

# The Westfield Traffic Commission

July 12, 2023

The Westfield Traffic Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 via remote participation and in person in room 315 at City Hall, 59 Court St., Westfield, MA.

**Roll Call:** Comm. Mejias – Present, Comm. Cain – Present, Comm. McMordie – Present, Comm. Clark – Present, Comm. Gadbois – Absent

**Approval and Release of Minutes dated March 15, 2023:** Commissioner Mejias made a motion to approve and release the minutes dated March 15, 2023. Commissioner Clark seconded this motion.

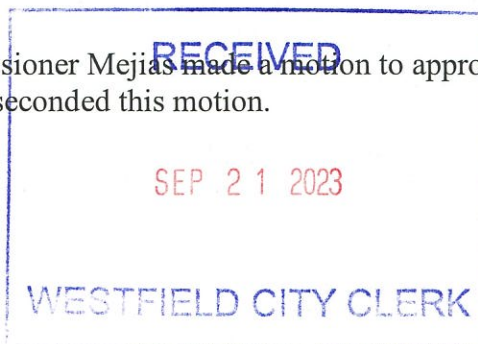
Roll Call:

Commissioner Mejias – Yes

Commissioner Cain – Yes

Commissioner McMordie – Yes

Commissioner Clark – Yes



**OPEN PARTICIPATION** – A resident from the corner of Highland and Western Ave brought up concerns over tractor trailers not being able to make the turns from West Silver Street to Western Avenue, even with the reconstruction that has been done. The trucks have been using Crane Avenue to Highland to get to Western Avenue as an alternate route. Commissioner Mejias said she will look into it.

Another resident brought up issues with the crosswalk push buttons at Franklin Street at Washington Street, and at Stop & Shop on Main Street that are not handicap accessible. Commissioner Mejias said the engineer is already looking into the Main Street problem and will look into the Franklin and Washington location.

City Councilor Onyski asked about an item from the June 1<sup>st</sup> City Council meeting that was referred to the Traffic Commission regarding adding a left green arrow on Old County Rd and one on East Mountain Rd. Commissioner Mejias said they already looked into it, and they cannot add an arrow because both roads are too narrow to add a turn lane and would be too difficult to stagger the lights for an arrow.

A resident from Susan Drive requested the Traffic Commission meetings are too infrequent and would like to see meetings every other month. Commissioner Mejias said she would look into it, but reminded everyone that she can be contacted in her office if there is a traffic issue as not everything has to go before the Commission.

Commissioner Gadbois arrived at 6 pm.

Peg C. speaking from Zoom who lives on Pleasant Street complained about the speeding and issues crossing even in the crosswalks. Due to technical difficulties, Commissioner Mejias responded by chat.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Traffic Study on North Road:** The traffic study was sent to Mr. Lang at District 2 and is still in progress, therefore the issue will be tabled.

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**Court St – Left turn curb cut:** Commissioner McMordie said the design firm McMahon recommends that the existing curbing be left as is since the roadway is not wide enough per Federal guidelines.

**Daylight intersections:** Commissioner Mejias said the discussion on this item is still ongoing as they need to work out the signage and prioritize the intersections. Commissioner Clark asked if No Parking Here to Corner signage could at least be put in place for Bartlett Street at Mechanic Street because there are always cars parked up to the crosswalk when there is mass at St. Mary's. Commissioner Mejias agreed that intersection is a problem, but it would be unreasonable to put a sign at every intersection.

**Rotary – Bates @ Western Ave:** Commissioner Mejias said she has not heard anything on this item. Commissioner McMordie said it is sitting in finance waiting for Free Cash certification. This item will be tabled.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Orange Street parking:** Commissioner Mejias said she received requests to have no parking on Orange Street. There is already no parking on entire length of the north side of the street and they cannot change it to no parking as some residents have no driveway to park in. There have been complaints about Conner Avenue at Orange Street and the intersection has been added to the list for traffic enforcement to address. Commissioner Clark asked about putting a No Parking Here to Corner sign on the parking side of Orange Street. He said he assumed it was mostly residents parking there, but Commissioner Mejias said she believed it was mostly visitors at that particular corner. Commissioner Cain agreed that the problem is at the houses with more people than room for parking. Commissioner Cain mentioned the option of having the street go back to being one-way. Commissioner Clark motioned for No Parking Here to Corner signs on the east side of Conner Ave and the south side of Orange Street. Commissioner Gadbois seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Mejias – Yes

Commissioner Cain – Yes

Commissioner McMordie – Yes

Commissioner Clark – Yes

Commissioner Gadbois - Yes

**Shepard Street, no parking both sides at southern end by Franklin Street:** Commissioner Mejias said this item is the same issue with parking. Commissioner Clark made a motion to post No Parking Here to Corner signs at the intersection of Shepard and Franklin Street. Commissioner Gadbois seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Mejias – Yes

Commissioner Cain – Yes

Commissioner McMordie – Yes

Commissioner Clark – Yes

Commissioner Gadbois - Yes

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**Beckwith Avenue, no parking from here to corner at southern end by Franklin Street:** Commissioner Mejias said this item is again the same issue with parking. She said people are parking right on the end on the corner where it goes from Franklin to Russell and when someone is trying to pull out, they get stuck on Franklin. Commissioner McMordie said it is a very residential area and asked if it is just one problem person could we just talk to them. Commissioner Mejias replied that they have. Commissioner Clark motioned to place No Parking Here to Corner signs on Beckwith Ave at the intersection of Franklin Street on the northeast side. Commissioner McMordie seconded the motion.

### Roll Call:

Commissioner Mejias – Yes

Commissioner Cain – Yes

Commissioner McMordie – Yes

Commissioner Clark – Yes

Commissioner Gadbois - Yes

### **School Street – Pedestrian only road from Elm Street to Central Street:**

Amber Champagne-Matos, owner of Champagne Apothecary located at 38 School Street and head of the downtown Westfield Merchant's Association read a statement in favor of the proposal. She said as pedestrian only it would provide a safer area, bring in more foot traffic, and encourage more businesses to open in Westfield with only five parking spaces lost. Commissioner Clark asked if all the downtown merchants are in favor of this and she replied that all of the members of the association are in favor. Commissioner Clark asked if they are looking to have this be a seasonal shut down or all year and Ms. Champagne-Matos responded that they are looking for an all-year shut down as the merchants have many outdoor activities throughout the year. Commissioner Clark said he has an issue with the bank building, since the drive thru is set up to empty onto School Street, and how would it get blocked off but still allow the DPW to get in. Commissioner Cain said it could be done temporarily with jersey barriers but could change to precast DOT-rated barriers that look nicer. He said they already purchased downtown snow removal equipment that would perfect for this situation, and it would be pretty easy to block the area off. Bill Westerlind from ArtWorks of Westfield expressed his appreciation of downtown Westfield and that when he heard about this project he thought of Church Street in Burlington, Vermont, and Strong Street in Northampton. He said it would provide a great platform for the art community, will attract new businesses, and will provide a great opportunity for Westfield. Commissioner Clark asked what Commissioner Mejias thinks as far as traffic. Commissioner Mejias said where the traffic is going to be pushed to needs to be addressed, along with deliveries to School Street. Paul Cacolice of 29 Westwood Drive said there are remote-controlled bollards that can drop down for emergency vehicles and can do the same for delivery trucks if the businesses have access to them. Amber Champagne-Matos commented that many businesses on School Street have deliveries made to their home due to the issues with delivery trucks. Commissioner Mejias said a concern is people using the back behind the bank as a cut through to Elm Street and that will increase when School Street is cut off. Commissioner Clark asked if making Central one way would alleviate that. Commissioner Mejias said she thinks School Street as pedestrian only is a great idea but the effects on the surrounding area need to be discussed more. Commissioner Cain asked if a temporary shutdown could be done to try it out. Commissioner Mejias the particulars need to be figured out and it won't happen tonight so this item will be tabled. The resident from Susan Drive said she uses School Street to get to the parking lot and although she could go around it is more convenient to use School Street. She also said people from out of town would not know to go all the way around to get to parking. Amber Champagne-Matos said that she shares the parking map link on the Westfield Forum and most people did not even know there is a

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parking map. Bill Westerlind from ArtWorks of Westfield said that when the city achieves cultural district status that part of the marketing of it will be to include parking. Commissioner Mejias told Amber Champagne-Matos that she will give her contact information so they can continue discussions, but for now the item is being tabled.

## **City wide 25mph for thickly settled or business districts (except for existing posted speed limits):**

Commissioner Mejias said at the last meeting they spoke about adopting 25 mph in part of the city and she received a lot of emails regarding it. After discussions with her boss, they decided to change it to city-wide thickly settled and business districts at 25 mph other than areas that are already posted above 30 mph. A resident asked if there will be more signs and Commissioner Mejias said there will be less signs. They will copy surrounding communities and place Speed Limit 25 MPH City Wide Unless Otherwise Posted signs at every entrance to the city. Commissioner Mejias said that anything that is 30 mph now will be 25 mph. Anything posted above 30 mph will remain as posted. The Susan Drive resident asked how it will be enforced. Commissioner Mejias said this is what the community asked for and they will do their best. City Council Onyski asked if the previous street listing will be revised. Commissioner Mejias asked if she could rescind the list because it would be easier to list the streets not changing to 25 mph. Commissioner Clark asked if it could just be unless posted otherwise? City Councilor Onyski and Commissioner Mejias both agreed that it was a matter of writing the ordinance. Commissioner Clark made a motion to adopt a 25 mph speed limit on all thickly settled roads and the business district unless posted otherwise. Councilor Cain seconded the motion.

## Roll Call:

Commissioner Mejias – Yes

Commissioner Cain – Yes

Commissioner McMordie – Yes

Commissioner Clark – Yes

Commissioner Gadbois - Yes

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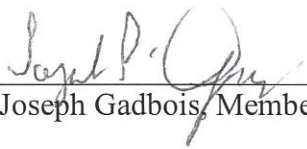
Next Meeting – September 20, 2023 at 5:30

At 7:05 PM Commissioner Clark made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Gadbois seconded the motion.

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Juanita Mejias, Member

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Fran Cain, Member

  
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Richard Clark, Member

  
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Joseph Gadbois, Member

  
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Allison McMordie, Member

9/20/2023  
APPROVED FOR RELEASE ON

