

# TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## Minutes of Meeting of June 17, 2021

Volume 68

No. 6

Members Present: Thomas Soyk, Deputy Commissioner of Parking, Acting Chairman  
John Larson, Commissioner of Parking  
Eileen McClain, Senior Planner, Planning Department (for C. Gomez)  
Nicholas Kralik, Capt.-Commander, Traffic Division (for D. Chong)  
Udomlug Siriphonlai, Deputy Commissioner of Public Works (for R. Hope)  
Daniel Spencer, Deputy Corporation Counsel (for J. Callahan)

Staff Members Present: Anthony Marena, Transportation Engineer  
Edward Ignaszewski, Supervisor of Enforcement

Members Absent: Melissa Briggs  
Ken Burford

Staff Members Absent:

Others Present: Lisa Lopilato, Secretary to Commissioner Larson  
Elizabeth Mirisola, Senior Associate Corporation Counsel  
Michael Murphy, Capt.-Commander, Operations  
Stephanie Hoina  
Sarah Collins-Mendes  
Richard Carmen  
Karen McKenna  
Palette Talley  
Serge Volpp  
Peter Rusillo  
Ron Rieman

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the minutes of the May 19, 2021 meeting was approved.**

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Pleasant Avenue** – Request from Ms. Constance Evans, 44 Pleasant Avenue to remove the “No Parking Any Time” between numbers 35 and 37 Pleasant Avenue. She states that the previous owner of the property requested this but he has since moved and the additional parking is needed in the neighborhood.

*The staff has sent letters to the residents but recommended that this item be held to allow time for responses.*

**This item was held.**

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Battle Avenue at McKinley Avenue** – Request from Ms. Daniella Patrick and Mr. Andrew Meranus to install crosswalks and yield to pedestrian signs at this intersection. They state that this intersection is a school bus stop and they feel the lack of crosswalks and signs put the children at risk.

*The staff discussed their request to install crosswalks at this location since it is a bus stop. Crosswalks are not required at bus stops. When a school bus is picking up or discharging the passengers traffic must stop. The Department of Public Safety stated they would be putting up advisory signs in the area when school commences. The staff did not recommend crosswalks at this intersection.*

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the Commission recommended the approval of the staff recommendation.**

**2. Bryant Avenue at South Lexington Avenue** – Request from Ms. Tracy Zimmerman, South Lexington Avenue resident to restrict traffic from entering South Lexington at Bryant. She feels this would reduce the volume at the intersection of Byron Avenue at South Lexington Avenue.

*The staff discussed Ms. Zimmerman’s request to restrict traffic from entering South Lexington Avenue at Bryant Avenue. The staff did not agree that doing this would reduce traffic at the intersection of Byron Avenue at South Lexington Avenue since diverted traffic would still be utilizing Byron Avenue. The staff reviewed the sight lines which were adequate. However, based on the accident experience the staff recommended holding this item to review sight lines in the evening to determine if parked cars are creating visual obstructions.*

**This item was held.**

**3. Prescott Avenue at Longview Avenue** – Request from numerous City residents to install an all way stop at this intersection as well as consider other options to slow the traffic down in this area. The residents expressed concern about the Highlands Neighborhood traffic conditions including but not limited to speeding, stop sign violations, school bus violations, bicycle safety, pedestrian safety and additional intersection concerns along Prescott Avenue and Hartsdale Avenue. An accident which resulted in one of the vehicles overturning recently occurred at this intersection and the residents feel that a stop sign should be installed.

*The staff reviewed the specifics of the recent accident and revealed that the driver indicated that he did not stop at the stop sign. The staff field reviewed the locations and accident history. Their review revealed that the sight lines at the intersection of Prescott Avenue and Longview Avenue are reduced by vegetation on private property. The Department of Public Works has been notified and will*

*be contacting the appropriate property owners for correction. Due to the residents' concerns about speeding, bus stop and stop sign violations the Department of Public Safety will be conducting enforcement in the future. A review of the accident history showed that the federal warrants for an all way stop are not met. Stop signs are not installed to reduce speeds. Based on the warrants not being met, the staff did not recommend an all way stop.*

Acting Chairman Thomas Soyk stated that he did an additional accident review in which he researched data over the past ten years for seven corridors in the Highlands. The corridors included Prescott Avenue, Hartsdale Avenue and five other north/south avenues. The first five years from 2010 to 2014 there were 227 crashes along those streets. We then compared that information to the next five years 2015 to 2019 (before we had the Covid impact) which had 205 accidents. Collectively the majority of the Highlands area showed a decrease of accidents by about 10% over that entire time.

Citywide we found there was a drastic reduction of accidents in 2020. It was found however, that Prescott Avenue experienced an increase in 2020 and 2021 with higher numbers then you would expect based on those previous years. That review does indicate that there is something more happening in that corridor, particularly between Longview and Old Mamaroneck Road.

Federal standards must be met for the installation of a four way stop. Although those locations do not meet the federal standards we will continue to review the area for other options. Acting Chairman Soyk continued by stating that a good location for a rectangular rapid flashing beacon is the intersection of Longview and Prescott where there is a school crossing. This location does have a crossing guard and we have received emails stating that the crossing guard has been experiencing difficulty stopping cars to cross the school children.

We have modified the signal operation at Davis over the years to try and create more gaps along that stretch so that it is not as hard for drivers coming from the stop sign to get onto Prescott. We will review that area to see if we can make some adjustments to that signal.

Ironically, when you look at the total number of accidents, Grandview Avenue actually has more accidents than Longview Avenue over that time period previously mentioned. Although that location does not meet the warrant for an all way stop we will continue to review the area to see what can be done.

Steven Magneson addressed the Commission. He is a resident whose daughter attends the Middle School. His concern is the traffic flow out of Highlands Middle School on Grandview Avenue in terms of drivers not making a complete stop. He was wondering if traffic flows could be reversed so that traffic exiting the Middle School would be restricted to only make a right onto Mamaroneck Road. He feels because of covid you have a high number of students being driven and the change may only need to be temporary.

Richard Carmen who lives at the corner of Prescott Avenue and Greenridge Avenue spoke for not only himself and his wife but also his two neighbors on Greenridge, Prescott and Grandview. He has lived in his home since 1992.

In or about 1997 a driver on Grandview coming from the Middle School ran the stop sign and hit his car broadside. Although this was a long time ago accidents like this still occur. Recently on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of June two accidents occurred one on Grandview and one on Greenridge and Prescott intersection where his house is located. He is basically looking for less restrictive alternatives to slow down the traffic on the Prescott corridor. His neighbor suggested the installation of rough road along the Prescott corridor to slow people down or some other less restrictive alternative. He feels this would increase the safety of both pedestrians and vehicles.

Acting Chairman Thomas Soyk replied that a pedestrian walking along the roadway is not a good indicator of speed. When a pedestrian is out walking, a speed of 30 mph can look faster than what it truly is. We will be installing a speed display sign for a month or two somewhere in that area to try to collect data to see what the speeds actually are. Initially the sign will appear blank but it will be collecting data. It will then display the speed and collect additional data. This will be part of the review process.

Serge Volpp addressed the Commission. He has lived in the Highlands for about 19 years. His concerns were the intersections of Greenridge and Linda and Grandview and Linda. Over the last year or so he has witnessed that the compliance with traffic laws has decreased substantially. Drivers are very impatient with pedestrians crossing the street and there are many more pedestrians. He walks his dog during rush hour in the morning and in the evening after rush hour. At the stop signs very few people stop and barely slow down. We have traffic ordinances and without enforcement drivers do not comply. Unless there is some way to modify the behavior of those who don't comply the problem will continue.

Stephanie Hoina addressed the Commission. She has lived here for three years. The speed display sign is helpful as well as the stop sign on Greenridge in the middle of the road. She inquired if the volume of traffic is measured? It seems more people are coming from different areas through the Highlands. She questioned if additional traffic lights should be considered because of this additional traffic.

Acting Chairman Thomas Soyk stated that traffic volumes are studied citywide. We see how traffic is changing on a historical basis. Traffic peaked in White Plains in 2006 and there has been a gradual decrease with about a 12 – 13% reduction since 2006 (discounting 2020). When reviewing the crash history it seems that there is an increase more recently along Prescott. We will schedule a count

for one of those intersections to see if there has been an increase in volume. It is possible there is an increase of cut through traffic. That is something that we will have to look at.

To remedy this type of problem it is not uncommon for one way operations to be installed around school areas. That is not an easy restriction to apply. If you confine the traffic to travel in one direction you could change the volume of traffic at another location. This could negatively affect the surrounding streets.

Paulette Talley stated that on Fenimore Road in both directions there is a sign that displays messages (speed, speeding, and thank you). Those seem to be very effective.

Acting Chairman Thomas Soyk added those are newer versions of the speed display signs. As we replace equipment with that feature we can try those as well.

Sara Collins-Mendes moved from Midchester to Hartsdale Avenue. She was involved in an accident on Prescott and Longview where the other driver did not stop for the stop sign. She feels the problem exists at the corner of Hartsdale Avenue and Ralph Avenue as well. Drivers do not yield for the stop sign at that location. There is a total disregard for the law. She suggested that perhaps an increase to the fine for speeding in a school zone and an increase of the locations of the school zone area should be considered.

Acting Chairman Thomas Soyk stated school zones can only exist on a street adjacent to a school property. A review of every street in the area was done a few years ago. All of the school zone areas were accounted for. We may be able to extend the zones to Hartsdale Avenue because Ralph Field is there and is used for school sports and activities.

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the Commission recommended the approval of the staff recommendation and additional review and placement of speed display signs in the area.**

**4. South Broadway at Livingston Avenue** – Request from Ms. Meghan Miller, 156 South Broadway to install a stop sign on South Broadway. A few weeks ago there was an accident which resulted in two vehicles striking the fence on Ms. Miller’s property. She feels that a stop sign should be installed at this intersection.

*The staff recommended holding this item to allow measuring sight lines at this intersection.*

**This item was held.**

**5. Prescott Avenue at Ralph Avenue & Prescott Avenue at Hartsdale Avenue** – Requests from Ms. Karen McKenna and Mr. Christopher Todd, 113 Ralph Avenue, and Ms. Sarah Collins-Mendes, 88 Hartsdale Avenue, to install stop signs at these intersections as well as conduct a study of the area and consider extending the school speed limit times and extend the limits to include Ralph Field. They feel that speeding in the neighborhood is excessive and these changes and enforcement would improve the situation.

*The staff recommended holding this item to allow for a review of the signage and limits of the school zone. The staff also recommended the temporary installation of a speed display sign on Prescott to collect speed data and subsequently conduct enforcement during times of violations.*

Sarah Collins-Mendes while addressing the Commission regarding item number three referred to this item as well. She feels that sight lines as well as speeds make this area difficult and hazardous. Additionally, she felt that there should be a stop sign at Ralph and Prescott because of sight line problems. The drivers do not stop for people in the crosswalk and it is not safe.

Mr. Magneson added that there is a location with a beautiful garden that he feels causes a sight line problem.

Acting Chairman Thomas Soyk stated that there is an ordinance that restricts the height of view obstruction to 30 inches and lower. There is also a sight distance corner which has restrictions as well.

When you see that type of problem it is best to contact the Department of Public Works directly. They will go to the area and determine if the heights are within the ordinance guidelines and then act accordingly.

Richard Carmen asked if there was any kind of additional information available to find out where a vehicle involved in an accident comes from. He expressed his concern over people using the streets as a cut through or area residents who are ignoring the traffic signs. Acting Chairman Thomas Soyk stated that sometimes when you take a closer look at the accident reports you do get some revealing information. With regards to the two recent accidents that occurred close together, one was a distracted driver that went through the stop sign and was from out of the area. The accident on Grandview was an unlicensed driver. In the Greenridge and Prescott accident, each of those drivers did have a stop sign and did not yield. Waze directing a cut through route to avoid traffic and drivers who are distracted and in a rush are always concerns.

Stephanie Hoina asked if there is a possibility of installing signage such as a “No Thru Traffic.” Tom Soyk replied that there is criteria that must be followed to install a sign or else enforcement of the restriction can be challenged. He did not believe a sign like “No Thru Traffic” was an option at these locations but it will be reviewed. We do have to follow the manual of uniform traffic control devices. Higher violations rates happen when signs are put in locations where they do not belong. Any time traffic is diverted from one area it can adversely affect another area.

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the Commission recommended the approval of the staff recommendation.**

**6. Quinby Avenue at Ridgeview Avenue** – Request from the Department of Public Safety to extend the parking restriction on the west side of Ridgeview. Cars are parked on both sides approaching the intersection which makes it difficult for motorists to proceed.

*The staff will review during the evening hours to determine if parked cars are creating obstructions prior to making any changes to the regulations.*

**This item was held.**

#### **IV. COMMON COUNCIL REFERRALS**

*The following referral items were received after the staff meeting. Therefore, the staff could not review or make any recommendations.*

**1. 359-369 Mamaroneck Avenue** – Request from Mr. Jorge Valencia, on behalf of “Salsa Picante” Restaurant for a special permit for outdoor dining.

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the Commission recommended the approval of the request for a special permit.**

**2. 8 City Place** – Request from Ms. Jessica Lopez, on behalf of “Bello’s Mexican Grill” Restaurant for a special permit for outdoor dining.

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the Commission recommended the approval of the request for a special permit.**

**3. 172 Mamaroneck Avenue** – Request from Mr. Raymond Hernandez, on behalf of “Mamasushi White Plains” Restaurant for a special permit for outdoor dining.

#### ***APPLICATION HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN***

**4. Zoning Ordinance** – Communication from The Planning Department regarding a proposed amendment to the existing Core Business-2 (CB-2) District to encourage scaled mixed-use development and expand affordable housing opportunities within downtown. The proposed amendment also entails the realignment of certain footnotes within Zoning table Section 5.3- Schedule of Dimensional Regulations.

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the staff recommended the approval of the proposed amendment.**

**5. 52 North Broadway** – Request from Cuddy & Feder LLP, on behalf of WP Development NB LLC, for site plan approval for the property at 52 North Broadway.

Peter Rusillo and Ron Rieman from Colliers Engineering & Design addressed the Commission. They displayed the project plans and discussed the flow of traffic into and out of the proposed site as well as the flow of traffic within the site. Traffic patterns were presented and discussed. Turning restrictions were discussed as well as the use of raised channelizing islands to prohibit and restrict certain areas. Directional and no turn signs will also be added.

Additionally, the applicant proposes modifications at the access drive at North Broadway. The proposed plans include updates to the traffic signal equipment which includes replace/relocation of pedestrian indicators, sidewalk ramps and the appropriate pavement markings.

The parking plan proposes shared parking between the Assisted Living and Independent Living residences. The applicant is prepared to have land banked spaces. Dan Spencer questioned the ease of garbage pickup for Public Works. He also inquired about the shortage of parking. The consultants felt that the area was an improvement to what existed before and that Public Works will not have a problem accessing and conducting services.

Thomas Soyk expressed concerns regarding traffic stopping before the main exit and asked the presenters to point out land banked parking spaces on the displayed plans. The traffic that stops before the sidewalk is on the approach. As it is now, drivers who stop before the crosswalk don't have detection before the stop sign. It is important to have detection before the stop sign as well.

The shortage of spaces, Thomas Soyk replied, exists among the Assisted Living and Independent Living residences. He did a review and these spaces can be shared. The consultant is prepared to use

the banked parking space areas if needed and it was felt the green space is the best choice for those banked spaces.

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the Commission recommended the approval of the site plan.**

**6. 1 Maple Avenue** –Request from Ms. Jessica Gabriel, Acting Associate Commissioner, Division of Real Estate Services, State of New York, for a governmental use permit application for the relocation of N.Y.S. Department of Motor Vehicles Offices.

Acting Chairman Thomas Soyk stated that this was just an approval of the permit for the relocation. This is just an approval of the government permit.

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the Commission recommended approval of the permit application.**

## **V. ADDENDUM**

**1. Cut-out on Longview Avenue (in front of New Hospital Office Building)** – Request from the Parking Department, Traffic Division to create a new “No Parking” regulation at this location.

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the Commission recommended approval of the “No Parking” regulation at this location.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion made, seconded and carried, the meeting adjourned at 9:29AM.**