

RECEIVED

By City Clerks Office at 9:02 am, Aug 15, 2025

TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING

March 19, 2025 (In Person)

5:30 PM

IN ATTENDANCE: Chair Elena Proakis Ellis, Commissioner Jeff Parenti, Former Mayor Gail Infurna, Commissioner Kara Oberg, Commissioner Andrew Paul, Councilor Ryan Williams, Chief Kevin Faller, Sgt. Jon Goc – Technical Advisor, Jennifer Rosa – Clerk

The meeting is called to order at 5:36 PM.

I. Continued Business:

1. Approve December 2024 meeting minutes

Motion to approve the meeting minutes is made by Commissioner Paul, seconded by Former Mayor Infurna. Jenn Rosa states that Commissioner Oberg sent her an email with two small changes to the minutes, one in reference to the spelling of her name and the other to her business name. Both changes have been made to the minutes, so the motion to amend the minutes as noted is made by Former Mayor Infurna, seconded by Commissioner Parenti. All are in favor, so the meeting minutes are approved.

II. New Business:

2. Resident request to reconsider the location of the taxi stand located on Essex St

Elena states that this item was brought in through Former Mayor Infurna. A resident was concerned that there was a taxi stand and was questioning whether it was really needed there. The thought was that a 15-minute parking space would be better utilized by residents in the city. Elena mentions that the mayor's office also received a question about this parking space, which is why we felt that this item should be placed on the agenda. Motion to change this parking space to a 15-minute parking space is made by Former Mayor Gail Infurna, seconded by Councilor Ryan Williams.

Elena states that we tried to eliminate this space once before while Essex St was being redesigned. At that time, we were informed that when taxi companies get their taxi licenses, they are provided with a list of taxi stand locations, so we were contacted to put it back in and this location is also in the traffic code. The animal hospital at the time also liked the taxi stand for animal emergencies, even though it is technically not an allowable use of the taxi stand. Elena is a proponent of keeping the taxi stand where it is. Commissioner Paul asks if we need to identify an alternative location if we were to remove the taxi stand. Elena states that she is not sure about the regulations with the taxi companies and if anything else is required. Commissioner Parenti asks how many taxis are licensed to operate in Melrose. Elena states that there were around two or three at the time when they originally tried to make the change. Commissioner Oberg states that there is a hydrant there and wonders how the site lines are for that location. Commissioner Williams wants to have the space be made for guaranteed use. Former Mayor Infurna feels that a 15-minute parking space should suffice. Elena doesn't think there is anywhere else in the city where

the traffic code specifies where there is active loading. Section 220-59 in the traffic code is for taxi cabs and Section 220-60 is for loading and unloading zones. Commissioner Parenti knows cabs are on their way out, but they are very common for seniors. He has not seen one there, but he wants to make sure this service is available for residents. He suggests moving it to where the ramp is at Shaw's if we feel it is still needed. Former Mayor Infurna's concern is if we move it somewhere else on Essex St, that we are still taking away a spot and she supports a 15-minute spot. Elena states that we have a motion on the floor for a 15-parking spot. If it doesn't pass, we can entertain a different idea. Commissioner Oberg asks if we can add a 10-ft buffer to the space. It currently isn't striped, and it is a frequently used turn into the parking lot. It measures 30 ft from the hydrant to the curb cut and we need to be 10 ft from the hydrant and 5 ft from the curb cut, so we have a 15 ft parking space.

Commissioner Paul, Commissioner Williams, Commissioner Parenti, Commissioner Oberg, Chief Faller, and Former Mayor Infurna all vote Yes, Elena votes no. The motion passes with six yes votes and one no vote. Jenn Rosa will reach out to Tanji in the Clerk's Office, so she is aware for taxi licenses and then put it in the newspaper.

3. Resident request to have No Turn on Red restrictions at the intersection of Emerson St East and Lebanon St, all approaches

Elena states that the proponent of this item is Commissioner Chiarenza, however he was not able to attend tonight's meeting. With that, Elena asks the commission if they would like to discuss this item or table it until the next meeting. Commissioner Williams makes a motion to table this item until Commissioner Chiarenza is here, seconded by Commissioner Oberg. All are in favor except Commissioner Parenti, as he would like to discuss it as he feels it can be taken care of it tonight. Elena states that none of the approaches have No Turn on Red signs, nor is it in the traffic code. Former Mayor Infurna thinks there is one blind spot going west down E. Emerson St. Her opinion is that all other approaches are fine, and she would be concerned with traffic backing up in the area. There is a motion on the floor to table this item and the vote was that all were in favor to table except for Commissioner Parenti, so the item is tabled.

4. Resident request to change the intersection of Nelson Rd and Albert St from a 2-way stop to a 4-way stop

Jon Ackland of 9 Nelson Rd is the proponent of this item. He states that there are two intersections on Nelson Rd between Howard St and the Lynn Fells Pkwy. There is a four-way stop at Clifford St and Nelson Rd, but at the Albert St and Nelson Rd intersection it is currently only a two-way stop. Cars coming from Albert St at either side have a stop sign, but there is nothing on Nelson Rd. Cars tend to be going at a high-speed coming off the Lynn Fells Pkwy and ultimately don't slow down until they reach the stop sign at the Clifford St intersection. The same goes for cars heading towards Lynn Fells Pkwy. There was an accident recently at this intersection because it appears to be a four way, so people don't stop. He spoke to neighbors, and no one was opposed. He states that he is open to all suggestions.

Former Mayor Infurna asks Sgt Goc about speed data in the area. He states that he doesn't have any information on speed but does have crash data. There have been two crashes in the last 9 months and before that it was minimal. From 2022 to now there were only two incidents. The most recent accident

was a teenager that ran a stop sign. Motion by Former Mayor Infurna, seconded by Councilor Williams to open public comment. All are in favor, so public comment is opened.

The resident of 700 Lynn Fells Pkwy states that his house is on the corner of Nelson Rd and the Lynn Fells Pkwy. He has lived there for 40 years. He has a side driveway on the Nelson Rd side. He believes that it is a very safe street with a limited number of accidents. He feels that there are too many signs in the area and does not feel it should be allowed. Elena mentions that another resident that lives at 2 Nelson Rd sent an email and is against this item due to all the stop and go noise that it would create. Motion by Councilor Williams, seconded by Commissioner Oberg to close public comment. All are in favor, so public comment is closed.

Councilor Williams states that this location is 900 feet from Horace Mann School. Councilor Williams goes through the stops currently in the area. He feels that stop signs have limited drawbacks and he sees potential to add a benefit. He believes in giving this location a shot. Commissioner Oberg is hearing that speed is the problem and then the concern of cars starting and stopping. With this she suggests adding a mini traffic circle to slow cars down. Chief Faller drives this street every day but doesn't feel that there is enough crash data to add another stop sign. He also states that a lot of long-term residents in the area are not in favor. Former Mayor Infurna doesn't feel that she can support a four way stop either, but she likes the traffic circle idea. Elena states that she is not prepared to discuss a traffic circle in detail, as the request is for a 4-way stop. Elena states that we handed out 40 notices in the area and only 3 residents are in attendance.

Motion to deny is made by Former Mayor Infurna, seconded by Commissioner Parenti. Commissioner Paul states that if you are taking a left onto Nelson Rd, it is a very short distance to Albert St. He feels we should look at it from a compliance standpoint. Commissioner Parenti states that noise will be an issue as well at that intersection. Elena calls the role, Commissioner Paul is a yes, Councilor Williams is a no, Commissioner Parenti is a yes, Commissioner Oberg abstains, Chief Faller, Former Mayor Infurna and Elena all vote yes. The motion is denied.

5. Property tenant request to remove one parking space on Cherry St to west of the driveway exiting First Congregational Church

Janet Dotolo works at Melrose Daycare Center and is the proponent of this item. The daycare is located to at the rear of the First Congregational Church on Foster St West. The parking space being discussed is close to the exit, so people are having difficulty turning left onto the one way of Cherry St. Recently there was an ambulance that was at the daycare center that was unable to make the left turn. She passes around pictures so the commission can see the location being discussed. She also has a letter from a parent that hit the curb there. There have been a few accidents here as well. She understands that parking is tight in this area. When Elena looks at the aerial view of the location in 2023 and 2024, both times cars are illegally parked where the hashed area is. Elena asks the proponent if there is a problem making the turn even if cars are parked in the proper locations. The proponent states that you can make the turn, but it is still tight. Former Mayor Infurna visited the location and agrees that it is extremely tight.

No one else is here from the public, so public comment is not opened. One resident sent an email stating that he is against this because he feels that parking space adds a traffic calming element forcing vehicles to exit slowly from the parking lot. Councilor Williams spoke to a member of the daycare staff today and parked in this spot and then drove around and tried making the turn. He can see the challenge because it takes a very precise turn with the size of the vehicles today. Emergency vehicles also need to turn there as well. Councilor Williams would love to move the curb cut forward maybe 3 feet to still have people be cautious, but also not eliminating the whole parking space. Elena states that the spaces are 18ft and are the smallest that we can go. We can't move all the spaces, and we can't make them smaller. Elena continues that Cherry St was redesigned about 6 years ago and a lot of options were reviewed at that time. The curb cut meets the zoning requirements and was discussed with the Church at the time of the work being done. Commissioner Oberg feels that we need to eliminate the parking space. She states the street is only 9 feet wide and the fact that an emergency vehicle couldn't make the turn is a concern. Elena states that Jenn reached out to the church and they are in favor of removing the space. Commissioner Parenti is worried about people still parking there with the hash marks. The daycare can also put out cones in the spot. Sgt Goc mentions adding a sign in the location as long as wheelchairs were still able to get by. Motion to approve is made by Councilor Williams, seconded by Commissioner Oberg. Elena calls the role. Commissioner Parenti votes no, and all others are yes. The space will be removed, the sign will be removed and we will add the lines when we start painting this season.

6. Resident request to change the intersection of Cottage St and Hurd St to a 3-way stop from a 2-way stop

7. Resident request to add a two-way stop at the intersection of Cottage St and Cottage Pk

Elena states that the final 3 items on the agenda all relate to Cottage St and she is inclined to discuss Items 6 and 7 together and then do Item 8 separately. The reason being that Items 6 and 7 are related to stop signs and traffic calming, while Item 8 is related entirely to parking. Former Mayor Infurna makes a motion to take public comment together for these two items, seconded by Commissioner Paul. Elena calls the role and all are in favor, so public comment is opened. The project proponent is not in attendance.

The resident of 62 Cottage St states that there are a lot of near misses at the intersection of Hurd and Cottage. Usually cars heading west across Cottage St, do not respect the stop sign. It used to be a yield sign because of the angle. Cars still consider it a yield sign but fail to yield. At least once a day he hears horns from cars heading north on Cottage St because cars heading east to west that are not honoring the stop sign. He states that a fair number of cars heading northbound pause for no reason. For all these reasons, he is in favor of making this a 3 way stop. He also points out that there are no crosswalks on Cottage St between Foster St West and Wyoming St West. He doesn't know what the regulation is, but it feels like a long stretch and maybe a crosswalk would be helpful in the area. A crosswalk across Cottage St at Hurd St would be a safer option than the crosswalk that currently exists at Cottage St and Wyoming Ave West. Motion to close public comment is made by Councilor Williams, seconded by Former Mayor Infurna. All are in favor, so public comment is closed.

Commissioner Oberg discusses Cottage St being listed as a traffic safety zone in the code, but the area is not marked as 20 mph or a traffic safety zone. Elena states that it could be because of the school and elderly housing. Councilor Williams reads the code and states that Chapter 171 in the code is related to traffic safety zones specific to Melrose. Commissioner Williams states that he is very familiar with this area as a Lincoln parent and that getting to the school is a big event. He states that he would be in favor of a 3-way stop as well as a crosswalk at this approach. Sgt Goc states that there have been 3 crashes since 2022 and there was one in 2023. No serious crashes. The last one was in January, so 3 in total in 3 years. He states that there is no crash data for Item 7 and Commissioner Parenti confirms that he found the same data. Elena states that Hurd St is going to be paved within the next two construction seasons. We would be adding curb ramps and would have the opportunity to narrow in that intersection and have a crosswalk across Hurd St. Former Mayor Infurna wonders if we should do it now or wait until after the street is paved and the area is reconfigured. Councilor Williams states that it could be longer than a couple of construction seasons due to budget concerns and wonders if we add a stop sign now and use the information collected from adding it for when the time comes for construction in the area to see if it had an impact.

Elena states that the operations foreman indicated that the stop sign must be within the existing curb and so it is set back a little because of the odd angle of the intersection. Councilor Williams also mentions that when the train comes the area gets backed up. Former Mayor Infurna wonders if maybe we try this for a 90-day period. Elena states that she likes to vote with the warrants but feels this intersection is justified. Motion to approve a temporary stop sign is made by Councilor Williams, seconded by Former Mayor Infurna. Sgt Goc asks if we do this, what we are evaluating and who would be evaluating it. Commissioner Parenti states that we have warrants and federal guidelines for a reason. We should make sound permanent decisions. If people aren't complying with existing stop signs, then why add another if we know it doesn't work. We don't want to trade one problem for another. What is the unintended consequence of adding an unwarranted stop sign at this intersection and that is rear end crashes and noise. Commissioner Oberg wants to put this on the next agenda to eliminate the two stop signs and add a traffic calming circle. Elena states that this would be a decision that would have to be made in accordance with the funding for the paving project. Funding is tight and we are hoping to get a little more money. Elena states that she has concerns about doing a 90-day trial and then taking it out. Councilor Williams agrees from a traffic safety standpoint we need consistency. Councilor Williams withdraws his motion for a 90-day stop sign and Former Mayor Infurna withdraws her second on the motion. Elena states that she feels that we can make major improvements when we redo this intersection. She mentions that this item was brought to the commission in June 2018 and voted down. In discussion with the mayor's office, we did feel that enough time had passed so that we could consider it again.

Elena doesn't feel that Item 7 makes sense. She states the proponent would like to add a stop sign on Cottage St and Cottage Pk.

Motion to deny Item 6 is made by Commissioner Parenti, seconded by Chief Faller. Elena calls the role. Commissioner Paul and Councilor Williams vote no, Commissioner Parenti votes yes, Former Mayor Infurna votes yes, Chief Faller votes yes, Commissioner Oberg votes no and Elena votes yes. Motion is denied.

Motion to deny Item 7 is made by Former Mayor Infurna, seconded by Commissioner Oberg. Elena calls the role. All are in favor to deny, so the motion does not pass.

8. Resident request to restrict parking on Cottage St between Hurd St and Foster St West, or some portion thereof to 2-hour parking

Motion to open public comment is made by Former Mayor Infurna, seconded by Councilor Williams. Elena reads in the proponent's email as he is not in attendance (see attached). The resident of 108 Cottage St states that the whole neighborhood has issues. The street is heavily populated, and residents can't get out of their driveways. At the last meeting we were informed that Peabody Properties asked if we could table the issue and that they would reach out to the neighborhood. He states that it has been 90 days, and no one has been contacted. They all want to work together but we do have a problem. Elena asks if the neighbors are concerned about adding a parking limit and he states that there are no concerns from the area.

David Lucas and Jackie Bird are two of the eight members of the board of directors for Congregational Retirement Homes, which owns Levi Gould, Fuller House and the Cochrane House here in Melrose - the biggest provider of senior housing. He states that he is very concerned about the neighbors and about the needs of the residents of the buildings. He mentions that they did reach out to the proponent back in December, however he responded that he only wanted to discuss the matter via email. About a month later an email was sent out with some suggestions that Jackie Bird can discuss. David mentions that there are renovations that are currently going on. Jackie addresses the commission and states that they are very concerned. She is worried about the 2-hour parking limitation. The home health aides would be getting tickets if this were implemented. We want to be sure we aren't limiting the ability to provide services to these residents because they are neighbors too. David mentions that they have reached out to the Milano Center and asked about utilizing the parking over there. They stated that this would be fine, but this was just confirmed yesterday. He states that they would prefer to have a neighborhood meeting. Elena asked if she got a sense of how many cars were parked in the area that were either residents, aides or visitors. Jackie stated that they do not have an idea of who the cars belong to, however there are enough spaces in their parking lot for their staff. Elena wonders if the Beebe School would be an option as the library is moving out of that location. Jackie states that she will find out more about this option. Former Mayor Infurna wonders if there is room for more spaces at the Levi Gould. David states that there is currently a waiting list to get into the building and the waiting list for resident parking is even longer. Commissioner Oberg asks about benefits to employees for transportation and train use. David states that some employees go from building to building throughout the day. Jackie hopes that the commission will take into account that these residents are also neighbors and have visitors and needs.

Former Mayor Infurna wonders about marking spaces on the street. Striping doesn't require a vote of the traffic commission. Chief Faller wonders if we can ban commercial vehicles on the street. The resident states that it is not just commercial vehicles, it is the all-day parking. Former Mayor Infurna states that we need to remember that this is a public street. She feels that a good compromise would be marking spaces. Motion to close public comment is made by Councilor Williams, seconded by Former Mayor Infurna. All are in favor, so public comment is closed.

Elena asks if employees aren't parking in the lot, then how do we manage this. This would be a first step for Peabody Properties. Elena has a major concern pushing health aides out of the area. Chief Faller does not like adding a time limit and has not heard a complaint from residents about not having parking for their guests. He is hearing that the residents don't like cars parking on the street. Councilor Williams is concerned with where these cars are going to go. Maybe striping will help, but he is not a fan of no parking opposite driveway signs. He feels that the Beebe School is a good option. Commissioner Paul likes the idea of applying to park in a lot. Commissioner Parenti wonders if this was a single-family home, would people feel the same way. We can mark out the spaces, but more conversation and communication is needed between the neighbors and the retirement home. Motion to deny is made by Chief Faller, seconded by Commissioner Parenti. All are in favor, so the motion is denied.

Motion to adjourn is made by Councilor Williams, seconded by Former Mayor Infurna. All are in favor, so the meeting is adjourned at 8:09 PM.

From: [Caspar Tudor](#)
To: [Rosa, Jennifer](#)
Subject: Parking Issues on Cottage St (Traffic Commission)
Date: Tuesday, November 26, 2024 9:34:29 AM

Hi Jen,

I am a resident of Cottage St in Melrose (104 Cottage St). I am reaching out because we as residents are having a lot of issues with parking on our street.

Cars generally park on Cottage at 7 or 8 am and stay parked all day until around 5pm or so. As a result, it is near impossible to park on our street. This becomes an issue when pulling our cars out due to the tandem parking driveway situation of many houses on this road (ours included). In addition, due to the lack of open parking space on the street, cars keep parking opposite our driveway as they seek to find an open space and resort to other tactics. Further compounding the issue is that the street is not very wide and becomes very busy throughout the day as people often use it as a cut-through. So all this parking makes the street very congested and I have even noticed issues with fire trucks reaching the main entrance of the nursing home on that street at certain times of day.

I would like to request that the parking commission re-evaluate the street and consider putting on a 2 hour parking restriction. This will prevent people from parking there and then walking over to the train station for the day. It will also enable easier parking for those visiting the houses on the street as well as the nursing home. Many of those visitors are also elderly and I'm sure would appreciate being able to park a bit closer for their visits.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Caspar

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