

Traffic Safety Committee, Meeting Minutes, October 20, 2023

Commander Whitehead called the meeting to order at 9:03 hours

Members Present: Commander Whitehead, Jim Rotondo and John McCann

Guests Present: Andrew Strniste, DPW Commissioner Bob Protivansky, DPW Highway Operations Supervisor, Daniel McIntyre, Steve Waite, Jennifer Yakunovich @ New Story and Avaloy Lanning

Members Absent: Chief Brian Kilcullen, Ted Gillen and Bradley LaFaso of LaFaso Electric

NEW BUSINESS

1) Request to discuss the Winter Parking Ban – Alderman John McCann

This topic was brought up at the Planning Commission. It allows for parking where we have dense parking. Andrew Strniste mentioned that this stems from shortage of housing. Would like to focus on additional housing units in the denser area. We have larger houses with a few dwelling units. Doesn't make sense to rent at \$2,000 a month. With housing issue, comes parking issue. Issue will take years to get under control. We recognize plowing would be an issue if we removed the winter parking ban. Maybe get some light up message boards that we could put notice on, to state when the Winter Parking Ban is in effect during storms. Maybe allow parking in parking deck during a storm.

John McCann stated that when this came up 2 weeks ago at the Planning Commission Meeting, they commented that our parking ban isn't unique. Maybe opposite sides of the street could take turns.

Andrew Strniste mentioned that Event based seems to help. Declare a snow emergency. Would have to be off the roads by a certain time for night plowing. Not sure what the best option is here. Maybe start the conversation, see where we wanna go.

Bob Protivansky stated that like Andrew mentioned, maybe take a neighborhood approach. On street parking isn't necessary in the whole city. Maybe identify certain streets. NS, SW, downtown, Strongs Avenue/border area.

John McCann stated that we want to limit it. Maybe tie to zoning blocks. These lines aren't really clean. Andrew asked if when DPW is out plowing, if they find that people are parking in the Green belts. Dan McIntyre said that people are pretty good about not parking there when it's snowing. Bob Protivansky stated that you might come across 1 or 2 in downtown that have parked in the green belt. Commander Whitehead mentioned that downtown has a parking ban. If we get a standard flashing ban, it may affect people but you're saying it's not an issue, Dan. Like on the 2 way portion of Terrill Street, it can be troublesome. Jim mentioned that on Forest Street they park in the green belts. Parking in the green belt is an issue that has to be dealt with, too. This day is coming. Conversation almost always starts about now. Would want to research other communities, like Burlington. We will want to see if they use event based. City of Rutland needs to do something for the convenience of all the people. Need to address it & come to a conclusion. Andrew stated that he agrees. We need to devote the time necessary to it. Bob Protivansky mentioned that a few years ago, Police Officers would go out around 3 AM

or so & ticket vehicles that were parked on the Streets during the Winter Parking Ban. Commander Whitehead said that we try not to Tow. We give Warnings. There has been previous talk about suspending the Winter Parking Ban. Jim mentioned, like Forest Street. John mentioned that parking in the green belt is allowed on Forest Street. This was an exception that was made last year when they were repaving this street. This exception is still in effect. Maybe if the ban doesn't make sense, maybe shrink the period of time it's in effect. Do we set a goal post with a date that we want a conclusion by? Andrew stated that it sounds like we research this Winter and take observations. John asked if we are trying to fix problems we don't currently have. Dan McIntyre stated that they find a lot of vehicles parked on the sidewalk. Jim mentioned that there is a guy that hops curbs & parks under a tree. Andrew stated that it makes sense that we deal with the Green Belt issues at the same time. John asked how we are going to address the issue when people are going to feel like we have taken something away from them. Commander Whitehead said that maybe if we do it year- round. It gives us enforceability to do that. John suggested using flashing lights. He asked how the emergency alert will work in the area? How will people know about the Policy? Jim said, like event based. We're not inconveniencing anyone. We just need time to do our work. We need to talk to the City of Burlington and find out their pros and cons. Andrew stated, then it just becomes second nature. Our next steps are to do the Research. John asked if we wanted to follow up at this meeting or what meeting? Andrew asked John if he should report out to the Alderman, then go to Charter & Ordinance or should it go to DPW? Jim asked Commissioner Protivansky what he thought. Commissioner Protivansky stated that until we have something concrete, let's leave this here at this Committee. We can come back next month with some information after researching.

Currently when we re-do streets, we try to address the parking issues at the same time. We recently did Curtis Avenue, and out in front of Todd Transportation, there have been parking issues. There are some ordinances that pertain to parking that if it is less than 20 feet wide, the Chief of Police can have "No parking".

Jim passed out a copy of what he found regarding parking ordinances. There was an old book from the 1970's vintage, that indicated when and where parking wasn't allowed. It was filed in the City Clerk's Office. On Schedules 3, 4, 5 & 6 of this book, the Police Chief made determinations where parking wasn't allowed at a variety of different levels. There was an agreement in this book that gave the Chief of Police permission to make these decisions. If the Chief of Police still has the authority, it would be helpful for him to use this. John McCann asked "Do you think these make sense?" Should we go through it line by line? Maybe one Chief of Police was actively using this tool, then maybe a successor Chief didn't continue to use this. We aren't really sure. Jim Rotondo feels that the whole city needs to be reviewed. What should be on Schedule 3, 4, 5, etc.? Jim feels that it would be good to have City Council review this ordinance. John McCann will bring this up at the next Board of Alderman meeting. Does this book need to be reworded, etc.?

There was a request to add an Item to the Agenda. The request was granted. The newly added Item is Agenda item #2. Being that we would be spending some time discussing Agenda Item #1, We asked if New Story Center would like to present their request first. They did.

- 2) Request to add a “no parking” sign and/or additional barriers in the front of our property located at 101 Grove Street – Avaloy Lanning

Avaloy mentioned that she is the Director of New Story and that they own the property at 92 Grove Street, 101 Grove Street & 103 Grove Street. They have recently done a 2M renovation at the building at 101 Grove Street. She mentioned that the “dirt patch”, as they refer to it in front of 101 Grove Street is an eye sore. They are asking if we could put a “No Parking Here to Corner”. She also stated that they were asked by the City to put grass seed at the corner, that the grass is growing in and it’s starting to look nice. She also mentioned that people are still parking here. She asked if they could put a plant there or someone to sit with a lawn chair. Prior to the construction, there were deep ruts here that filled with water and turned muddy. It’s a matter of confidentiality of who is at their location. They would prefer if there could be “No Parking” here. If someone is parked here and sees someone come out of the building, that wouldn’t be good. John McCann mentioned that it seems like part of this comes back to the green belt. It’s not unique to this property. Talk about the Green Space was referred to Charter & Ordinance. It doesn’t help in the short term.

Jim Rotondo stated that he feels if they extend the curb, that will help a lot. He indicated that we have this issue a lot around the City. Curbing is done for this season. We can move the “No Parking” sign if the Police Department agrees. Commander Whitehead said if we move the sign from 103 Grove Street to Library Avenue, that should give space. Maybe keep the wooden stakes up, initially. John McCann wondered if that would be too far. Jim suggested we leave it up to DPW. They will move the “No Parking” sign and keep the wooden stakes up to prevent parking where the grass has recently grown. Bob Protivansky asked if we know how wide the green belt is? He asked if we could put up a tree? Maybe 2 feet wide. Dan McIntyre mentioned temporary no parking signs could be put up. We have some of those. Between putting the temporary no parking signs up and the Forester putting in a couple of trees, that should work. Avaloy mentioned that their Open House is on November 30th where they would unveil their new/old building.

Updates from City Engineer –

We have been busy replacing & updating sign packages, busy on Strongs Avenue and Harrington Avenue. John McCann mentioned that at the SW corner of Strongs, there’s no pedestrian curb cut for pedestrian crossing. Commissioner Bob Protivansky said that they have talked about adding a Pedestrian crossing. This would require electrical work and would be in the future. He also stated that they were mulling that over the other day.

City Engineer mentioned that the crosswalks on Stratton/Woodland & Stratton/Giorgetti are being poured today. 40 feet on East side of Stratton, on West side 20 feet with crosswalk signs

Speed Carts Update –

We have put the carts up at Hazel Street, Mussey Street, Stratton Road, Granger Street, Dorr Drive and Killington Avenue. When it was on Killington Avenue, twice, in 2 different spots on Killington Avenue, the speed carts were unplugged.

Steve Waite read in the newspaper that a woman was killed on Woodstock Avenue. Is this a good place to bring this up? He stated that he lives on East Center Street and works on North Main Street. He mentioned that the lady crossed in front of Walgreens. There are 4 lanes of traffic. One problem at the pedestrian crosswalk, after hitting the button to cross, is that he doesn't believe that the signal is squalking. Cars get the green light while signal is blinking. Cars are accelerating at the corner, while taking right hand turn. Can someone make sure to take a look at this to be sure it's working. Jim Rotondo mentioned that this is a very busy intersection. I believe we talked about this last year. Thinks that we put up a sign to Yield to Pedestrians. Nora confirmed that we did. At Merchants Row/West Street, we have a fade that all traffic stops. We can look at this again to try to stop all traffic. Commander Whitehead stated that as an example, we have the Plaza. Pedestrians have the right of way, even with traffic continuing. Not sure if technology wise, if we're able to do this. Maybe do for a trial period. If we're able to cut down on pedestians getting hit, it will be good. John mentioned that he didn't think that we're looking for all stop traffic. Maybe keep the right turn light off when pedestrians cross. If there's like a 10 second lag, that would help. Jim will bring this up with Lafaso Electric and see if it's possible. Steve Waite thanked us. He also wanted to add to next month's Agenda that in general, with traffic flow, if we could not see cars backed up at lights, that would help people from getting impulsive. He mentioned that Traffic Safety from a pedestrians point of view should be talked about and also mentioned the noise from cars and trucks. John McCann mentioned that he thinks that he's heard less from cars since the ordinance was changed. Dan McIntyre agreed. Commander Whitehead mentioned that the Police Department has done some enforcement on this. We hope that word is getting out that we're not going to tolerate it. Once, we shut down Strongs Avenue, did Search Warrant, looked for shells when someone believed they heard shots fired. It ended up being sounds from a car.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 hours.

Submitted by Nora J. Moore, Records Clerk

