



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 2, 2017  
REPORT OF THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

| Attendee Name        | Title               | Status  | Arrived |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|
| Robert J. McWatters  | Chair               | Present |         |
| Matthew McLaughlin   | Vice Chair          | Present |         |
| Tony Lafuente        | Ward Four Alderman  | Absent  |         |
| Maryann M. Heuston   | Ward Two Alderman   | Present |         |
| Mark Niedergang      | Ward Five Alderman  | Present |         |
| Lance L. Davis       | Ward Six Alderman   | Absent  |         |
| Katjana Ballantyne   | Ward Seven Alderman | Present |         |
| William A. White Jr. | Alderman At Large   | Present |         |
| John M. Connolly     | Alderman At Large   | Absent  |         |
| Mary Jo Rossetti     | Alderman at Large   | Present |         |
| Dennis M. Sullivan   | Alderman At Large   | Present |         |

Others present: Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Adam Polinski - OSPCD, Suzanne Rinfret - T&P, Terry Smith - T&P, Lt. Polito - SPD, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Alderman McWatters and adjourned at 7:46 PM.

**Approval of the July 12, 2016 Minutes**

**RESULT: ACCEPTED**

**199244: That the Commissioner of Public Works or the Director of Traffic and Parking install traffic calming measures on Cameron Avenue and Clarendon Avenue.**

See discussion of item 201477.

**RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**199282: That the Director of Traffic and Parking suggest traffic calming measures on Pembroke Street to slow traffic that cuts through to avoid the traffic light at Central and Medford Streets.**

Mr. Rawson said that this item will be looked at

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**199700: That the Traffic Commission consider installing a temporary speed bump on Governor Winthrop Road near Grimmons Park to protect children from speeding vehicles.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**199845: That the Director of Traffic and Parking notify MASS DOT about the malfunctioning traffic signal at McGrath Highway and Medford Street.**

Alderman White would like the city's state delegation notified if MASSDOT doesn't respond to requests.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201477: That the Traffic Engineer and the Chief of Police suggest traffic calming measures for High, Sterling, Fairfax and Gordon Streets and Woods Avenue and report back to the Ward 7 Alderman.**

Mr. Rawson gave a synopsis of the Article 14 process and said that the required number of signatures was reduced from 20 to 6.

Alderman Ballantyne explained that the issue is with the streets that run from North Street to Alewife Brook Parkway, as they are downhill and speed is a problem. She thinks that there should be an interruption to slow the speed of vehicles, adding that posted signs won't be enough. There are 20 children on Fairfax Street and she hears from constituents on these streets all the time. She would like to have the slowest travelled roadways because the city is the most dense. Mr. Snyder said that the administration is also frustrated. Mr. Polinski said the city is reviewing 30 petitions and gathering data and prioritizing the streets. The streets with the greatest problems will be addressed first. Chairman McWatters asked for police data on this subject.

Mr. Rawson said that data is being processed to filter out false positives, such as bicycles, and that geographic discrepancies are apparent in some petitions. Alderman Ballantyne said the Clarendon Hill project has many parking spots and more to come. She wants to make sure there is a comprehensive view of the data. She asked if anything can be done now. Mr. Snyder replied that item # 202590, (also in the T&P Committee, but not on tonight's agenda), relates to this matter.

Chairman McWatters said some constituents are frustrated with the administration's lack of response to requests. Alderman Niedergang said many people have given up out of frustration. He suggested using removable speed humps as an inexpensive and effective way to address the problem and would like to have a discussion about cost effective intervention. Alderman Heuston agreed, adding that they can be removed for snow removal.

The speed limit throughout the city is 25 mph, except for certain streets where it is 30 mph. Alderman Heuston wants speed studies based on the 25 mph limit and said that the number of required signatures shouldn't matter, adding that if someone contacts their alderman, that should

be enough. The 9 signature threshold is an artificial barrier. She said developers should be asked to provide speed humps and that the requirement should be codified in the zoning. Alderman Niedergang said Maxwell's Green paid \$220,000 and he agrees that developers should contribute. Alderman Rossetti spoke about the frustration she experienced regarding a petition she worked on in 2014, saying that she requested speed bumps and nothing happened. Alderman McLaughlin said it is frustrating to work with neighbors when nothing happens. He said he just wants an answer from the administration, even if the answer is "no". He would also like to see studies from his neighborhood and wants additional blinking lights installed in his ward.

Mr. Rawson said the city streets need to be looked at like a network and that long term exercises must be examined. He said there will be a city wide mobility plan. Chairman McWatters asked if there were plans to purchase temporary speed bumps and Mr. Rawson said the city will get a grant for them. The city will get \$1.6 million. Speed humps costs \$3,500 - \$4,000, depending on width of the roadway. Mr. Rawson said speed boards and directed patrols work for a few weeks, but then people go back to their bad habits. Chairman McWatters asked about radar feedback signs and other traffic calming measures to be implemented. Mr. Polinski spoke about chicanes, bump outs, speed humps and temporary speed bumps. Mr. Rawson said the city will know the game plan for construction by this April. Alderman Niedergang said the painted chicanes make a big difference and solved problems in his ward. Alderman Heuston believes the radar works and she inquired how the city decides when they will be purchased and where they will go. Mr. Smith said the city has 4 radars and they cost about \$6,000. Chairman McWatters would like to see money in the budget for more radar feedback. Alderman Sullivan said he wants a comprehensive plan.

Alderman Ballantyne asked what steps need to be taken to get something done.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**201711: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a crosswalk at Spring Street and Somerville Avenue.**

Mr. Smith explained that there are site line problems that won't allow this.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201755: That the Director of Traffic and Parking place signage at the intersection of Hawkins Street and Somerville Avenue to stop vehicles from entering Somerville Avenue and traveling the wrong way.**

Ms. Rinfret reported that the signage is in place.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201900: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to this Board by its September 22 regular meeting on plans to implement new legislation to reduce speed limits on local streets to 25 mph in "thickly settled areas" and 20 mph in "designated safety zones."**

The committee discussed making the entire city a safety zone. Mr. Snyder said there is a lack of clarity with the state statute in that a "rational basis" standard is needed for a city wide safety

zone. Alderman White said that the “rational basis” test is the lowest standard. Mr. Rawson handed out a list of potential safety zones. Alderman Heuston mentioned making Allen Street a safety zone because of the Head Start program. Alderman Niedergang mentioned making the areas around doctor and dentist offices safety zones. Alderman Ballantyne would like to make Tufts a safety zone due to pedestrian accidents. Alderman Heuston would like 25 mph signs posted throughout the city and Mr. Smith explained that the posting of signs would need to be approved by MASSDOT. Alderman McLaughlin and Lt. Polito would like the whole city to be 20 mph.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**202622: That the Administration share with this Board the timeline and plan for implementing 20 mph “safety zones” and reducing the speed limit to 20 mph on as many city streets as possible.**

See discussion of 201900.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**202728: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to the Ward 5 Alderman on whether large truck traffic can be curtailed or banned on Cedar Street to avoid disturbing residents’ peace and damaging their foundations.**

Mr. Smith said that MASSDOT must approve truck traffic and that there must be an alternative street located. Mr. Rawson will get together a flow chart of state regulations to get the process going. Alderman White said there is no scientific analysis to create an alternate truck route. He said it’s a value judgment.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**200844: Lucy and Jason van Beaver submitting comments re: #200639, a raised crosswalk at the West Somerville Neighborhood School.**

Mr. Smith said there will be a major sewer project soon and that will be the time to construct a traffic calming table. Alderman Ballantyne asked about community outreach to get ideas other than the raised bed. Alderman Niedergang asked for temporary measures.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**200845: Barry Rafkind submitting comments re: #200639, a raised crosswalk at the West Somerville Neighborhood School.**

See discussion of item 200844.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**202236: Lisandra Ayala submitting comments on the dangerous intersection at Routes 93 and 28.**

Mr. Rawson said he has negotiated a road safety audit with MassDOT. Short, medium and long term solutions are being discussed. Funding is available for design work and funds for construction will be available in 2020. Incremental changes being worked on and Federal Realty is upgrading traffic signals. Chairman McWatters asked for a brief synopsis of the plan.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200558: DPW Commissioner responding to various Board Orders submitted 11/24/15.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200759: DPW Commissioner responding to various Board Orders submitted 1/14/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201572: DPW Commissioner responding to supplemental Board Orders submitted 5/12/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200355: Traffic and Parking Director responding to various Board Orders submitted 10/8/15.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200492: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders submitted 10/22/15.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200560: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders submitted 11/24/15.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200561: Traffic and Parking Director responding to #200262 re: using mirrors to improve street sight lines.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200908: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders submitted 1/28/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200909: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders**

submitted 2/11/16.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**200910: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders  
2/25/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201197: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders  
submitted 3/10/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201446: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders  
submitted 4/14/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201748: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders  
submitted 4/28/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201749: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders  
submitted 5/12/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201938: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders  
submitted 5/26/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**201939: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders  
submitted 6/23/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202004: Traffic and Parking Director submitting responses to various Board Orders  
submitted 6/9/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202226: Director of Traffic and Parking responding to Board Orders submitted 7/14/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202250: Director of Traffic and Parking responding to Board Orders submitted 8/25/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202294: Director of Traffic and Parking responding to Board Orders submitted 8/25/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202384: Traffic and Parking Director responding to Board Orders submitted 10/13/16.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202666: Traffic and Parking Director responding to items approved at this Board's 11/10/16 meeting.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202667: Traffic and Parking responding to items approved at this Board's 11/22/16 meeting.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**Handout:**

- Safety Zone info (with 201900)