclusion order for Framingham Rd. and Farm Road between Maple St. and Boston Post Rd. – dated 1/5/81 – along with other supporting documents.

-Wording for warning signage for truck exclusion on Farm Road along with diagram showing location.

- Photos of intersection of Maple Street & Framingham Rd. with signage noted.
- Copy of Section 10A-9 – Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion – from the MUTCD Manual.
- Diagram of FHWA Vehicle Classifications.
- Copy of City of Marlborough Special Speed Regulation No. 388A (includes Farm Road) dated July 1973.
- City Council Order establishing 25mph Speed Zone on Framingham Rd., dated 8/14/78.
- Procedure for establishing speed zone based on 85th percentile.
- Aerial photo of intersection of Boston Post Road West and Ames Street with turn lanes indicated along with photos of the queue waiting to take the left turn from Ames onto BPRW.
- Copy of Ch. 586-14 – Operation of heavy commercial vehicles (A & B) and Ch. 586-51 Schedule VII: Heavy Commercial Vehicle Routes.
- Aerial photo of intersection of Bolton St. and Reservoir St. with proposed right turn lane indicated.
- Engineering diagram of Cashman Street area.

Karen Lambert

From: David Giorgi
Sent: Thursday, September 16, 2021 5:37 PM
To: Karen Lambert
Subject: Laviolette St.

Good Morning Karen,

Could you please add this email to the agenda for the September Traffic Commission. Recently, the residents of Academy Knoll at 22 Broad St. have inquired through the Mayor's Office about the possibility of adding 2 handicapped spaces on Laviolette St. to accommodate some of the residents who are unable to safely access the building through the current handicapped parking spaces.

I would like to discuss this request with the rest of the Commission members.

Thank you,
D. Giorgi

Karen Lambert

From: Sean Divoll
Sent: Thursday, September 2, 2021 8:51 AM
To: David Giorgi; Thomas DiPersio
Subject: Stevens Park Parking

Quick email to bring us together on what we need to do for a parking restriction at Stevens Park. The issue I see is overnight parking and commercial parking. Tom looked through the ordinances and doesn't see a regulation for the lot. We'll need the Traffic Commission to vote in a new regulation. Which is the bigger concern: overnight or commercial parking. I think Bolton Street is just overnight.

I've seen commercial trucks during the day and I think the PD has seen commercial trucks at night. I think it's a safe guess to think commercial landscapers that live in the area are using the parking lot at night when they come home from work. I'm not sure about the commercial vehicles during the day. I'll swing by during the day and get some names off the sides of the truck for further discussion.

Thanks,
Sean

Sean