

Aug 26 2022 8:35 am

City of
Fitchburg



Department of
Public Works

August 25, 2022

COMMISSIONER

301 Broad Street
978-829-1910
978-345-9687 FAX

STREETS & PARKS

301 Broad Street
978-829-1900
978-345-9687 FAX

WASTEWATER

301 Broad Street
978-829-1930
978-345-9687 FAX

WATER

1200 Rindge Road
978-345-9616
978-345-9555 FAX

ENGINEERING

301 Broad Street
978-829-1915
978-345-9687 FAX

CEMETERIES

115 Mount Elam Road
978-345-9578
978-345-9686 FAX

Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Public Works Committee was held on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, in person at City Hall 718 Main Street in the West Conference Room at 5:00 PM.

Committee Members Present: Councilors Paul Beauchemin, Bernie Schultz and Sam Squailia;
DPW Commissioner Nick Erickson (remote);
Superintendent Gary Withington

Committee Members Absent: Councilors Sally Cragin, Marisa Fleming

Other Participants: Councilor Derek Cruz

- 1) Vote to approve minutes from previous meeting (5/31/22): Minutes were approved unanimously.
- 2) DPW Updates: Commissioner Erickson provided updates on the Main St/Boulder Dr project. Work is ongoing with the Cushing St and Mill St area but the work on Main St/Boulder Dr is in the punch-list phase now. The conversion has gone smoothly but we are continuing to monitor the situation and assess traffic signal timing to improve flow of traffic. The wastewater division combined sewer separation project is still ongoing. Polito is working on South St currently and once that is done will begin working on change order work. The streets division has been busy helping the Cemetery build a wall to expand an area of the Cemetery. The water division recently had a pump fail that was just rebuilt and will be turned back online. The wastewater division recently had a tour by EPA and DEP and they are happy with the upgrades that have been done since the consent decree was implemented in 2012. Councilor Beauchemin asked about the backups on Rollstone/Academy and North/Main. Commissioner Erickson said that he will add the suggestion of no right on red from North St to Main St to the list of things to consider to Tom Skwierawski. Rollstone/Academy Commissioner Erickson will have the timing looked at later in the week. Community Development is currently working on way-finding signage for several intersections. Councilor Squailia asked about Rollstone/Academy traffic signal. The issue with it facing sideways has been fixed. Councilor Squailia asked about a completion date on Cushing St. Commissioner Erickson stated that the water main work has been completed and the work is about wrapped up. PJ Albert is still continuing to do work on Mill St and Cushing St surface treatment and should be wrapped up in 2-3 weeks. Councilor Squailia mentioned the no turn on red signs installed on Bemis Rd/Wanoosnoc/Water but has received feedback that the signs are turned at a 45 degree angle. Commissioner Erickson stated that the only solution to the sign placement would be to have it fabricated to the mast arm which would have to be done by our traffic signal contractor.
- 3) Action was taken as follows on NEW petitions:
 - a) **199-22. An ordinance amending Section 169-24 entitled "Parking prohibited at all times" (Pertaining to Boulder Drive as outlined in the enclosed order).** (REFERRED from City Council on June 21, 2022)

Discussion: Commissioner Erickson explained that Community Development drafted and the City Solicitor submitted the petition to implement all the ordinance changes necessary for the conversion of Main St and Boulder Dr to 2-way traffic. Everything seems to be working good but we are continuing to monitor traffic and will assess any other ordinance changes that need to be submitted. Commissioner Erickson recommends that the committee votes to approve the petition as submitted and make additional tweaks to the petition before the final reading, if necessary. Councilor Beauchemin asked how many parking spots would be lost on Boulder Dr. Commissioner Erickson said he isn't sure of the exact number of spaces but a majority of parking on Boulder Dr will be eliminated to allow bike lanes and 2-way traffic. Councilor Beauchemin asked if there was going to be separation of bike lanes from the regular traffic. Commissioner Erickson stated that there is no additional work being performed on Boulder Dr and the bike lanes will travel with traffic to a point where they are then to travel on the sidewalk and out of the lane of traffic. There is not enough width in the road to allow for 2 lanes of traffic and a bike lane that is separate from the vehicle traffic. Councilor Schultz asked if there was new parking being added to replace the parking being lost on Boulder Dr. Commissioner Erickson explained the parking garage is being repainted to allow for parking in the parking garage. There are new paint colors to designate who can park in certain spots. Councilor Beauchemin made a motion to accept, seconded by Councilor Squailia.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 3-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- b) **201-22. Residents of Bella Vista I Condominiums located at 875 John Fitch Highway Fitchburg, MA respectfully request support with our neighborhood improvement petition. It is our intent to proactively implement these improvements and allow us to live in the comfort, health, peace and safety of our own homes. This goal can be achieved by addressing public safety issues on John Fitch Highway and ensuring the safe and enjoyable use of Coolidge Park by all citizens. Our proposals include, but are not limited to, the following; Please see attached documents for all requests. (REFERRED from City Council on June 21, 2022).**

Discussion: Councilor Schultz recommended taking petitions 201-22 and 203-22 together. The proposals submitted were read. Commissioner Erickson spoke with Chair Fleming prior to the meeting and she requested that the Parks Board and Public Safety Committee review the petitions before the Public Works Committee as the only request that is really under Public Works jurisdiction is the crosswalk across John Fitch Highway. The crosswalks that were there in the past are not ADA accessible so we are legally not allowed to repaint them at this time. It is on DPW radar to get some crosswalks but they need to be done lawfully. Commissioner Erickson recommended that the committee hold the petition until it has been reviewed by the Parks Board. Councilor Squailia moved to approve proposal number 1 of the petition and forward the remaining items of the petition to the Parks Board and Public Safety Committee because there are numerous items that need to be reviewed by subcommittees. Commissioner Erickson explained that the DPW sidewalk budget does not have enough funding in it to handle the sidewalk/crosswalk repairs at this location and we would need to secure funding from CDBG to do the work. Commissioner Erickson will submit a CDBG proposal or other grant funding that can pay for the repair work. Councilor Squailia made a motion to recommend approval of proposal number 1 for legitimate crosswalks only pending DPW securing funding and forwarding all other proposals to Parks Board and Public Safety Committee. Councilor Beauchemin seconded.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 3-0 that proposal 1 of the petition be APPROVED and proposals 2-6 be forwarded to the Public Safety Committee and Parks Board for review.

- c) **202-22. Councilor Marisa Fleming to fix the cracking sidewalks due to overgrown tree roots in Stoneybrook Village. Beginning at Stoneybrook Road which begin at the side of 170 Village Crossing and continue around to 108 Village Crossing.** (REFERRED from City Council June 21, 2022)

Discussion: Superintendent Withington explained that the work will be done in conjunction with the tree trimming recently approved. Councilor Squailia made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilor Beauchemin.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 3-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- d) **203-22. Residents of Bella Vista II Condominiums located at 855 John Fitch Highway Fitchburg, MA respectfully request support with our neighborhood improvement petition. It is our intent to proactively implement these improvements and allow us to live in the comfort, health, peace and safety of our own homes. This goal can be achieved by addressing public safety issues on John Fitch Highway and ensuring the safe and enjoyable use of Coolidge Park by all citizens. Our proposals include, but are not limited to, the following; Please see attached documents for all requests.** (REFERRED from City Council on June 21, 2022)

Discussion: This petition was taken up at the same time as petition 201-22. The Committee recommended to approve proposal 1 to install a legitimate crosswalk and forward proposals 2-6 to Parks Board and Public Works Committee.

Recommendation: The Committee voted 3-0 that proposal 1 of the petition be APPROVED and proposals 2-6 be forwarded to the Public Safety Committee and Parks Board for review.

- 4) HELD petitions for review.

- e) **089-20. Councilor Bernie Schultz and resident Alex Freeman to remove the “No Turn on Red” sign at the intersection of John T. Cetrino Memorial Drive and Water Street.** (HELD on the 10/28/20 meeting and the 1/26/21 meeting and the 7/27/21 meeting and the 3/29/22, and the 4/26/22 meeting, and the 5/31/22 meeting). (Amended the spelling of Cetrino at the January 2021 meeting).

Discussion: Commissioner Erickson stated that he solicited proposals for the traffic study which will cost \$4,500 and is in the process of issuing a notice to proceed. Councilor Squailia made a motion to hold the petition pending the results of the traffic study, seconded by Councilor Beauchemin.

Recommendation: The committee voted 3-0 that the petition be HELD as previously amended until a traffic study is completed.

- f) **027-22. Councilor Derek Cruz, on behalf of resident Bassem Awad at 8 Boylston St., to install a streetlight on telephone pole #4 on Boylston Street.** (HELD at the 5/31/22 meeting).

Discussion: Commissioner Erickson stated that Superintendent Withington visited the site while it was dark to see what the conditions looked like. Superintendent Withington suggested rotating the

existing light from Harvard St to Boylston St which will allow better lighting at both Harvard and Boylston St. Commissioner Erickson showed pictures of the site and suggested pole being used. The current pole has a lot of things already connected to it including a transformer so it might not be possible to add a light there. DPW will have their streetlight contractor take a look at the location and make recommendations. Councilor Cruz asked if rotating the light would then take adequate lighting away from Harvard St. Commissioner Erickson utilized Google Earth to show different locations that could potentially have new lights installed. Councilor Beauchemin asked if we could just add a brighter bulb. Commissioner Erickson stated that we did turn the brightness of the light up but we have turned it as bright as we can without violating our agreement with Unitil. The light bulb there currently is a low wattage bulb so there is possibly an opportunity to change it out to a higher wattage one. Councilor Beauchemin is not in favor of adding any new streetlights. Councilor Schultz stated he was in favor of adding streetlights if it is for safety. Commissioner Erickson wants to speak to our streetlight contractor and see what recommendations they might have. Councilor Squailia asked Councilor Cruz if the concern at this location was safety. Councilor Cruz stated that the primary concern is children playing outside in this area. Commissioner Erickson stated that a new light would cost about \$4,500 while other solutions would probably cost around \$1,000 or less. Councilor Beauchemin made a motion to hold the petition until the condominiums in that area are complete. Commissioner Erickson pulled up Google Earth and showed the proposed location of the condos which is far away from the area of the petition. Councilor Beauchemin made a motion to hold the petition, seconded by Councilor Squailia.

Recommendation: The committee voted 3-0 that the petition be HELD.

g) 093-22. Councilor Sam Squailia on behalf of resident Nick Hains, to add a 4-way controlled stop at the intersection of Victoria Lane, Industrial Drive and Game-On Way. During times of heavy traffic flow in or out of the Game-On facility, residents of Victoria Lane do not have the right of way to cross, and thus must wait for long periods while the traffic lines go through. If a 4-way stop sign is not feasible, an alternate solution shall be investigated by the City. (HELD at the 5/31/22 meeting).

Discussion: Commissioner Erickson has solicited a proposal for a traffic study which will cost \$11,200 and is in the process of issuing a notice to proceed. Councilor Squailia made a motion to hold the petition, seconded by Councilor Beauchemin.

Recommendation: The committee voted 3-0 that the petition be HELD pending traffic study.