

August 28, 2019

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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 Wednesday, August 28, 2019 at 10:00 am in Memorial Hall, 3rd Floor, City Hall. Members present: Chairman - Police Chief David Giorgi, DPW Commissioner John Ghiloni, Fire Chief Kevin Breen and City Clerk Steve Kerrigan. Also present: Assistant City Engineer Tim Collins, Sgt. Zac Attaway - MPD Traffic Services Unit, City Councilor Katie Robey, City Councilor Christian Dumais and local residents Keith and Christine St. John. Minutes taken by Karen Lambert, MPD Records Clerk.

1- Minutes

The minutes of the Traffic Commission meeting of Wednesday, July 31, 2019.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED:

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

2 - New Business

2a) Safety Concern re: traffic light at intersection of Granger Blvd. and South Bolton St.

Local resident, Karl Klemm, contacted Engineering regarding this issue. He was asking if it would be possible to have a flashing yellow arrow here indicating that oncoming traffic has the right of way. Tim Collins pulled up a photo of the intersection. He noted that there is already a sign at the light which states “left lane yield to green”.

Mr. Collins advised that if there is a change made here, the entire intersection would need to come up to 2019 standards. They can't just add a flashing light without upgrading the entire intersection. For example, the pedestrian push buttons would need to be moved because they are supposed to be within five feet of the intersection. This would require new posts and signals. The actual crosswalk locations would need to be moved as they

are currently too close to the apex of the intersection. Adding a flashing light sounds like a quick fix but it really is not. Mr. Collins noted that the turn movement is protected if you read the posted sign, "left lane yield to green". Sgt. Attaway noted that part of the problem is that when the green arrow changes "four more cars try to fly through the intersection." This then becomes more of an enforcement issue.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to the POLICE DEPARTMENT for enforcement. Chief Giorgi advised that he would respond to Mr. Klemm.

2b) Crosswalk request / parking issues on Dicenzo Blvd.

Chief Giorgi received an email from Lynn Hoffman on this issue. She outlined 4 specific requests and the reasoning behind each.

- 1) Request for crosswalks and appropriate signage where the sidewalk ends at Azalea and Dicenzo and at Violet Woods Circle and Dicenzo. She said there are large neighborhoods on each side of Dicenzo and there is currently no safe way to cross Dicenzo.
- 2) Request for crosswalk at the Target entrance on Dicenzo. She mentioned a blind resident among many others who frequently walk to Target. The only crosswalk is at the intersection of Rte. 20 and Dicenzo which is a very busy intersection.
- 3) Request to mark the areas within 20 feet of an intersection and 10 feet from a hydrant as no parking. With all the cars that park here, especially between Lilac and Lilac and Lilac and Violet Woods Circle, pulling out of the side roads is very challenging.
- 4) Speeding issues on Dicenzo. She knows speed limit signs were discussed in the past, but the area did not meet the criteria for "thickly settled". With the number of homes, kids, joggers, dog walker, etc. in the area, could this be reconsidered?

Tim Collins gave a brief history. The City did install speed tables at one time, however, many residents were not happy with them. Tim Collins has spoken with Ms. Hoffman and explained that "white edge lines" or "fog lines" along Dicenzo to narrow the lane could be helpful. It would also create a bike lane. Ms. Hoffman liked this idea and added this request to her original email. She also requested additional crosswalks at Azalea, the 2 Lilac Circle's and Violet Woods Circle where they intersect with Dicenzo.

Commissioner Ghiloni asked if there was enough space for the edge line. Mr. Collins pulled up the area on the screen and said it appears that there is. There would need to be 4 to 5 feet of edge line, on both sides, and 12 feet of travel lane. He also said that the best spot for the crosswalk would be at Lilac since it is in the middle of the development and there are already sidewalks on both sides with a grass strip between the road and the sidewalk. The green area would need to be opened. In order to install a crosswalk at Target the sidewalk would also need to be redone.

Chief Breen asked if there were any sight distance issues. Mr. Collins said no as there is a wide curve and you can see more than 200 feet of sight distance. The City would not have to do much to get the crosswalk at Lilac installed.

It was also discussed that any new crosswalk locations would require a regulation.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to ENGINEERING to review the specifics for the edge lines and the crosswalks at Target and Lilac and to REFER to Chief Giorgi to respond to Ms. Hoffman.

Before continuing to Old Business, Chief Giorgi asked if any City Councilors present had any new issues they would like to discuss.

None Noted

3-Old Business

3a) Parking Issues on John Street around the playground area.

Update: St. Mary's project is still pending Site Plan arrival. The Traffic Commission had determined that a No Parking area (Safe Zone) would be created on both sides of John Street near the playground. A crosswalk also will also be installed, however, the exactly location has not been finalized, as it is contingent upon the entrance/exit to St. Mary's.

Commissioner Ghiloni advised that "Slow Playground" signs have been put up for now as a temporary solution until all the construction plans are finalized. Waiting on Site Plan.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to TABLE until the St. Mary's Plan is finalized.

3b) Crosswalk Concerns on Stevens Street near Lodi Road.

Update: Tim Collins passed out an aerial photo with the proposed signage indicated. The old sign will be removed and the new signs will be added. He drove by yesterday and it had not been done yet, however, he said it should be done by the end of the week.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to keep this on the agenda until proper signage is installed.

3c) Hosmer Street Crosswalk / Traffic Complaints / Jaworek School

Update: Tim Collins passed out an aerial photo of the area with both the old and new crosswalk locations marked. He confirmed that the old one was removed and new one installed. Chief Giorgi advised that he went out to this area this morning and there was still confusion as people were used to the old crossing location. He noted that people were just crossing where the crosswalk used to be. The old crosswalk was basically right at someone's driveway and there was no where else to move in either direction. The crossing guard was trying to coordinate people crossing with those exiting the school. The Traffic Unit was also there to assist.

Chief Giorgi advised that he has drafted a letter to the school for parents regarding the traffic situation. The school is supposed to be sending the letter home to parents. He said that the start of the new school year is always tough to get started.

Sgt. Attaway said that it's a matter of getting those that are turning to hug the curb so other cars can continue to pass by them. He also noted that the issue really only lasts about 10 minutes. His unit will be out here for a least the first week of school to work through it.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to the TRAFFIC UNIT to continue to monitor the traffic situation.

3d) Request for Pedestrian Crossing signs on Church Street.

Tim Collins pulled up a diagram of Church Street on the screen. All bus stop locations were marked in yellow and he noted which schools pick up at each location. The most troublesome area, highlighted in pink, is at Essex Street. There is a bend in the road at the crest and no easy way to see the intersection ahead. It is a very narrow roadway and he noted that the sidewalks are plowed by the sidewalk plow. None of the other crosswalks have any signage because you can clearly see them as you approach. None of these crosswalks are regulated and the Traffic Commission will need to vote to add them to the Crosswalk Schedule. Mr. Collins prepared the language for the regulation. This would normally have been done when the roadway was reconstructed but it was not. He didn't feel that a crosswalk was really needed at every single intersection, but this is what was done at the time. Advance warning signs do not require a regulation.

The resident's initial concern was at Warren Ave. Mr. Collins noted, however, that when the bus stops, all traffic stops also until all of the children are across the street. When the bus stops, it creates a crosswalk. All children should be crossed while the lights are flashing. In theory, they don't want children crossing without a crosswalk or crossing guard, however, that's why the bus stops at every intersection and creates a safe crossing area.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to Chief Giorgi to respond to the resident who made the request and advise as to the discussion. ACCEPT and PLACE ON FILE.

3e) Request to limit the use of air brakes for large vehicles.

Tim Collins pulled up a letter from Jacob Vehicle Systems explaining the purpose of a "Jake Brake" and how it works. He highlighted a section stating, "According to U.S. EPA guidelines, new trucks manufactured since 1986 must be no louder than 80 dBa at 50 feet; that in-use trucks manufactured since 1986 must be no louder than 83 dBa." and also "The primary source of excessive noise produced by engine retarders is due to trucks operating with improperly maintained, defective, or modified muffler systems. Mr. Collins also included a dB(A) scale reflecting Sound Pressure Levels – Human Perception to put the noise level into perspective (See attached). He also had a copy of the Noise Ordinance for the City of Marlborough. Chapter 431-11 entitled "Specific prohibitions for vehicles". It states that the maximum noise level permitted for a vehicle over 10,000 pounds GVWR is 86 dBa at 35 mph and 90 dBa at 35 to 45 mph. The

properly maintained Jake Brake falls below this level. It's more of an enforcement issue but the problem is how to actually enforce the regulation. An officer would need to have a decibel reader and would need to be within 50 feet of a truck with the Jake Brake in use. It was suggested that the best way would be for a resident to get a plate number and name off the truck itself. The Police Department can then contact the employer about the issue.

Mr. Collins explained that truck drivers may prefer to use the Jake Brake because it puts less wear and tear on the brakes. The Jake Brake can also be used for safety issues, for example, if the truck is carrying a heavy load. He also had an example of a regulation used by the City of Northampton, MA regarding the use of these brakes. It "encourages motor vehicle owners and operators to deploy them judiciously and respectfully in our community, avoiding unnecessary use in nonemergency situations"

Steve Kerrigan said it's a difficult issue because the use of Jake Brakes is not prohibited. It's just that they are noisy if not properly maintained. It was discussed that an area like West Main Street is a residential area but it is also a truck route. When a road has a steep grade, the driver needs to use these brakes.

Councilor Doucette had concerns about large trucks specifically on Farm Road. There should not be any trucks on Farm Road. There were signs at the intersection of Maple and Walker.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to ENGINEERING. Tim Collins will respond to Councilor Doucette. ACCEPT and PLACE on FILE.

3f) Request for speed tables on Farm Road.

Tim Collins advised that when the electronic speed boards were put out from 4/23/19 to 4/29/19, it was determined that the 85th percentile was traveling at 35 mph. (Extended Speed Summary Report is attached.) The speed limit is 25 mph. Since the 85th percentile is traveling well over 25 mph, this is actually an unrealistic speed limit. He said that if a speed study were done today it would indicate that the speed limit should actually be higher.

He said that speed tables cause issues for plows and drainage issues. If we were to install speed table here, many other neighborhoods would be requesting the same thing.

He mentioned that there is also a Truck Exclusion on Farm Road. It was originally approved because it was a long and winding road with a school so an exception was made. The State has to approve a Truck Exclusion and he said that they probably couldn't get one on Farm Road if they were applying today.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to ACCEPT and PLACE on FILE.

3g) Request for a Truck Exclusion on Stevens Street.

Tim Collins advised that a Truck Exclusion was requested here back in 2006 but the road did not meet the specific warrants. There would have to be triple the truck traffic. He mentioned the tight turn by the cemetery and that there is a truck route sign at East Main

Street suggesting a better route. Some trucks may go this way and then realize it is not safe and not go this way again.

Chief Giorgi asked what the process is for determining truck traffic. Mr. Collins advised that Engineering would do a speed count by using tubes in the road that vehicles drive over. The tubes determine the weight of the vehicle. There would also need to be a detour route down East Main, Right onto Granger Blvd. and up Bolton Street.

Commissioner Ghiloni advised that this area is on the plan for reconstruction but realistically this is 10 years away. He thinks it would make sense to do another truck count and see what we get.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to ENGINEERING to do a truck count and to Chief Giorgi to follow up with Councilor Clancy.

3h) Concerns with the Crowley Drive Project (Senior Independent Living Multi-Family Community)

There was a question as to what the actual speed limit is here. There was a report of different speed limits on the same stretch of road. Officer Larose went out and checked and sent an email to the Chief stating that Southbound on Fitchburg Street says 35 mph until Land's Towing and then turns into 25 mph. After the Crowley/Sasseville intersection it becomes a 30-mph zone. Northbound is 30 mph, then turns into a 25-mph zone at the Moose and then changes to a 35-mph zone at Lands. He attached a photo showing the two confusing signs. He said that if the 25-mph sign was brought south and relocated directly across from the 30 mph sign it would eliminate the confusion. It would also make the 25 mph sign more visible.

Mr. Collins also had a copy of a letter from the DOT on 3/25/14 in which he highlighted "We have no record of an approved 25mph speed zone on Fitchburg Street near the Crowley Drive/Sasseville Way intersection." He went on to state the current regulation shows 30 mph and 35 mph zones and that the 25 mph signs would be removed and adjusted as needed to bring the speed limit signage into compliance with the current regulation. Mr. Collins said that if we don't bring it up again we can leave the 25-mph sign.

This road is controlled by the State. If it were within the boundary of the City and found to be a "thickly settled" area the speed limit would be 30 mph. It could be dropped to 25 mph or be designated a "safety zone" and set at 20 mph. Councilor Robey mentioned that the City of Boston did a blanket change were all thickly settled areas were dropped to 25 mph. Mr. Collins advised that the State allowed each City or Town to adopt whether or not to drop the speed limit. He said that the speed limit is supposed to be set at what the average normal person would drive. Councilor Robey said that if we made Farm Road a 35mph zone, "people would be in an uproar".

Crowley Drive is a private road and they can ask the Traffic Commission to regulate the speed. It was discussed that they should do a speed study first to see what the 85th percentile was driving and then they would need everyone on the road to agree to the speed limit and that the owners would need to install and maintain the signs. Mr. Collins said that we really can't do anything until the area is fully developed. The good thing

about the results received from the electronic speed boards is that they show a pie diagram where what is in blue means vehicles are slowing down. It does show that the majority of cars do slow down when they see the sign. In this way, the signs do work.

Commissioner Ghiloni advised that the branches and debris that were blocking sight distance has been cleared away. Chief Giorgi advised that he would talk to the resident who made the initial request. Code Enforcement can also have more brush cut back if it doesn't meet City Code requirements. Mr. Collins pulled up a copy of the area. He said that the condos actually own the area at the side of the road and can clean it up. He said that brush can't be more than 2 feet tall.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to REFER to Chief Giorgi to review the discussion with the resident who made the initial request.

That there being no further business of the Traffic Commission held on this date, the meeting adjourned at 11:06 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, August 28, 2019, including meeting agenda.
- Draft of Traffic Commission Minutes from Wednesday, July 31, 2019.
- Email from Krista Holmi to Chief Giorgi (on behalf of Karl Klemm), dated 8-2-19, re: Signal Inquiry South Bolton at Granger Blvd. (along with Google photo).
- Email from Lynn Hoffman to the Police Department, dated 8/8/19, re: Request Crosswalks/parking issues Diconzo Blvd.

Additional Handouts:

- Aerial photo with proposed crosswalk signage indicated – Stevens St. @ Lodi Rd.
- Aerial photo of Hosmer Street at entrance to Jaworek School with crosswalk locations indicated.
- Diagram of Church Street with school bus stops indicated and crosswalk location schedule for Church Street.
- Copy of Chapter 312, Section 75, from City of Northampton, MA Rules and Regulations re: use of compression release engine brakes.
- Copy of a letter from Jacobs Vehicle Systems explaining how “Jake Breaks work”.
- Copy of Chapter 431, Section 11 from the City of Marlborough Rules and Regulations re: Noise and Specific prohibitions for vehicles.
- Diagram of Sound Pressure Levels – Human Perception.

- Extended Speed Summary Report for 171 Farm Road.
 - Extended Speed Summary Report for Farm Rd. @ Boivin.
 - Copy of Chapter 586, Section 51 – Heavy Commercial Vehicle Routes
 - Copy of a letter from MA DOT to the Marlborough City Engineer, dated 3/15/06, re: request for Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion on a section of Stevens St. and Union St.
 - Copy of an email from Joseph Frawley (DOT) to Tim Collins, dated 3/25/14, re: Another Traffic Control Device Question – Infrared Detection.
 - Copy of an email from Joseph Frawley (DOT) to Tim Collins, dated 12/17/18, re: Speed Limits.
 - Copy of an Email from Andrew Larose to Chief Giorgi and Tim Collins, dated 8/28/19, re: Fitchburg Street (along with photo).
 - Copy of part of an email from Tim Collins with the MA DOT's response to specific questions regarding the area in front of Our Future Learning Center (Boston Post Road West near intersection of Boundary St.)
-