

City of Northampton, MA
Transportation and Parking Commission

May 18, 2021

MEETING MINUTES

Submitted by: Beth A. Kaplowitt

1. DPW Director Donna LaScaleia called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and announced that there would be audio/video recording of this virtual meeting.

Members present and absent/introductions:

Member	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director, Chair	X	
Jody Kasper, Chief of Police, Vice Chair	X	
Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability	X	
Nanci Forrestall, Parking Enforcement Administrator	X	
Jim Nash, City Council Vice President	X	
Karen Foster, Ward 2 City Councilor	Absent	
Debin Bruce, Citizen	X	
Gary Hartwell, Citizen	Absent	
Adam Novitt, Citizen	X	Arrived at 4:17 p.m.
Jami Albro-Fisher, Citizen	X	Left at 4:30 p.m.
Advisor	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Maggie Chan, DPW Traffic Engineer	X	
Staff	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Cyndi Quinn, DPW Administration Manager	X	
Beth A. Kaplowitt, DPW Clerk	X	

2. Public comment

- Nick Horton from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee said that the Main Street reconstruction can lead to many exciting opportunities. Multiple options have been proposed - he has dates and reflections to offer. He feels that Main Street cannot be expected to provide most of the parking for the City, and he referenced data collected in a 2015 parking study. He likes that the improved wayfinding signs have been installed and wonders if that information can be made available in other ways, such as apps;
- Diana Day introduced herself. She has applied for the vacant position on the TPC. She is an attorney who recently moved here from Arizona. She is familiar with the guidelines for safe roads and has other relevant experience that she can bring to the group;
- Fred Zimnoch from Ward 3 said that he was recently at a meeting and heard about changes being considered for Phillips Place. Director LaScaleia offered to answer his questions about this tomorrow.

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting (s): March 16, 2021

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

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To approve the minutes from the March 16, 2021 meeting.	Jody Kasper	Debin Bruce	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 1

4. Reports from departments and subcommittees/announcements/presentations

- Department of Public Works (DPW) - Director Donna LaScaleia
 - **Atwood Drive Water Main Replacement** - Atwood Drive is undergoing roadway reconstruction and water line replacement;
 - **Street Repaving** - The City has plans to repave Pine Street, Warfield Place, Hayes Avenue, Meadow Street, and Loudville Road. This project includes reclaiming the pavement, drainage and sewer pipe replacements, bridge repairs, intersection reconfiguration, pavement markings, sidewalk and curb ramp improvements, and curb work. The project was awarded to Warner Bros LLC. The project is expected to begin in June;
 - **North Farms Road** - The City contracted with Palmer Paving Corp. last year for pavement reclamation and drain improvements. The contractor may be on North Farms Road to finish up punch list items.
- Department of Planning & Sustainability - Director Wayne Feiden
 - During the third week in June there will be a forum held regarding Pleasant Street from Hockanum Road;
 - Installation of the four new Valley bike stations that are planned will be delayed due to a gas leak.

5. Matters before the Commission

- a) Proposed Ordinance on adding accessible parking spaces at CT Greenway River Parking Lot
 - Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
 - A motion for a positive recommendation was proposed and seconded;
 - Director Feiden explained that this is about improving both short and long term accessibility for the CT Greenway River parking lot. There will also be new signs installed to increase visibility;
 - Several members expressed support for modified signage which would use active icons rather than the traditional static signs. Director LaScaleia will check into the regulations regarding signage standards;
 - A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Off-Street Handicapped Parking Spaces to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Wayne Feiden	Jody Kasper	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0

b) Updates on Certain Previously Submitted Traffic Calming Requests

- The Traffic Calming Request (TCR) for Hatfield Street was submitted in November 2020. There are safety concerns regarding the lack of safe bike routes between downtown and the River Valley Coop. Due to holdups with a MassDOT project, which has since been cancelled and is in the process of being reassigned to a new team, the City cannot take action on this request at this time because City resources cannot be devoted to a street that MassDOT may be considering reconfiguring. The DPW will work to improve streetlights in the area;
- The TCR for Cross Street at Bliss Street was submitted on November 15, 2020. There is no stop sign at the “T” of those two streets, and the request is for a stop sign at the bottom of Cross Street. The DPW recommended an Ordinance to enhance safety in the area. This was approved by City Council, and the DPW will be installing signs soon. The TCR will be closed because it has been resolved;
- There have been several TCRs submitted regarding Pine Street, Maple Street & Mann Terrace. The Police Department (PD) collected data over five days which showed that there is no speeding problem on Pine Street. This data was compared to that from a 2014 study and was found to be almost identical;
- Director LaScaleia says that designs for the Chestnut Street and Beacon Street intersection have been redesigned. The intersection is too narrow and therefore vehicles need to slow down to enhance pedestrian safety. In terms of the requests for dedicated bike lanes, the DPW must work within the available amount of the public right-of-way, and there is not enough width available here – there are just too many space constraints. The DPW will install pavement and markings indicating that the roadway is shared with bikes. ADA compliant sidewalks are also being installed in the area;
- Councilor Nash expressed concern that the North King roundabout may not happen. It has been under discussion for at least the last 15 years, and this would be a real setback.

c) Discussion of Traffic Calming Request for Old Wilson Road

- This request was received on October 30, 2020. Old Wilson Road is a narrow country road which connects Florence Road and Rocky Hill Road. There are 25 mph speed limit signs posted, but speed limit regulations do not actually exist there, so these signs are incorrect and illegal. Any areas considered “thickly settled” should have a 30 mph limit, and outside of those areas the speed limit should be 40 mph;
- The PD assessed the speed data and detected no speeding problem. They also did a five year look-back of collision data and found a record of only one collision which was between a vehicle and a deer and did not involve speeding;
- Director LaScaleia and Chief Kasper will issue a formal written recommendation back to the TPC at a later date.

d) Discussion of TCR for Orchard Street

- This request was received on November 10, 2020. The request is that the speed limits here should not be more than 20 mph, rather than the 30 mph indicated on the posted speed limit signs;
- The PD did a five year collision “look-back” and found that there were four collisions in that time period. They were all minor incidents with no personal injury involved, and the PD determined that there was no single contributing factor;

- The PD also determined that there was no speed issue, since over a 16 day period, the average speed of almost 8,500 vehicles was measured and found to be 20 mph which is well below the posted limit;
- The DPW discussed some possibilities internally. One was to remove parking regulations on the street so that cars are parked on alternating sides in order to create a visual guide to cause drivers to slow down. A second possibility that was discussed would be to install painted bump-outs, but drivers tend to hit them;
- Members expressed their opinions regarding the two suggested possibilities and brought up some additional concerns;
- Director LaScaleia and Chief Kasper will meet to further consider the options.

6. New Business

- Debin Bruce said that the TCR on South Street has been a big topic of conversation on the neighborhood listserv. It seems that some residents thought that there would be public comment on the topic at this TPC meeting. Director LaScaleia will send some information to Debin to help her summarize what has been done for the members of the list serve.

7. Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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

Motion	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
Adjourn.	Jim Nash	Debin Bruce	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0