MEETING OF THE
CITY OF WOBURN
TRAFFIC COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 16, 2017 – 4:00 P.M.
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL

Attending: Comm. Joanne Campbell, Comm. Tina Cassidy, Comm. Myles Collins, Comm. John Corey, Comm. John Duran, Comm. Raymond Mooney, Comm. Keith Peary, Comm. Lindsay Higgins.

Absent: Comm. Peter Socorelis.

Motion made and 2nd to waive the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting and to accept, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Socorelis absent).

No. 2016-21

On the petition relative to no commercial trucking signs on Green Street. Comm. Corey stated that 4,700 signs have been inventoried in the city, that one-third of the signs meet current standards, that once the data is compiled a five year capital plan for signs will be established, that it is highly likely that signs such as warning signs will be replaced first, and that trucking signs will likely be second or third in line for an upgrade. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be placed on file until a completed data record is received from the sign inventory consultant, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Socorelis absent). Appearing was David Fallon, 40 Green Street and he wanted to understand what action would be taken on his petition. Comm. Corey stated that the signs must be upgraded based on Federal Highway standard rules, that the inventory will be completed within two to three months, that all fieldwork has been completed and the information is being entered into a database, and that signs are no allowed to be affixed to utility poles. Mr. Fallon stated that he has seen signs affixed on utility poles in other communities. Comm. Corey stated that the signs could remain on utility poles if they meet standards. Comm. Duran stated that the city is working to have the sign project completed correctly. Mr. Fallon stated that it appears that nothing will be done with respect to truck traffic until the sign inventory is completed. Comm. Mooney stated that the Police Department can perform enforcement of trucking regulations but the preference is to do this in conjunction with improved signs, and that there have been enforcement efforts at the location within the last week. Comm. Cassidy stated that the Clerk can notify Mr. Fallon when the sign inventory is completed.

No. 2016-19

On the petition for review of safety zones and thickly settled area speed regulations. Comm. Campbell stated that the subcommittee consisting of Comm. Mooney, Comm. Cassidy and Comm. Campbell met on this matter, that the Police Traffic Bureau went out to inspect the safety zones based on the plan compiled by the City Engineer, that the discussion was to review on a case by case basis as to whether cut through streets should be included, that schools, parks and daycare centers would be safety zones, and that the subcommittee wants to establish definitions

such as how many children in an establishment would be considered a daycare. Comm. Cassidy stated that some daycares are located on dead-end streets or true side streets and many not need safety zone designation, and that the subcommittee has collected additional data relative to daycares. Motion made that the matter be continued to the next meeting of the Traffic Commission, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Socorelis absent).

No. 2016-16

On the petition relative to resident traffic and through traffic only restrictions. Comm. Mooney stated that the streets with the signs have been identified and a list was created, that there are eleven streets that he wants to put forward for the next meeting, that he is not certain whether to notify residents or have the Aldermen notify the residents, and that traffic safety as opposed to quality of life issues may be handled differently. Comm. Corey stated that he would like there to be a public meeting but not a public hearing, and that he wants to see the list of streets to allow the information to be placed on a map. Comm. Mooney stated that he wants to bring eight streets to the next meeting where there is the most concern, that he will distribute the list of eight streets to the Traffic Commission and then a public meeting can be held once the streets are determined, and that there are 31 or 32 streets involved by this would be too much to handle in one meeting. Comm. Cassidy stated that if there is not a public hearing the rules would have to be suspended to allow public input on the issue. Comm. Mooney stated that the eight streets that the he wants to bring in first have do not enter restrictions at both ends of the street at the same time of day. Comm. Duran stated that there sign inventory will have to be coordinated, and that there has to be certainty that there is a proper sign once the time or direction of travel is determined. Comm. Mooney stated that the signs are liability issues for the city, that if there is a collision on the street then there is an issue, and that an example is Washington Circle where removal of one sign at the end of the street will resolve the issue temporarily. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be tabled to the next meeting, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Socorelis absent).

No. 2016-14

On the petition relative to the request for traffic calming on Beacon Street at intersection with Sturgis Street. Comm. Corey stated that there is a conceptual plan, that an on ground survey must be completed to obtain correct grades, that there must be handicapped accessible access, and that the snow conditions have deterred progress. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be laid on the table to the April 2017 Traffic Commission meeting, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Socorelis absent).

No. 2017-1

On the petition relative to a review of crosswalks at Woburn Common and Woburn Center for pedestrian safety. Comm. Campbell stated that she spoke to the City Solicitor about the appropriateness of discussing the crosswalks in Woburn Center and that the City Solicitor stated there would be no objections in doing so, that since the last meeting she witnessed an incident where a vehicle nearly struck an individual in the crosswalk who was crossing from the westerly end of the Common to City Hall, that some action must be taken with respect to the crosswalk, and that she is not certain whether the solution is to move the crosswalk or to eliminate the

crosswalk. Comm. Corey stated that the functional design report includes a road safety audit, that preliminary analysis indicated over 500 accidents over a number of years which included pedestrian accidents in crosswalks, that it is best to leave the decision regarding crosswalks to the professionals, that if a crosswalk is eliminated it would force people further down the road to cross the street, that pedestrians could be crossed at the island, and that a signalized intersection would have four crosswalks but this is not a signalized intersection. Comm. Mooney stated that the Police Department is in favor of eliminating the crosswalk from the westerly tip of the Common to City Hall, that vehicles are supposed to stop at the intersection but do not, and that vehicles roll through the intersection consistently and directly into the crosswalk. Comm. Corey stated that there is a stop sign at the intersection. Comm. Campbell stated that there is no stop sign at the intersection, and that there is a flashing red light at the intersection. Comm. Mooney stated that the safer solution would be to have pedestrians cross further down Common Street. Comm. Duran stated that there is no easy answer, that further down Common Street is not a solution, and that the best solution is to leave the matter in the hands of the professionals. Comm. Campbell stated that action cannot wait, that it would not be responsible to not remove the crosswalk from the westerly tip of the Common to City Hall, and that she is not certain what the solution is but that a decision should not wait until the whole downtown project is completed. Engineering Department Senior Engineer Brett Gonsalves stated that the crosswalk from City Hall to the Mobil gasoline station was removed and curbs installed so that crosswalk no longer exists at that location. Comm. Corey stated that there were a series of crosswalks in that area. Comm. Campbell stated that if a pedestrian is on the sidewalk across from the northerly side of the Common they may have to walk down to the crosswalk at the courthouse. Comm. Corey stated that pedestrians are going to take whatever is most convenient. Comm. Mooney stated that police officers observations are that the eyes of many drivers when rounding the westerly corner of the Common do not look left towards the crosswalk over Common Street but look right towards the courthouse to see if there is oncoming traffic from Pleasant Street, that accidents occurred most often when there was a crosswalk across Common Street in front of City Hall, that this was followed at the crosswalk at the westerly tip of the Common, that people will cross the street where they want to cross, that people feel safe when they are in a crosswalk, that this is a false sense of security, and that the crosswalk under discussion has to be addressed. Comm. Corey stated that it may take three or four months for action on the functional design plan. Comm. Duran stated that the best place to move the crosswalk would be in front of the courthouse, that perhaps a traffic control signal at the courthouse would work, and that the traffic has to be slowed down. Comm. Mooney stated that there are also flashing pedestrian actuated signs that could be installed. Comm. Corey stated that the pedestrian actuated light would be less expensive than a full traffic control signal at the intersection, that there is evidence that other intersections are unsafe, that if one pedestrian actuated sign is installed at the crosswalk then under the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) a flashing sign would have to be installed for all of the crosswalks, and that a quick fix is to eliminate the crosswalk. Comm. Mooney stated that eliminating the crosswalk eliminates the sense of security for people crossing the street. Comm. Campbell stated that people in the crosswalk believe they are in a safe zone, and that it would be better to eliminate the crosswalk at the westerly tip of the Common and thereby eliminate that false sense of security and have the pedestrian find a safer space to cross. Comm. Mooney stated that there is a better line of sight crossing at the courthouse. Com. Duran stated that if the crosswalk is eliminated people will cross at that area anyway. Comm. Campbell stated that the crosswalk should be removed as it is located in a dangerous location, and that if a crosswalk must be installed it needs to be further down Common Street. Comm. Corey stated that there was a crosswalk further down Common Street that was eliminated because there were pedestrian collisions at that location. Comm. Higgins stated that it is not realistic to have

pedestrians walk down to the courthouse or to the opposite end of the Common to cross. Comm. Mooney stated that a study must determine the safety issue, that if the issue is avoiding fatal accidents the solution may be for a pedestrian to walk further down the street to cross, and that there is not a legal obligation to locate a crosswalk in the most convenient location but at the safest location. Comm. Higgins stated that the Alderman will get calls from constituents complaining if the crosswalk is eliminated, and that there has to be another crosswalk added. Comm. Duran stated that he could not add or remove a crosswalk during this winter weather. Comm. Campbell stated that the City Solicitor did not believe that there would be an issue if the crosswalk was removed. Comm. Mooney stated that the Police Department will also receive calls when there is an accident at the crosswalk, and that it is the recommendation of the Police Department that the crosswalk be removed until the study is concluded to determine whether the location of the crosswalk is safe. Motion made and 2nd that the crosswalk from the westerly tip of the Woburn Common crossing Common Street southwesterly towards the westerly side of Woburn City Hall be removed until such time as a functional design study including a road safety audit is completed which determines the appropriate location for the safe crossing of pedestrians, 6 in favor, 2 opposed (Corey, Duran opposed), 1 absent (Socorelis absent).

No. 2016-24

On the petition relative to safety improvements at Bedford Road and Cambridge Road intersection. Comm. Higgins stated that that intersection has been placed on the Construction Investment Plan list but is not on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) list this year. Comm. Cassidy stated that the intersection improvement project is in a pre-TIP phase but has no details, and that advancing the project would require some funding from the city for the initial design. Comm. Corey stated that the location is a State controlled intersection which would not permit any input expect to act as a party if a land taking is necessary, that most large projects are funded by the TIP, that this project expense is probably in the $500,000.00 range which is too small for the TIP, and that the project would like be funded out of a smaller pool of State funds. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be placed on file until more information is received, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Socorelis absent).

No. 2017-2

On the election of a Chair. Comm. Higgins stated that she enjoyed her time as Chair and thanked the Traffic Commission for their confidence. Comm. Cassidy nominated Comm. Higgins to serve an additional term as Chair. Comm. Higgins nominated Comm. Campbell to serve as Chair. Comm. Campbell stated that she understood that the Chair was for a one year term, and that she is willing to serve but is also willing to step aside if Comm. Higgins wants to continue to serve. Motion made and 2nd that the matter be laid on the table to the next meeting, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Socorelis absent).

Motion made and 2nd to adjourn, 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (Socorelis absent). Meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST: _____

William C. Campbell, City Clerk
and Clerk of Traffic Commission