

City of Northampton, MA  
Transportation and Parking Commission

February 16, 2021

MEETING MINUTES

Submitted by: Beth A. Kaplowitt

1. DPW Director Donna LaScaleia called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and announced that there would be audio/video recording of this virtual meeting.

**Members present and absent/introductions:**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director, Chair	X	
Jody Kasper, Chief of Police, Vice Chair	X	
Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability	X	Arrived about 4:20 p.m. & Left around 5:00 p.m.
Nanci Forrestall, Parking Enforcement Administrator	X	
Jim Nash, City Council Vice President	X	
Karen Foster, Ward 2 City Councilor	X	
Debin Bruce, Citizen	X	
Gary Hartwell, Citizen	Absent	
Adam Novitt, Citizen	Absent	
Jami Albro-Fisher, Citizen	X	
<b>Advisor</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Maggie Chan, DPW Traffic Engineer	X	
<b>Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Cyndi Quinn, DPW Administration Manager	X	
Beth A. Kaplowitt, DPW Clerk	X	

**2. Public comment**

- None.

**3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting (s): January 19, 2021**

- A motion was proposed and seconded and a roll call vote was taken. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To approve the minutes from the January 19, 2021 meeting.	Debin Bruce	Jody Kasper	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0

#### 4. Reports from departments and subcommittees/announcements/presentations

- Department of Public Works (DPW) - Director Donna LaScaleia
  - **Atwood Drive** is planned for reconstruction this year and includes roadway resurfacing and waterline improvements. The estimated project cost is roughly half a million dollars. It is currently out to bid, and is expected to be completed by the end of this construction period;
  - **Smith College Design Clinic** - A group of senior engineering students from Smith College are developing a complete streets conceptual design for South Street from School Street to South Park Terrace with guidance from the DPW. This will incorporate a more pedestrian friendly design and look at the street in a holistic way;
  - **Exit 19 Roundabout** is nearly complete;
  - **Damon Road reconstruction** is going to be ramping up with the good weather.
- Councilor Jim Nash announced that the traffic study which will be looking at the lost truck problem is moving in a positive direction. He thanked the DPW, the Mayor and the Plant Manager of Coca Cola for their assistance with this.

#### 5. Matters before the Commission

- a) Overview of proposed safety improvements to Maple Street/Pine Street/Mann Terrace intersection
  - Director LaScaleia gave background to and an overview of the DPW's proposed project as set forth in in a February 8, 2021 document addressed to residents titled "RE: Pine Street Paving Project – Summer/Fall 2021";
  - The intersection of these three streets has had a high incidence of accidents and near misses for a long time;
  - The DPW analyzed the streets regarding paving and safety enhancements;
  - Pine Street needs reconstruction, so Fuss & O'Neill was hired to do an engineering study. They developed a list of alternatives that the DPW reviewed. The DPW publicized the details to the area residents in the letter cited above;
  - Chief Kasper did a collision analysis over a 5 year look-back period and discovered that all of the many accidents occurred between 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., and 96% involved Pine Street cars colliding with Maple Street cars. Twenty-three percent of the Pine Street drivers ran the stop sign and another 23% stopped but then proceeded because they thought it was a four way stop (it is not);
  - The public was invited to comment:
    - ❖ Marci Linker of 107 Black Birch Trail is in favor of the proposed changes. She has had a lot of near misses there;
    - ❖ Bob Gardner & Mary Albert of 24 Pine Street feel positive about the four way stop proposal but feel that speed calming bumps should also be considered;
    - ❖ Ann & Joe Wassel of 32 Pine Street support the four way stop proposal since sightlines are difficult and speed is increasingly an issue;
    - ❖ Maura Plante & Michael Romanovitch of 28 Pine Street said that potholes have been a speed deterrent, and that when they are fixed, speeds will increase, so they would like to see speed bumps installed;
    - ❖ Dennis Desmond of 50 Middle Street said that he makes local deliveries and feels that four-way stops don't work – they create more problems than they solve. He proposed that large stop signs be installed on both sides of Florence Road before the stoplight at the Florence Road/Rocky Hill Road intersection;

- ❖ Elena Huisman of 19 Mann Terrace said that she sees the need for some kind of traffic calming measures on Pine Street. She asked why the DPW did not bring some of the additional possibilities developed by Fuss & O’Neill forward;
- ❖ Jeffrey Bot of 32 Pine Street supports the changes for Maple Street and Pine Street, but said that speed is his primary concern. He wants the Pine Street/Chestnut Street intersection problems to be addressed as well;
- ❖ Christine Lebel of 47 Pine Street agrees that the intersection needs improvement and affirms that there are sightline problems on Pine Street. She would like to know about the cul-de-sac and roundabout options;
- ❖ Councilor Jarrett said that he has heard from other residents who made some suggestions including squaring off the Chestnut Street/Pine Street intersection. He has been directing people to the online traffic calming forms;
- ❖ Maura Plante & Michael Romanovitch of 28 Pine Street suggested crosswalks be installed at the Pine Street/Chestnut Street intersection;
- ❖ Councilor Foster said she would like to hear Director LaScaleia’s perspective on suggestions that have been offered by residents;
- ❖ Director LaScaleia responded that an engineering company with expertise in traffic issues was hired to assess this complex intersection with a high crash rate. The DPW then internally vetted their recommendations, seriously considering the pros and cons of each, always considering which one (s) would be most advantageous to the most residents. They also vetted the suggested solutions with the Fire Department, and carefully analyzed the robust data that was available from a traffic study done by PVPC in 2014. In addition, they investigated the potential costs involved in solving significant drainage issues, the relocation of utility poles, and overhead utility and water/sewer structural issues that would be required for each scenario;
- ❖ Commission members thanked the DPW for the work that has been done, and Director LaScaleia responded to additional questions and concerns that were raised by both Commission members and the public.

b) Proposed Ordinance for Stop Signs on Pine Street, Maple Street and Mann Terrace

- Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
- A motion was proposed and seconded;
- There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Stop Signs on Maple Street, Mann Terrace, and Pine Street to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Karen Foster	Debin Bruce	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0

c) Proposed Ordinance for One-Way Street on a Section of Mann Terrace

- Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
- A motion was proposed and seconded;
- There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to One-Way Street on Mann Terrace to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Debin Bruce	Jody Kasper	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0

- d) Proposed Ordinance for turn restriction on Mann Terrace at Pine Street
- Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
  - A motion was proposed and seconded;
  - There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Turning Restriction on Mann Terrace to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Jody Kasper	Karen Foster	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0

- e) Proposed Ordinance for Pine Street No Parking Zone
- Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
  - A motion was proposed and seconded.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Pine Street to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Debin Bruce	Jody Kasper	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0

- Director LaScaleia said that the DPW has received many comments from residents who feel that the width of the street is currently functioning as a traffic calming one-way traffic measure;
- Councilor Nash said that the neighbors do want parking in front of their homes – he thinks that this is an acceptable pattern since it doesn't involve eliminating those spaces;
- There was no further discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

f) 2020 Annual Traffic Safety Report

- Chief Kasper said that this yearly presentation is mandated by Ordinance;
- 2020 was a unique year regarding citations (which dropped from 3,000 to 1,700) and accidents due to the pandemic. Officers were directed to not cite drivers for minor violations during this time;
- An overview of the report shows that operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs (OUI) numbers in 2020 had dropped significantly (45%) from 2019. OUI: Drugs charges increased from 5.4% in 2019 to 9.8% in 2020;
- Collision numbers dropped from 596 in 2019 to 366 in 2020 probably because there were fewer cars on the road;
- Grant work has been impacted as well - they pulled back due to COVID;
- The number of car seats installed dropped from 2019 to 2020;
- Councilor Nash said that the data for OUIs can be viewed in the open portal.

**6. New Business**

- Director LaScaleia asked that anyone who has comments or concerns about the Pine Street/Mann Street project should contact the DPW by email at [dpwinfo@northamptonma.gov](mailto:dpwinfo@northamptonma.gov).

**7. Adjourned at 5:48 p.m.**

- A motion was proposed and seconded and a roll call vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
Adjourn.	Jami Albro-Fisher	Jody Kasper	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 0