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TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING

September 18, 2024 (In Person)

5:30 PM

IN ATTENDANCE: Chair Elena Proakis Ellis, Commissioner Dan Krechmer, Commissioner Elizabeth Peart, Councilor Kim Vandiver, Commissioner Jeff Parenti, Sgt. Jon Goc – Technical Advisor, Jennifer Rosa – Clerk

The meeting is called to order at 5:36 PM. Elena states that the meeting is being recorded. Sgt Goc is a voting member this evening in Chief Faller's place. Commissioner Peart and Commissioner Krechmer will be here for their final meeting, and we would like to thank them for all of their hard work. We will be welcoming new members in December.

I. Continued Business:

1. Approve March 2024 and June 2024 meeting minutes

Elena states that the March 2024 minutes are ready for approval. Motion to approve the March 2024 minutes is made by Commissioner Parenti, seconded by Commissioner Peart. All are in favor, so the meeting minutes are approved. We will vote on June 2024 and tonight's meeting minutes in December.

2. Provide traffic volume update for both E. Wyoming Ave and Summer St

Sgt. Goc states that there were two data collections done in August. He specifically asked if the residents wanted it done over the summer or if they wanted to wait until fall and there were no objections to proceeding in August. The device was placed in front of 34 E. Wyoming Ave on Tuesday, August 13th and data was collected through Sunday, August 18th. Over the 6 days there were 13,783 cars, bikes and trucks recorded. It roughly comes out to 2,300 cars a day. During the am peak hour there were 189 cars in an hour (3 cars a minute). The pm peak hour had 291 cars (roughly 5 cars a minute). The average speed was 21.6 mph. The 85th percentile was 25 mph. There were 52 cars going over 32mph. This comes out to be less than half a percent. On Summer St it was a little bit surprising to Sgt Goc. He states that there was nothing concerning, it just presented stronger data. On Wednesday, August 21st through Monday, August 26th, data was collected at 22 Summer St. There were 14,376 cars over this period, averaging 2,400 a day. Lane 1 was going towards E. Wyoming and there were 6,350 cars. Lane 2 was coming down the hill and there were 8,026 cars. The am peak time was on Monday and there were 207 cars. The peak pm hour was Friday and had 287 cars. The speed avg was 24 mph which is about 2 mph more than East Wyoming Ave. Sgt Goc states that there were 151 traveling over 32 mph, which is less than 2.9%. Resident Eva Cincotta asks Sgt. Goc how this volume compares to other streets, and he states that these numbers are very normal.

Elena asks the commission if they have any thoughts on the data that was presented. Commissioner Peart states that the volume is relatively low, and the speed is low as well. Councilor Vandiver is still concerned about the speeding of the small percentage of cars. Commissioner Parenti agrees with the data being presented and states that these numbers are very typical. He points out that all the streets in Melrose

take on some of the cut-through traffic. We each use each other's streets. The problem is shifting the traffic from one street to the next is not a solution. The best use of our time is to discuss what we can do about it. Can we reduce speeds even lower than what we are seeing? He does not see anything alarming taking place on these streets.

Commissioner Krechmer agrees that it is a small percentage driving recklessly and the videos that were shared before the last meeting shed light on what could happen.

Elena emphasizes before public comment is opened that this item was discussed at a prior meeting, so please try not to repeat the same concerns. She also states that the Traffic Commission role does not include traffic calming or intersection reconfiguration. If you have ideas that are regulatory in nature, those are the things that we would like you to share.

Councilor Vandiver makes a motion to open public comment, seconded by Commissioner Krechmer. All are in favor, so public comment is opened.

Alex Vandiver is a resident at 91 Crescent Ave and is annoyed with the transparency of the meetings. He states that the meeting minutes/agendas are not accessible. He feels that the speed limit is 25 mph for a reason and is concerned with the 2.5% of vehicles that are speeding in this area. People other than drivers are using the streets, so speeding is a safety issue. He mentions that the street is 23 ft wide, which is wider than it needs to be, so he suggests narrowing it. He disagrees with the data that was collected and does not feel that it captures what is going on in the area.

The next resident states that she lives on Summer St and feels that the study should have been done in the fall. She is very concerned about the heavy trucking and would like a sign put up, so that they avoid going down the street. It is a cut through street where people speed and disregard the stop signs. There are a lot of cars parked on the street and limiting parking to only one side may help.

Chris Coughlin is a resident at 27 Summer St and states that he was not able to attend the last meeting but had submitted a letter. He has lived here for about nine years and mentions that he put a camera up for this exact purpose. He doesn't feel that everything in the area has been captured in this traffic report and feels the timing of it wasn't beneficial and representative. During the school year he believes that the data will be different. He feels that the study should be redone during the school year. If the data is the same, then maybe the concerns that they have are not justified. He is curious about the citation data in this area. A lot of cars park on the street to help slow down cars, but there are residents that do not park on the street because they are afraid that their vehicle will get hit. He states that Lynde St has speed bumps, and that traffic is now being diverted down Summer St. He doesn't feel that it is fair to neighboring streets to divert the traffic. He states that he doesn't have a solution, but he does agree with his neighbors that limiting the traffic to one-way at the end of E. Wyoming Ave would help.

Elena mentions that in terms of the one-way street request, the commission does not want to put this on the agenda until we get a petition submitted from the neighborhood with most of the neighborhood signing on. If the neighborhood wants this considered that is how we would move forward with this.

Ken Murphy is a resident at 65 E. Wyoming Ave and states that his concern is that the stop sign at the corner of Summer St is nonexistent because people just roll through it. He feels that installing a speed bump with a 30-foot setback from the stop sign will slow people down.

Jonathan McCurry of 16 Summer St speaks regarding Sgt Goc's data. He asks Sgt Goc what he found surprising about the data collected. Sgt Goc states that he just felt that with E. Wyoming Ave being wider that the speed would have been the same or less. The resident asks what an appropriate number of cars would be on Upham St and Elena states it is 18,000 cars a day and Howard St is a little bit less. The resident mentions that those streets have striped lanes, parking spots, and Main St has the curbs coming in. He wants to know what are determining factors for these features being added to these streets. Elena states that we stripe the major roads for 11 ft travel lanes. We only stripe the major roads. Additionally, a road like Summer St has parking on both sides, so there is no logical way to stripe. Elena mentions that the parking on both sides works as a traffic calming measure to slow cars down, so shifting parking to only one side may increase speeding. The resident goes on to say that we are saying that their neighborhood has been described as a cut through, however it doesn't qualify for line striping. Elena states that there are no criteria for striping, but it has been her experience that residents do not want to stripe as they think it decreases their property values. He then asks Elena if she feels that E. Wyoming Ave and Summer St are major roads such as Upham St, Franklin St and Howard St. Elena states that she does not. He poses the question to the Commission that wouldn't it make more sense for the traffic to go down Grove St. Elena states that everywhere in Melrose is a very residential area, so yes you can move cars to the more major roads, however those other streets are residential as well. It is hard to come up with a solution when you are discussing so many roads.

Commissioner Parenti states that he wants to advance the conversation and come up with a concrete idea.

The resident inquires about traffic signals on the street and Elena states that it does not meet the warrants. He then goes on to discuss speeding and ticketing with Sgt Goc, however as Sgt Goc mentioned in his data, speeding is not a significant problem on these streets being discussed, so they are going to focus their resources on the streets that have a larger number of vehicles speeding. The resident wants the 2% of vehicles that are speeding in this area gone, but as Sgt Goc mentions they are going to focus their time in a more problematic area. The resident then goes on to ask what can be done to slow traffic down on Summer St. Elena mentions intersection reconfiguration; however, this requires grant funding and is not within the jurisdiction of the Traffic Commission. We have added Summer St to the traffic calming prioritization list, but there is no guarantee as to when this will take place.

Eva Cincotta of 43 E. Wyoming Ave is surprised at the volume but likes the idea of a one way at Main St and a truck restriction. She also feels that a bump out at E. Wyoming Ave and Summer St would help. Speed humps may help even if temporary.

Resident Verge Brincheiro of 16 Summer St mentions that the volume isn't so much a problem as the speed. He states that he experiences speeding on a daily basis in this area and has difficulty just getting into his driveway.

The next resident asks for help in getting a one-way petition going for E. Wyoming from Main St to Chestnut St. If one way doesn't pass, then he feels enforcement is the next option. Sgt Goc asks about clarification on the one-way request. He states that they are looking for a one way from Chestnut St to Main St, so there would be no turning onto E. Wyoming Ave from Main St.

The next resident to speak lives on the corner of Chestnut St and E. Wyoming Ave. She doesn't think a one-way would help and feels that it would be terrible for Chestnut St. She feels that reconfiguring the corner would have a better impact.

Commissioner Parenti makes a motion to close public comment, seconded by Commissioner Peart. Elena states that we don't have anything to vote on. We have been talking about this for quite some time and a lot of the items are traffic calming. We have a proposal for a one-way that cannot be voted on at this time.

Councilor Vandiver asks about regulatory actions such as traffic signals and other things that we can do. Elena states that truck restrictions are a MassDOT process that cannot be done by us. Parking restrictions, turning restrictions, one-way streets and no parking are all items that the Traffic Commission can address. Sgt Goc states that he wants something decided. Elena wonders where we are sending cars if we divert traffic. Would the traffic go down Mt Vernon St? How would people that live on East Wyoming go?

Commissioner Parenti feels that a one-way proposal petition with signatures from everyone in the surrounding area that would be impacted is the next step. He states that one question that will come up from residents is how will I get home? Commissioner Krechmer states that in the short term there is the traffic calming list. Longer term is that both intersections could use some work.

Jenn Rosa asks Elena about the one-way petition and what streets would we want involved with the petition. Elena states that at a minimum we would want support from everyone in the area. Jenn confirms that the petition that we have on file only has signatures from E. Wyoming, so we would need signatures from the surrounding streets.

Councilor Vandiver asks the residents if temporarily they would park on the street to slow cars down, however they are not open to it as vehicles have been hit while parked. Commissioner Peart states that there are a lot of cars driving on the street, and they may be Melrose residents driving on a Melrose public street. She states that if there was a vote, she would not support in favor of a one-way street because it just pushes traffic to other streets. We also need to remember that a lot of homes now have two vehicles.

No vote is required, so we will wait for the petition for the next meeting. A resident asks about the traffic study being redone and Elena states that we asked everyone before the study was done if they wanted to wait until after the summer and then all wished to proceed. With that said another traffic study will not be done in this area.

3. Resident request to prohibit parking across from the driveway of 17 Brookledge Rd.

The proponent for this item has withdrawn his request.

Motion to adjourn is made by Commissioner Peart, seconded by Commissioner Krechmer. All are in favor, so the meeting is adjourned at 7:22 PM.