

# City of Northampton, MA

## Transportation and Parking Commission

March 15, 2016

MEETING MINUTES  
Submitted by: Terry A. Yusko

1. Councilor Ryan O'Donnell called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and announced the audio/video recording of the meeting.

2. Members present and absent/introductions:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Councilor Ryan O'Donnell, Chair	X	
Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra, Vice Chair	X	
Dave Veleta, DPW Senior Civil Engineer	X	
Jody Kasper, Chief of Police	X	
Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability	X	
David Pomerantz, Director of Central Services	Absent	
Ann Brooks, Planning Board	X	
Christa Grenat, Citizen	X	
Gary Hartwell, Citizen		
Rich Cooper, Citizen		
Jami Albro-Fisher, Citizen		
<b>Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Nanci Forrestall, Parking Enforcement	X	
Maggie Chan, Traffic Engineer	X	
Terry Yusko, DPW Clerk	X	

3. Public comment:

- Zane Lumelsky of 20 Hampton Avenue, Northampton, MA would like to know what the status is of the request for a crosswalk on Hampton Avenue. Dave Veleta spoke about mid-block crosswalks and historically in the past the DPW hasn't allowed them, but with research the DPW is looking into seeing if a mid-block could be used on Hampton Avenue. Traffic counts for speed and volume as well as pedestrian counts have to be gathered first.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

Due to vacancy caused by Councilor Klein leaving the Commission.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To open nominations for the election on Vice Chair	Gary Hartwell	???????	

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To nominate Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra to Vice Chair	Councilor O'Donnell	Ann Brooks	

Councilor Ryan O'Donnell asked if there were other nominations for office of Vice-Chair, none were offered.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To close nominations for election of Vice-Chair	Ann Brooks	Gary Hartwell	Yes, 10 No, 0 Abstain, 0

Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra was elected to Vice-Chair by a voice vote of 11 yes, 0 no.

5. Reports

a. Approval of minutes for December 15, 2015 and November 17, 2015

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To take both sets of minutes as a group To approve the minutes	Gary Hartwell	Ann Brooks	Yes, 8 No, 0 Abstain: Councilor Sciarra Jami Albro-Fisher

b. Bicycle and Pedestrian Sub Committee update

Wayne Feiden announces the next forum for the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan is May 10, 2016 and then on May 18, 2016 is the workshop on Main Street.

c. Updates from DPW, Planning and other departments.

Maggie Chan stated the following updates:

1. Paving Contract 2015

- a. Warner Brothers will be back to do punch list items in the first week of April

2. Paving Contract 2016

- a. DPW is planning on repaving Park St and sections of Locust St, Park Hill Rd, Burts Pit Rd, and Bridge St for this year's paving project

3. Traffic Control Devices Contract 2016

- a. Installation of 10 accessible pedestrian buttons at various intersections
- b. Contract awarded to Central Mass Signal LLC

4. Crack Sealing Contract 2016

- a. Crack sealing various streets in the city
- b. Bid opening will be at the end of march

5. North/Summer/King/Finn (MassDOT - TIP 2018)

- a. Possible improvements include lane reduction on King Street, additional turn lanes, green space improvements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodation, and traffic signal upgrades
- b. 2/5 and 3/2: DPW met with Fuss and O'Neill to discuss initial concept plans

6. Conz Street Roundabout (MassDOT - TIP 2016)

- a. Columbia Gas needs to relocate gas lines before Gomes Construction can begin their work

7. Traffic Calming

- a. Priority ranking is now up on the TPC website  
(<http://www.northamptonma.gov/1118/Traffic-Calming>)
- b. Florence Road temporary speed hump will be placed in the spring

6. Announcements & Presentations – NONE

7. Requests, Recommendations & Appointments

a. Chamber of Commerce request to close the Strong Avenue Parking Lot from Friday, April 29, 2016 to Saturday April 30, 2016.

- Suzanne Beck, Executive Director from the Chamber of Commerce is requesting to close the Strong Avenue Parking Lot for their spring fundraiser, Annual Auction, on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> until April 30, 2016 to roughly 10:00am. They will be utilizing the parking lot for their 40 x 80’ tent.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To close Strong Avenue parking lot from early morning Friday, April 29, 2016 to early morning Saturday, April 30, 2016	Wayne Feiden	Ann Brooks	Yes, 10 No, 0 Abstain, 0

c. Review of study and data gathered by the DPW and possible vote on ranking of Traffic Calming Application #27: Nonotuck St/Elm St.

- Maggie Chan, DPW Traffic Engineer summarizes the traffic Calming Application by stating that the stretch of Nonotuck Street to Elm Street is about a 1 ½ mile long, with a posted speed limit of 30mph on Nonotuck Street and a posted speed limit 35mph for Elm Street. There are various signage and pavement makings along these two streets. A percent of vehicles are traveling 6-12mph above the speed limit on Nonotuck Street, and a percent of vehicles are traveling about 5-8mph above the posted speed limit on Elm Street.
- Alexander Papouchis, 113 Nonotuck Street – Florence, MA stated speeding is still continuing, also mentioned that there is no crosswalks for the high school students that walk along Nonotuck Street. Doesn’t think the data captures the full of extent of traveling down or being a resident of Nonotuck Street.
- Maureen Scanlon, 197 Nonotuck Street, Florence, Ma glad to see that the residents can be a part of seeing the Traffic Calming Application through the process and look forward to hearing the recommendations.

- Natasha Yakovlev, 147 Nonotuck Street – Florence, MA stated concern about South Main, Nonotuck, Elm and Federal Street, because there continues to be a near misses several times a day.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To request the DPW rank the Traffic Calming Application #27: Nonotuck Street and Elm Street	Wayne Feiden	Ann Brooks	Yes, 10 No, 0

10. Discussion Items/Other

a. Traffic issues near Northampton High School.

- Wendy Bernstein, President of the Northampton High School PTO, would like to revisit pedestrian safety at the High School. Some concerns are cars not obeying the speed limit or stopping at the crosswalks. In 2011 a calming application was submitted with Laura Hansen.
- Sue Sullivan a teacher at the High School and also a resident of Northampton, stated cars are just racing around and are not being aware of their surroundings. Lighting and crosswalks are an issue and would like to see raised cross walks.
- Michael DiPasquale of Woodlawn Avenue is speaking as a parent of a student at the High School is concerned about the intersection at Childs Park and North Elm Street and feels the intersection is tricking and particularly dangerous. Mr. DiPasquale feels the budget of \$35,000 for Traffic Calming needs to be more in balanced with the budget for roads, residents safety should be more of a top priority.
- Jim Nash challenges people to drive 35mph on Elm Street at the narrow point where the cars are parked to see if they can do it. Suggests a study starts there.
- Alex Ghiselin of 164 Riverside Drive, Florence, MA spoke about Carney Field Road, next to Milton Street that was closed about ten years ago for safety reasons.

b. Expanding the bus stop in front of the Academy of Music by removing parking spot(s).

- David Elvin, Senior Planner with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is here to speak about the potential changes of the current bus stops. First being in front of Pulaski Park where the new shelter is being installed, which will sit back further off the street. In front of the Academy(south side), there is a shortage on bus queuing space at the peak times , when there is as many as 6 or 7 vehicles that need to pulse from this stop. Currently, some vehicles are forced to wait around the corner on South Street, which backs up traffic. Also the thought is with people waiting in the new shelter they will not be able to see down the row of buses because of the shelter being set back further than before, farther away from the curb. So they would like to ask the City to extend the bus queuing area about 15 feet further east up to the crosswalk, this would mean eliminating a metered parking spot that is west of the crosswalk.

c. Moving the bus stop between Masonic St and State St to the intersection with Masonic St.

- On the Masonic Street (north) side, PVTA would like to restore the bus stop to its previous location from Masonic Street curb westerly about 55 ft, and then the four parking spaces slide west toward the cross walk signal at South Street. PVTA hopes the current position would encourage more people to use the crosswalk, but conflicts with vehicles turning right are more frequent than anticipated. So after trying this location for several years they think it would be best to move the stop back about 40ft towards Masonic Street.

These two items will be brought back to the Transportation and Parking Commission at a future meeting with some more possible changes.

## 7. Requests, Recommendations & Appointments

c. Review of study and data gathered by the DPW and possible vote on ranking of Traffic Calming Application #29: Lincoln Avenue.

- Maggie Chan, DPW Traffic Engineer spoke about the findings of the Traffic Calming Application for Lincoln Avenue. It was stated that Lincoln Avenue has two travel lanes but is not marked with a center line. The posted speed limit is 30mph and the average vehicles per day are 1,243, with the average speed of 30-31 mph.
- Thay Nguyen of 44 Lincoln Avenue spoke about the 20 children that live on this street. That she isn't able to walk her child in the morning to school on Lincoln Avenue because of the volume and speed of the vehicles. She feels a speed hump will slow vehicles down, not signs because the postings are ignored.
- Ms. Choi of 22 Lincoln Avenue asked if painting of lines, such as bike lanes, or a center line, could this be done on Lincoln Avenue, and when will some of these suggested measures be done.
- Jim Nash, Ward 3 association, spoke about statistics with the rates of speeds and accidents and mentioned that the fears that people have are real and we have to make our city streets safe, and lower the speed limits down to 20mph.

It was suggested that the State do a speed study on the minimum speeds on City streets to see if they can be lowered to 20mph. It also can work in reverse and could increase the posted speed limit. Councilor Ryan O'Donnell would like to have more information before ranking the traffic calming application for Lincoln Avenue. Maggie Chan suggested adding Lincoln Avenue to the painting list so a centerline can be added as a temporary solution in hopes to slow vehicles down.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To request the DPW rank the Traffic Calming Application #29: Lincoln Avenue	Wayne Feiden	Gary Hartwell	
To postpone ranking of traffic Calming Application #29: Lincoln Avenue	Councilor Ryan O'Donnell	Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra	Yes, 10 No, 0

10. Discussion Items/Other

e. Question of the addition of a stop sign on Henry Street at the intersection of Henry Street and Venture’s Field Road/Montview Avenue and review of DPW analysis

- Maggie Chan spoke about the DPW analysis, such as there is an existing stop sign at the southern corner of Mount View Avenue an a existing Yield sign on Venturers Field Road. The three items that warrant a stop sign and the criteria have not been met for this location. Such as the data doesn’t show volumes of vehicles between 1,000 and 2,500 on the surrounding streets, as well as a restricted view and three or more vehicle accidents at this site.
- Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra feels that there are many site line issues and asked Maggie Chan how that gets measured.
- Jim Nash shared photos of him in his car at the different locations showing how there are site line restrictions. Lack of sidewalks and curbs are a problem and the traffic speed. Most accidents aren’t reported therefore the DPW analysis would be incorrect. Mr. Nash would like to see stop signs at this intersection. Would like to have the intersection redesigned if stop signs aren’t allowed.
- Madeline Blanchette, 41 Valley Street owns the property that runs along Montview Avenue. There is wild erratic driving in the neighborhood, used as a cut through. Ms. Blanchette believes the DPW report doesn’t grasp the issues happening at this intersection. Also, there are no trees, the sidewalks are crumbling and therefore the lawns are taking a beating.

At Councilor O’Donnell’s suggestion, items 1F, 7B, 8A, 9A, 9B, 9C, 10D & 10E are postponed to the next meeting without objection

New Business and Adjourn

Motion	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
Adjourn	Gary Hartwell	Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra	Yes 10, No 0