

**CITY OF WOBURN
CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC LANDS
WOBURN CITY HALL
COMMITTEE ROOM
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2025, at 6:11 p.m.**

Voting Members present: Chair Lou DiMambro, Councilor Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Councilor Charles Viola, Councilor Robert Ferullo, and Councilor William Pappalardo.

Non-Voting Members present: President Jeffrey Dillon, Councilor Robert Toro, Councilor Joanne Campbell, and Councilor Joseph Demers

Also present: Mayor Michael Concannon, former City Engineer John Corey, City Engineer Alexander Rozycki, DPW Supt. John Duran, and Economic Development Coordinator Casey Hagerty

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Reading and approval of the previous meeting minutes: Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the meeting of September 9, 2024, and to approve; all in favor, 5-0.

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Pursuant to Rule 36 of the Rules and Orders of the City Council, receipt and placement on file of the following items that have been in committee for more than 24 months: Petition to accept Tower Office Park as a public way; Resolution that the Committee on Infrastructure and Public Lands convene, as a committee of the whole, in collaboration with the City Engineer, City Traffic Consultant, and representation from MassDOT Highway Division District 4, to discuss traffic signalization and process for notification of changes on Commerce Way and Washington Street; National Grid request under Woburn Municipal Code Section 12-24 to break up streets due to an obvious necessity in the Lowell/Wyman Street area; Resolve that the Committee on Infrastructure and Public Lands meet with MassDOT and City Engineer about the Cambridge Road/Bedford Road Intersection proposed TIP work: Chair DiMambro said this is a paperwork exercise. He said there will be no discussion of these matters. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked if all of these items have been in committee for at least two years. Chair DiMambro answered affirmatively. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to receive and place on file the aforementioned items pursuant to Rule 36 of the Rules and Orders of the City Council; approved, 5-0.

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Communication and order in support of Site Readiness Grant for New Boston Street Opportunity Analysis: Mayor Concannon said Ms. Hagerty has spearheaded an effort to obtain a grant for a mini Master Plan for the New Boston Street area. He said there is a procedural

requirement for the city to take advantage of the \$115,000 grant. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to receive and make part of the permanent record the following documents: A memorandum dated October 11, 2024, to Ms. Hagerty from Gary S. Walker, Interim Executive Vice President, Real Estate, Mass Development, 99 High St., Boston, MA entitled “RE: Application 00705;” and a template entitled “Commonwealth Site Readiness Program Technical Assistance Grant Agreement;” all in favor, 5-0. Mayor Concannon said if the city decides to sell its parcels it would pay in the range of \$15,000. Ms. Hagerty said the grant will support a zoning study that will be about a year-long process. Councilor Mercer-Bruen thanked both Mayor Concannon and Ms. Hagerty. She said she asked for backup documentation because there is going to be interest in this property. She said what made her curious is that Mass Development would want some money back. She said she would like some feedback and public input. Ms. Hagerty said before the administration comes forward with an ordinance there will have to be at least three public input sessions. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked if the public can participate. Ms. Hagerty answered affirmatively. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked what the method of notification would be. Ms. Hagerty said there is a public outreach program that is really robust. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked if the City Council will be involved. Ms. Hagerty said the council can participate in the three hearings. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked if there is a schedule for the hearing. Ms. Hagerty said there is no schedule yet. She said the document that was distributed to the committee is a copy of an agreement. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked if the City Council will have an opportunity to see the completed contract. Ms. Hagerty answered affirmatively. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to suspend the City Council’s rules to allow any member of the council not on the committee to address the topic; approved, 5-0. Councilor Demers asked if the council would just be authorizing the mayor to accept the grant. Mayor Concannon said there is a provision in the draft that requires the City Council to accept the language. Councilor Demers asked if it is the language the council is being asked to approve. Ms. Hagerty answered affirmatively. Mayor Concannon said the \$115,000 grant allows the city to scope that area of the city. He said there will be initial public feedback and then some sort of recommendation. He said then it is like any other zoning change, with which the Planning Board and City Council would run. He said if the city deems it unacceptable, it could be thrown in the trash. Chair DiMambro said he looks forward to the analysis. He said what has been going on is a spitball approach. He said he is looking forward to substantive discussions. He said it is important for the residents to participate. Councilor Demers asked if a vote is necessary. Mayor Concannon said no vote is necessary at this time. Chair DiMambro said the matter will be left in committee.

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Resolve requesting City Engineer provide an update on the pedestrian crossing lights at Salem Street and Bow Street: Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to take collectively items 4 and 5 on the posted agenda; all in favor, 5-0. Engineer Corey said there was a meeting this morning about the intersection at Green and Holton streets. Engineer Corey said the city has a TVC do an RSA and there were several recommendations. He said the most expensive option involves a \$5 million outlay for traffic signals. A \$1.5 million outlay would be required for road calming along Green Street. He said one of the biggest problems with the intersection is sight distances. He said the DPW cut down two trees and that resulted in a major improvement. He said signs will be added to direct traffic to a more uniform approach. He said an option for Green Street is to narrow the lanes to 11.5 feet. He said this will

involve approximately 100 feet of milling and in-lay with thermoplastic markings that will last five years. He said that measure along with better signage will make the intersection safer. He said work could begin around April 15. Supt. Duran said April 15 is the earliest date the work could start and it would probably last until around June 1. He said it depends on the weather. Motion made by Councilor Viola and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to suspend the City Council's rules to allow any member of the council not on the committee to address the order; approved, 5-0. Councilor Pappalardo said the city officials involved in this project are doing a great job, but since the trees were chopped down there have been four accidents. He said the city has to execute the plan. He said this problem isn't going away. He said there is a trucking restriction on Green Street but the trucks often don't obey the signs. He said when the trucks take a right from Green Street onto Holton Street, that is when the tipping happens. He said he thinks the city should revisit that. Engineer Corey said one of the things that was discussed was re-grading, but there is no record of where the utilities are. He said re-grading would involve the installation of a retaining wall, which is outside of the scope of what has been discussed to this point. He said they can revisit a bigger project, if the committee wishes. Councilor Pappalardo said he feels that would really help. He said trucks are using that road. Mayor Concannon said re-grading of that corner was always on the table, but the thinking was if the trees were taken out, then they might not have to re-grade. He said there will be a little exploration period. Engineer Corey said he thinks the city can reassess that. Councilor Pappalardo said he thinks the problem is bigger than removing a couple of trees. He said there was a recent accident that involved a truck catching fire. Councilor Toro said he lives off Green Street and agrees the city has to do something with that area. He said the trucks that violate the trucking restriction need to be penalized. He said it's clear trucks are not allowed to be traveling that route. He said if they are using GPS to get there, that's on them. He said he does not know if taking land is the best option. He said some of the truckers just don't care. He said it's clearly marked that there is no trucking. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said this has been a great collaboration. She asked where the city is financially with this project. Auditor Doherty said if there are modifications to the project more money will be required. Supt. Duran said once the frost is out of the ground, they can do test pits. He said once that happens they can start planning what the next move will be. Engineer Corey said the city can look at better rounding of the intersection. He said he is confident they can find a solution. Councilor Mercer-Bruen thanked city officials for the work they are doing. She said this intersection has been notorious for decades. She said when you're coming from Winchester up the hill to cross Green Street, there is a time of day you can't see. Engineer Corey said at this time of year visibility can be brutal at night. He said there is nothing the city can do about it. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said that spot is the only place she has been blinded. She said it is great that the city is making progress. Councilor Demers asked if there has been any thought of sending notices to the businesses on Holton Street advising them of the truck restrictions so they can let their drivers know. Mayor Concannon said the city could send out some sort of advisory. Councilor Demers asked if the city could enhance traffic enforcement. Mayor Concannon said the city has to have an approved truck route plan, and in order to that the city would have to undertake a study. He said there have been discussions about revisiting a previous study. He said the new plan would then have to be approved by the state. He said most of the no trucking signs in the city don't have the teeth they need to have. Councilor Demers asked if that's true why are there even signs up. Engineer Corey said deciding on truck routes is going to involve some tough decisions. He said at some point the plan would have to come to the City Council. Mayor Concannon said there have to be trucking routes in the city. Councilor Demers said Woburn is

being punished by Waze and Google Maps. He said there has to be some sort of provision to provide those routes to the applications. He said the trucking restrictions in Boston are on Waze and Google Maps. Mayor Concannon said Boston's truck routes have been approved. Engineer Corey said there are some truck routes that were approved by MassDOT that can be submitted to Waze. Councilor Ferullo said for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. He said if the city puts up no trucking signs in one place they are going to hurt someone somewhere else. He said if you come off Route 128 and head south on Main Street, the first legal left turn a truck can take is on Salem Street. He said he likes the idea of dropping off packets to businesses advising them of the truck restrictions. He said state police are able to enforce trucking restrictions on state roads. He said another option is working with the traffic bureau. He said truck routes were a thorn in his side when he was the Police Chief. He said there are probably only a half-dozen no trucking signs in the city that are legally posted. He said coming up with a trucking plan will require a lot of thought. He said the city can start enforcing the restrictions it has. Motion made by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Councilor Viola to ask the City Auditor what has been spent on improvements at the intersection of Salem and Bow streets; approved, 5-0. Councilor Ferullo said the committee needs to keep in mind there are allowances for local deliveries. Federal Express, UPS, Amazon and the like are allowed to violate trucking restrictions is the drivers are making local deliveries.

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Resolve requesting City Engineer provide an update regarding improvements to Holton

Street and Green Street intersection: Mayor Concannon said there is an on-going project as the result of a request by Councilors Mercer-Bruen and Demers. He said the order calls for the installation of a pedestrian signal with flashing beacons. He said they looked at the rounding at the intersection of Salem and Beach streets. He said the consultant said there is not enough room to meet the ADA requirements. He said the DPW narrowed the roadway and put up signs indicating there is a new traffic pattern. He said after a few weeks the road was repainted to make the entrance to Beach Street a bit wider. Engineer Corey said they had to pull back the turning radius. He said there are two options, either to kick the curb out or leave everything as it is and ask residents for easements. He said they have talked to people. He said it's not going to happen right away. Supt. Duran said nothing new is going to happen before April 15. He said the city needs to get feedback. Engineer Corey said the goal is to put a crosswalk across Salem Street with signage, along with signs about 110 feet from the crosswalk that indicate there is a crosswalk ahead. He said everything has been a one step forward and learn. He said he realizes it is frustrating but they are getting there. Councilor Demers said the committee needs to know in which direction this project is going and how much it's going to cost. He said it will be a lot of money. He said there may be push back and the council needs to square that away. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she knew there was push back about the re-direction of traffic. She said she is glad solutions are still being discussed. She said there was something similar done on Washington Street, Washington Circle and Mill Street. She said the next logical step would seem to be communicating with the residents, especially if easements are required. She said this is a public safety issue and it needs to be addressed. Supt. Duran said if the curb is bumped out enough they won't need the easements. Mayor Concannon said the Washington Street/Washington Circle solution can't be implemented at Salem, Beach and Bow streets because the intersections have different configurations. Councilor Demers said the span is too

big. Supt. Duran said nothing can be done until the weather improves. City Engineer Rozycki said the curb needs to be moved away from the existing driveways. Mayor Concannon asked if the city can put up a sign on each side of the yellow line with an arrow, and signs that are 110 feet back that indicate there is a crosswalk ahead. Supt. Duran said those measures can't be implemented in the winter. Engineer Corey said they can install little Christmas tree signs. He said they will flash. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked if there was any differential in speed when the turn from Salem Street to Beach Street was narrowed. Engineer Corey said the Woburn Police Dept. collected data that showed the average speed decreased from 40 mph to 29 mph during the afternoon peak hour and to 23 mph in the morning peak hour. He said there was a calming effect. Motion made by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Councilor Ferullo to request from Engineer Corey the traffic data he cited from the Beach Street/Salem Street intersection; approved, 5-0. Motion made by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Councilor Viola to ask the City Auditor what has been spent on improvements at the intersection of Salem, Beach and Bow streets; approved, 5-0. Councilor Demers said he had a constituent reach out to him about this issue. He said the purpose behind the striping at the intersection of Salem and Beach streets was to prepare people for when the city does the curbing. He said the city wanted to warn people that something was in the offing. He said the goal is to keep it safe for kids walking to the two schools in the area. He said the curbing is an important piece so cars will come to a gradual stop before they turn onto Beach Street. He said he supports the curb cut piece. He said he only got one phone call about the striping. He said it might be a good idea to break down the project into phases. He said he thinks that would be a smart move. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she is fine with that as long as there is progress before school resumes in September. Supt. Duran said he thinks there will need to be some input from residents on Beach Street. Mayor Concannon said what makes sense is for the city to go back on April 15 and repaint the lines, maybe soften that turn, and pull back the double yellow line on Beach Street. He said there could be a message board put there to warn of the new traffic pattern. He said at some point the administration would request more input from this group about whether the better option is to bump out the curb cut or explore easements. Supt. Duran asked if there will be community meetings. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she and Councilor Demers can host community meetings. Councilor Demers said abutters that are affected would be invited. Mayor Concannon said that could happen around May. Engineer Rozycki said there are some things short term that will immediately help.

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MOTION made by Councilor Viola and seconded Councilor Mercer-Bruen to adjourn, 5-0. Chair DiMambro adjourned the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees

