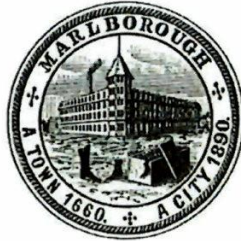


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**CITY OF MARLBOROUGH
OFFICE OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION
140 MAIN STREET
MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS 01752**

Traffic Commission Minutes

The Regular Meeting of the Traffic Commission was held on November 29, 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 and City Clerk Steve Kerrigan. Also present: City Engineer Tom DiPersio, Officer Andrew Larose from the MPD Traffic Services Unit and City Councilor Sean Navin, City Councilor Mark Oram and City Councilor Samantha Pearlman. Also present local residents: Dave and Beth Cormier from Old Charter Road, Glenn Davis and Sergei Beliaev from Davis Street, Harold Dunn from Clinton Street, David Kirkpatrick from Crescent Street and Elyse Heis, Jennifer Oliveira, Cassia Marinho and James Joyce from Auburn Street.

Minutes taken by Karen Lambert, MPD - Public Safety Administrative Assistant.

Chief Giorgi started recording the meeting at 10:01 a.m. and began by welcoming everyone and making introductions.

1- Minutes

Review of the minutes of the Traffic Commission meeting of October 25, 2023.

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

2 - New Business

2a) Request to DELAY removal of Northern Stop Sign at Intersection of Clinton St. and Auburn St.

Chief Giorgi received emails from local resident, Elyse Heise, regarding this issue. He reviewed that at the last meeting the stop signs on Clinton Street were discussed and the

fact that they are not warranted stop signs. An engineering study was presented which determined that they did not meet the warrants for a stop sign and the Traffic Commission voted to remove the unwarranted stop signs. He received the emails from Ms. Heise in response to this decision and pulled up her emails for the discussion. Several residents from the Clinton Street and Auburn Street area were in attendance for the discussion. Chief Giorgi deferred to them to speak their concerns.

Ms. Heise asked if a line-of-sight study had been performed. Chief Giorgi referred this to Tom DiPersio, City Engineer. Mr. DiPersio gave some background and advised that he is not a member of the Traffic Commission but does provide studies and reviews issues and makes recommendations. He explained that warrants are determined by the Federal Highway Commission. They are established so that no matter where a driver goes, traffic signs mean the same thing. They follow the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Stop signs mostly have to do with traffic counts and travel onto main roads but also pedestrian traffic and allowing people to be able to cross a road. What they try not to do is have stop signs where they are not expected because this can also be unsafe. It can provide a false sense of safety that cars will stop when they actually may not, when pulling out.

Sight distance is not one of the warrants, but it is a factor that can be considered to make sure that cars on a main road will stop. The issue with sight distance involves the fence on the corner. The actual line of sight is fine. The fence does not meet city code. Sight is limited by the fence, and you have to move up further to see oncoming traffic. Ms. Heise said that with a smaller size car you can't see cars coming until you are very far out into the intersection. It was discussed that maybe when the fence went up, the stop sign was already there. The fence would be an issue for Code Enforcement. Residents are concerned that if the stop signs are scheduled to come down tomorrow, the fence is still there, and is something that would take longer to address.

Harold Dunn, who currently lives at 41 Clinton Street, grew up at 24 Clinton Street. He is concerned with the safety of the entire intersection. When he was born there, Clinton Street was a dead end. Officer Larose brought up a photo of the area for reference. Mr. Dunn knows that the stop sign is not supposed to get traffic to slow down but it does. He can sit in his living room and can see the intersection morning, noon, and night. There are also at least 3 school buses that stop here. It is also a cut through for busses, fire and police vehicles and others. The Traffic Commission doesn't sit there day and night. At the bottom of his driveway to the curb across the street is 19 feet. It's the narrowest part of Clinton Street. When he backs out of his driveway, he crosses the entire street. He also sees cars coming and they do slow down at the stop sign. At the top of the hill, you can't see cars at all even though the road is wider. There is a need to slow people down. He said that in the 80's, he lived at 48 Clinton Street and 2 cars went speeding onto his lawn and one went through his fence. Another family had a child who got hit by a car.

Glenn Davis, resident of Davis Street, said that he was at the meeting when it was decided that the stop signs would be put in. They were specifically installed to slow traffic, and they work. 99% of cars drive through, but they do slow down. He said that before the stop signs were put in, cars flew through the area. He also agrees that the sight line is an issue. He doesn't see why they just can't be left there for now.

Ms. Heise said that she moved in in 2014 but it sounds like it was more dangerous before with kids hit, dogs hit, and fences hit. She thinks it is irresponsible to take the sign down. She asked about speed humps that are designed to slow cars. If this stop sign is taken down, they need speed humps. Chief Giorgi advised that the Traffic Commission has discussed speed humps before, most recently the requests were from Church Street. They wanted speed humps and stop signs to slow people down, however, stop signs are not warranted in this area either. Residents know the stop sign is not warranted but they also know it is slowing people down. Why can't we just leave it there.

Steve Kerrigan, City Clerk, said that the same situation existed on Bigelow Street and Beach Street and Clinton Street. Unfortunately, stop signs are not to be used as traffic calming devices. Residents asked when the engineering study was done? The stop signs have been there for 25 years. The stop signs went up and people stopped using Clinton Street as a cut through. They feel the data is faulty as a traffic study done now with the stop signs shows different results then with no stop signs. Lawsuits will come if a child is injured or killed.

The question for the Police Department is, are the stop signs enforceable? They are not. So, if a ticket is issued it will be dismissed in court. Continued discussion followed about the 3 bus stops, a cut through street and visibility. The residents are talking about a safety issue. Ms. Heise said that something needs to be done quickly. Tedd Scott, from the DPW, said that speed humps don't work here in the winter. There is no way they can be used with snow plowing. Traffic counts relate to the side street and traffic entering the main road not about the traffic coming down the main road. Manufacturers are trying to sell a product but it's not as straightforward as they make it sound.

Dave Cormier, from Older Charter Road, said that he was somewhat instrumental with Councilor Oram to get the stop signs put up. All rules were followed, they had a neighborhood meeting which included the Police Department, Fire Department and Engineering. At that time, 500+ vehicles were traveling on the road. Now it appears from reading Traffic Commission minutes that someone brought this area to the City's attention and that the stop signs are illegal. The stop signs have been there for 25 years and have had a positive impact on speeding. In 1998 there was no posted speed limit and no traffic control. By the time cars got to the northern end of Clinton Street they were traveling so fast that he lost his fence and hedges etc. It was the decision of the Traffic Commission at that time that something needed to be done. They talked about many things, but 3-way stop signs were determined to be the most cost effective and best answer. Traffic that does come through Clinton Street, that are not residents, are flying. When folks obey the stop signs, they do work. There is no curbing except near his house because of the design of the road. Cars can and will hit the curb but stay off lawns. If you can't write tickets to violators, then what methods can be used so you can cite motorists for speeding through the neighborhood?

Chief Giorgi explained how the speed study was conducted, how the electronic speed signs work and how they collect data. Mr. Cormier said he would invite anyone to come to his driveway to see for themselves. School buses also fly down the hill on the opposite side because of the hook in the road. There's a ½ mile stretch from Route 20 where it meets Old Charter Rd. where there are no speed limit signs at all. There is one thickly settled sign that is buried in the trees. Before the signs are taken down, residents want to know what the solution is for speed control. As a group, speed issues need to be

addressed. Ms. Heise said that she has talked to several urban planners and there is no such thing as an illegal stop sign. She said the MUTCD provides guidelines, but city planners can have jurisdiction to put up signs wherever they deem necessary.

Beth Cormier, from Old Charter Road, said the problem is still there but no one's lawns are being damaged and having cars come up onto their property. When her kids were young, they never let them play in the front lawn because of speeding cars. She feels it is safer with the stop sign when kids are waiting for the bus. Kids run and play tag and they do step into the street. Ms. Heise again said the stop signs were put up for a reason.

Councilor Navin said he understands that the Traffic Commission is trying to create uniformity across the city. He used to have family on Bigelow Street. He said that Clinton Street has more bends and is more of a closed off neighborhood. He also cuts through here every day to go to work. He is not alone and sees others doing this as well. He feels that neighborhoods are impacted more with volume when it is used as a cut through street. Stop signs are the easiest way to address it. In his regular job he sees requests for speed bumps all the time. We know the Traffic Unit doesn't have enough officers. If the fence is out of code and the stop signs are not warranted, instead of taking them down, can we at least keep both for a while until we can figure something else out? Kids on their bikes are not stopping. Neighborhood are turning over with young families moving in.

(Note: Chief Giorgi was called from the meeting at this time for an emergency police matter.)

Councilor Oram said that he concurs with Councilor Navin, but he doesn't use GPS in Marlborough. If he did, it sounds like it would be sending him down side routes. He has also worked with constituents and the DPW and police on these issues. He asked where is a letter he can read that says the signs are mandated to come down? Steve Kerrigan said that the former DPW Commissioner had requested that the Traffic Commission look at this issue across the City. Councilor Oram said it needs to be held off until there is another way to address the speed issue. Safety is the most important thing to consider. The stop signs need to stay until there is a mandate to take them down. He said that he drives a small car and when he comes out of Lakeshore Drive, he prays he won't get hit. He suggests that we look at what other towns have done. Framingham has long speed bumps that work. Ashland has rubber ones that do have to be taken up in the winter. We need to reconsider until we have another option. Traffic counts need to be done. It's the same on Mt. Pleasant Street, it's a traffic nightmare. He wants to see a study done now, while the signs are up, so we can see the increase when the signs are down.

Councilor Pearlman said that she appreciates all the comments and discussion. With the speed which cars enter and exit from Route 20, it only takes one accident. She is very concerned and feels that we need a citywide approach to traffic control and speed. She understands that it is impossible for the police to be in all places. She has an urban planning background and said that we need to be thoughtful and pilot new things. She recognizes how personal this is. There are cars that try to get around buses. Children running into the street when a parent tries to grab a young child. She would recommend not removing the stop signs now. When the snow comes, visibility will be even worse. She also noted that Bigelow Street and Church Street are much straighter roads. She is

asking the Traffic Commission to be thoughtful with what is done. Do we have a legal opinion from the city solicitor? The fact that 3 City Councilors are here speaks volumes.

Mr. Cormier also added that the stop signs have been there since 1998, what harm is there in leaving them there? Ms. Heise would like to see a history of accidents and a visibility study. She wants to know if there were more accidents before. Ms. Cormier again added that before the stop signs, they had cars totaled and their bushes and lawn damaged. That hasn't happened since the signs were installed. She is also asking if the signs can stay up until a speed study is completed.

Chief Breen made a motion to keep the stop signs up for now. All agreed.

Steve Kerrigan had to abruptly adjourn the meeting at 10:55 due a Public Safety Emergency involving the Police Department.

The remainder of the agenda items will be addressed at the next meeting.

2b) Request for Crosswalk Sign at the corner of Devens St. and Washington St.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to

2c) Discussion of possibility of making Weed Street one-way (westbound only) between Court Street and the west side of the City Hall rear plaza.

MOTION was made, seconded, duly VOTED to

3-Old Business

3a) Mt. Pleasant Street Traffic Concerns

Update:

3b) Crescent Street Parking Issues

Update:

3d) Commercial Vehicle Parking Issues

Update:

Chief Giorgi asked if anyone had any further issues they would like to discuss? None noted.

That there being no further business of the Traffic Commission held on this date, the meeting adjourned at 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 November 29, 2023, including meeting agenda.

- Draft of Traffic Commission Minutes from Wednesday, October 25, 2023.

- Email from Elyse Heise to Chief Giorgi, dated 11/5/23, Re: URGENT – Delay Removal of NORTHERN Stop Sign at Intersection of Clinton and Auburn Street.

- Email from Councilor Dumais to Chief Giorgi, dated 11/14/23, re: Crosswalk Corner of Devens St. and Washington St. – original email from Slava, dated 11/11/23, including (including photo).

- Email from Tom DiPersio to Chief Giorgi, dated 11/22/23, re: Traffic Commission Item (discussion of possibility of making Weed Street one-way (westbound only) between Court Street and the west side of the City Hall rear plaza.

Additional Handouts or Displayed on Screen at Meeting

- Stop Sign Petition signed by 21 residents of Auburn Street and Clinton Street