

# City of Northampton, MA

## Transportation and Parking Commission

February 23, 2022

MEETING MINUTES

Submitted by: Cynthia Quinn

1. DPW Director Donna LaScaleia called the meeting to order at 4:00 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	--	
Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability	x	
Nanci Forrestall, Parking Enforcement Administrator	x	
Jamila Gore, City Councilor At Large President	x	
Karen Foster, Ward 2 City Councilor	x	
Adam Novitt, Citizen	x	
Jami Albro-Fisher, Citizen	--	
Diana Day, Citizen	--	
Vacant, Citizen	--	
Advisor		Time if arriving late or leaving early
Maggie Chan, DPW Traffic Engineer	x	
Staff		Time if arriving late or leaving early
Cyndi Quinn, DPW Administration Manager	x	

2. **Public comment**

- None.

3. **Approval of minutes from previous meeting (s): January 18, 2022**

- 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 January 18, 2022 meeting.	Wayne Feiden	Adam Novitt	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain 0

4. **Reports from departments and subcommittees/announcements/presentations**

- Department of Public Works (DPW) – Director Donna LaScaleia
  - The current DPW paving project has stopped for the winter and will resume in the spring.
  - MassDOT projects – The Exit 19 at Damon Road project, King Street Corridor Improvements, I-91 Bridges over Route 5, the railroad, and Hockanum Road project are ongoing. The Damon Road

Reconstruction project has paused for the winter and will resume in the spring. Any questions about the previously mentioned projects should be directed to MassDOT District 2.

- Department of Planning and Sustainability – Director Wayne Feiden
  - Nearing completion of the penultimate draft of the new Complete Streets Transition Plan. A request will be made to add this as a March TPC agenda item for TPC input.

## 5. Matters before the Commission

- a) Discussion of roadway safety concerns in the vicinity of the Northampton High School.
  - The DPW and NPD have temporarily prohibited 5 parking spaces on westbound by Childs Park to allow for continuous bike lanes and sightline improvement.
  - The U-turn prohibition ordinance that was discussed at the December meeting has been approved. The no U-turn sign has been installed at the intersection of Elm and North Elm Street.
  - The DPW has engaged the consultant Fuss & O’Neill to study the traffic in the vicinity of the high school and provide recommendations for safety improvements. This is a long term study/project closely looking at roadway geometry, probable cost and logistics of possible improvements. More community engagement will occur also.
  - Mayor, Police Chief, school officials, and DPW Director have met at the site to review the potential for a student drop off zone.
  - Director LaScaleia clarified that this roadway is under City jurisdiction. MassDOT would need to approve any alteration to the speed limit.
  - During the comment period, three people spoke: Candee Gibbs of Hinckley Street, Councilor Karen Foster, and Councilor Jamila Gore. The discussion included the timeline of the study and implementation, drop-off zone review, parking changes, traffic patterns/changes, community and PTO involvement and communication.
  - Director LaScaleia expressed her appreciation for the patience and support of the Mayor, school administration and Police Department.
  
- b) Discussion of **Traffic Calming Request on Burts Pit Road (west of Florence Road)**
  - Submitted 5/26/2021, request #22
  
  - **Resident Concern:** *A traffic calming request has been received and is paraphrased as follows: Since Burts Pit Rd was repaved Summer 2019, it has been observed that the automobiles velocity has increased significantly - to the point where automobile accidents have occurred. I would guess that certain cars reach in excess of 60-70 MPH, maybe faster. The straight portion of the road seems to invite many to travel more than the 35 MPH max. Additionally, the entrance to Woods Rd from Burts Pit has oversized entrance radii, inviting cars to making enter Woods at high speed - many cars seem to take a right turn while traveling Westbound on to Woods at 35 -45 MPH. I request that traffic calming assessment be conducted ASAP - as the warmer weather seems to encourage some to travel an increased speed - making is dangerous and the possibility for an automobile related fatality.*
  
  - Director LaScaleia gave an overview of engineering characteristics of the street as well as the speed and collision data that was collected.
  
  - No public comment was made
  
  - No comment from commission was made\.
  
- c) Discussion of Traffic Calming Request on North Maple Street
  - Submitted 6/10/2021, request #23\_
  
  - A traffic calming request was received and is paraphrased as follows: *Traffic is crazy fast down this street. I know many of my neighbors feel the same way. It's especially hard in the afternoons when there are a lot of people (well, for Florence!) parking and walking. I worry about the bike path crossing that is right in this area too."*

- Director LaScaleia gave an overview of engineering characteristics of the street as well as the speed and collision data that was collected. She explained the process for review, discussion and implementation of traffic calming.
- During the comment period, eight people spoke: Erin Wolcott of North Maple Street, Megan Allen of North Maple Street, Kris Vannaerssen of North Maple Street, Candee Gibbs of Hinckley Street, Commission Member Adam Novitt, Councilor Karen Foster and Councilor Jamila Gore. The discussion included visibility and nature of crosswalks, crosswalk stop signs, speed and outliers, traffic calming suggestions, requests and feasibility and education of both JFK students and the community and feasibility.
- Director LaScaleia said that this would be discussed internally and recommendations would be brought back to the commission for discussion.

d) Discussion of Traffic Calming Request on Hinckley Street

- submitted 6/11/2021, request #24
- A traffic calming request was submitted and is paraphrased as follows: *Hinckley Street is a connector street. Since the street was repaired cars travel faster up and down the street. There is only one stop sign at Warner St. between Nonotuck St and Riverside Dr. There is a side walk the length of the street. There are many pedestrians walking their dogs, babies, cyclists, cats, wild life (bears, deer, and skunks). Traffic in Baystate Village is becoming busier with the housing construction as well.*
- Director LaScaleia gave an overview of engineering characteristics of the street as well as the speed and collision data that was collected.
- During the comment period, three people spoke, including Candee Gibbs of Hinckley Street, Mike Soref of Hinckley Street, and Councilor Karen Foster. The discussion included speed limits, requests for traffic calming measures on Nonotuck Street, the new road condition, visibility of crosswalks, sidewalks and feasibility of potential improvements.
- Director LaScaleia said that there would be an internal discussion including the Police Chief and engineering staff. Recommendations would be brought back to the commission for discussion.

**6. New Business**

- None.

**7. Adjourned at 5:20 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: Wayne Feiden	Second: Karen Foster	Vote:
Adjourn.			Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 0