

# The Westfield Traffic Commission

September 18, 2019

The Westfield Traffic Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, September 18, 2019, in Room 207 at 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA.

**Roll Call:** Comm. Valliere – Present – Comm. Billips – Present - Comm. Cressotti – Present - Comm. Boldini – Present – Comm. Clark – Present

Commissioner Valliere notified the commission that Sergeant Robert Saunders who is in charge of the Traffic Bureau at the Westfield Police Department will be his designee for tonight's meeting and for all future meetings. Commissioner Designee Robert Saunders is present for tonight's meeting.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES DATED June 19, 2019:**

Commissioner Boldini made a motion to approve the minutes dated June 19, 2019. Commissioner Clark seconded that motion.

Roll Call:

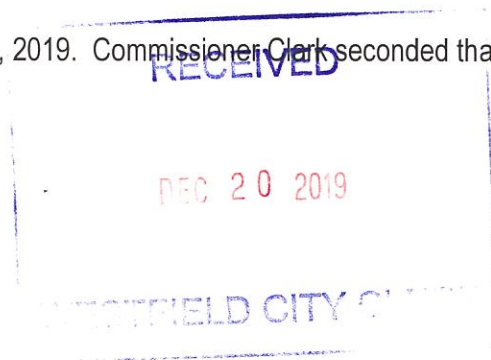
Commissioner Saunders: Abstained

Commissioner Boldini: Yes

Commissioner Billips: Yes

Commissioner Cressotti: Abstained

Commissioner Clark: Yes



Commissioner Boldini said he would like to move item #1 under new business as the first item this evening. The commission will need to vote on a new chairman since Chief Camerota has retired.

**Vote on new Traffic Commission Chairman:** Commissioner Boldini made a motion to appoint Commissioner Designee Robert Saunders as Chairman of the Traffic Commission. Commissioner Billips seconded that motion. All in favor.

Commissioner Saunders notified everyone present that tonight's meeting is being recorded by the chief's secretary. Also recording tonight's meeting is Peter Currier from the Westfield Evening News.

## **OPEN PARTICIPATION**

City Councilor Onyski said that he already spoke to Chief Valliere regarding the road markings on North Road and East Mountain Road. He was notified that those markings are set to be done in the near future. Commissioner Saunders said those markings are scheduled to be done tomorrow. Councilor Onyski also said that there is concern to have the damaged railing on the bridge on East Main Street fixed. There was a car accident there some time ago and it has yet to be repaired. Sergeant Saunders said he has reached out to the MADOT regarding this. It is on their list of items to be repaired.

Kathy Hillman of 179 Susan Drive addressed the commission. She said that she is concerned about the lines that will be painted at the intersection of North Road and East Mountain Road. She wants to make sure the arrows will be painted far enough in advance to give motorists enough time to get into the right lane. She also said that she has concerns about the bridge on East Main Street at the corner of Union Street. She feels there is going to be another accident there again.

City Councilor Babinski addressed the commission regarding issues that are happening on Pinewood Lane. There are commercial vehicles being parked on the hill going towards Pochassic Street. There is a city ordinance that states not more than 1 commercial vehicle that can be parked at a time. They are parking 1 vehicle on their property and 1 on the street.

# The Westfield Traffic Commission

September 18, 2019

There are 2 residents that live at this address that both work at the same company. A neighbor said that the vehicles weigh about 1 ton each. There is concern regarding other vehicles being able to pass safely in the winter. Commissioner Saunders said that the traffic department has been involved in this situation last year, but he doesn't remember the specifics on the outcome. City Councilor Babinski suggested the commission look into this with the other city departments that have been involved to see if there is a violation of the city ordinance.

City Councilor Babinski notified the commission that she has been asked to have the commission look into the crosswalk on North Elm Street near Munchies and Whip City Candle Co. She said there is a new boutique, along with other businesses, and there is concern for pedestrian safety. Commissioner Saunders said there is already a crosswalk at that location. Councilor Babinski said she is aware, but she would like this topic to be on a future agenda.

Laura Kellogg of Buck Pond Road addressed the commission. She said there is a posted no left turn sign on North Road coming out of the Dunkin Donuts parking lot. She said she heads to work between 7:30 and 8:00 and she always sees cars taking left turns during her commute. She would like to see either enforcement done or the sign removed. She said another concern she has is regarding Woronoco Soccer Field. She said vehicles are using Buck Pond Road as a cut through to get to the soccer field. They are speeding. There are no sidewalks on Buck Pond Road. There have been a few times where residents have been out walking their dogs and have had to jump out of the way of speeding vehicles. Her last concern is regarding the light on County Road and East Mountain Road. She would like to see it alternated. She said cars that are trying to take a left from County Road to East Mountain Road can cause traffic to back up, especially during the morning and evening rush hours.

Donna Cipriani of 20 Lisa Lane said that there was an email sent back in June to the commission regarding truck traffic and speeding on Buck Pond Road. She said the truck traffic is still happening. She said that the road is narrow and windy. If there is a truck traveling this road it would be impossible for a school bus to go by. Commissioner Saunders said there is no ordinance making this road a truck exclusion. Donna said it seems to be happening more frequently. Commissioner Billips said that they have had good luck in the past with just educating the drivers. Commissioner Saunders said this is a common problem throughout the city. Truck drivers are not using a commercial grade GPS unit. They are using their cell phones. The software on their cellphones do not factor in height and weight restrictions. They only notify drivers of the speed and directions. Often times it will just bring a driver the shortest route to get to their destination. He has tried to reach out to certain companies to come up with a solution.

Commissioner Boldini made a motion to move item #8 from new business to be addressed before old business. Commissioner Billips seconded that motion. All in favor.

**Bailey Drive traffic issue – Councilor Babinski:** City Councilor Babinski said she has a resident of Bailey Drive that wants to address the commission. John Glenn of 41 Bailey Drive said that there has been an increase in traffic and speeding on this road. He said lawns have gotten torn up from the traffic and they have to go out and clean up this area all the time. He said he finds garbage and alcohol nips on his lawn all the time. There are 18 homes and 30 children on this one road. He said cars come down Sammy Lane very fast as well and there is a bus stop on this corner. He said that at 3:00pm when the local businesses get out the speeding gets worse. He said he has been able to get 4 different incidents on camera just in the month of September. He is looking for a solution. He suggested either a stop sign at the end of Sammy Lane, or perhaps a speed bump. He said he believes all of the neighbors are pretty supportive to find a solution. Commissioner Saunders said that Sammy Lane and Bailey Drive are not public ways. He said even if the city installed a stop sign, they would not be able to enforce it. He said that they have had officers up there at 3:00pm and have not seen much speeding. One resident of Egleston Road said that she has noticed cars speeding through the corner of Egleston Road and Bailey Drive. The road is narrow. She said that when cars are taking this turn, it is hard for them to see someone walking. She said she's concerned not only for the speed, but the fact that there are nips being left along the road. People are not only speeding, they are drinking. The area is overgrown as well. Commissioner Boldini suggested opening up

# The Westfield Traffic Commission

September 18, 2019

Egleston Road to Servistar Industrial Way. The residents do not feel that will solve the problem. Residents of Egleston Road had it closed for this exact reason. They would like to see Sammy Lane closed. They feel this would resolve the problem. Commissioner Boldini said he believes that this was discussed in the past and the problem was that the Fire Department needs to be able to access the road. Commissioner Billips suggested a gate with a lock box. He said the commission would have to talk to the Fire Department. Commissioner Boldini said if the snow is plowed to the gate, this wouldn't allow access. Commissioner Billips said that the DPW could address the plowing if that is an issue. Commissioner Billips suggested that the commission speak to the Fire Department and address this at the next meeting. Commissioner Billips made a motion to table this until the next meeting. Commissioner Boldini seconded that motion. All in favor.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Update on two hour downtown parking – Kate Phelon:** Kate Phelon addressed the commission. She said that she has spoken to local downtown merchants and they are not in favor of metered parking. The merchants she has spoken with are in favor of a 2 hour parking limit throughout the business district. Commissioner Boldini made a motion to make both sides of Elm St from the bridge to Court St, both sides of Court St from Elm to Washington St and both sides of Main St from Broad St to Taylor Ave (all where parking is already allowed) two hour parking. Commissioner Billips seconded that motion. All in favor.

**Update on bicycle/pedestrian safety at Old Pochassic and N. Elm:** Kate Phelon said when pulling out of Old Pochassic Rd it is difficult to see oncoming pedestrians and cyclists. Commissioner Saunders said he met with Casey from the DPW and they are looking for a permanent solution. Commissioner Billips said that they had looked into curbing but they don't think that will work so they are now looking into extending the railings. Commissioner Billips said that the DPW will put railings up and see if this corrects the issue.

**Update on crosswalk on Noble St near Senior Center – Councilor Figy:** Councilor Figy is not present this evening. The commission has discussed this in the past and was told there was only 1 resident requesting this. Chief Valliere said he went and looked at where the proposed crosswalk would be. He said it is a very busy street and he has safety concerns, however he does feel they need a safe crosswalk somewhere on that road. Commissioner Cressotti said that during the design of the Senior Center it was decided to not put in a crosswalk due to the street being so busy. He understands the argument, but he was directed not to put one in. Commissioner Boldini said perhaps Councilor Figy has new information he wanted to share with the commission regarding this topic. Commissioner Boldini made a motion to table the item one last time in order to give Councilor Figy the opportunity to present the commission with any additional input he may have. Commissioner Billips seconded that motion. All in favor.

**3 way stop at Broadway and Orchard – Councilor Surprise:** Councilor Surprise is not present this evening. The commission doesn't see any reason to put a 3 way stop at this location. Commissioner Boldini said that this is a through street so as written it cannot be a 3 way stop. Commissioner Boldini made a motion to not put a 3 way stop at Broadway and Orchard. Commissioner Billips seconded that motion. All in favor.

**Update on truck traffic in area of Notre Dame St and Crown St:** Commissioner Saunders said that he spoke to a resident there that had some concerns. Richard Piper addressed the commission. He said that he owns property on Crown St. He said that several years ago there were signs up regarding truck traffic on Crown St. It is his understanding that the state had done a study years ago and deemed Crown St to not be a good road for truck traffic. He wants to know if Crown St does in fact have a truck exclusion. Commissioner Saunders said that he looked at the ordinances and Crown St does not have a truck exclusion. None of the commissioners are aware of the state's study. Mr. Piper said that another resident who was unable to attend this evenings meeting does have the documentation regarding the truck exclusion. Councilor Babinski said he was present at the last meeting and presented all of the documentation to the commissioner. Commissioner Clark said that he owns property on Crown St. He said after the last meeting he has sat on Crown St and monitored the traffic. He said he has seen very little truck traffic using Crown St. Commissioner Boldini asked Commissioner Cressotti if they could put up signs showing a truck route. Commissioner Cressotti said that that can be done. Commissioner Saunders said he will do a truck study on Crown St.

# The Westfield Traffic Commission

September 18, 2019

**Update on Russellville Rd at Cabot Rd flashing stop – Councilor Babinski:** Commissioner Billips said the sign has been ordered and as soon as it comes in, it will be installed.

**Update on King St parking – No parking Bates to YMCA, south side – Sgt. Saunders:** Commissioner Saunders said he does not see anything in the ordinances designating no parking in this area. He knows residents in this area have had issues with vehicles parking in this location. He said that the road is narrow and if a vehicle is parked there it forces traffic to go into the other lane. Commissioner Cressotti said he would like to hear from the residents. Commissioner Boldini made a motion to table this item. Commissioner Billips seconded this motion. All in favor.

**Update Mountain View at Dickinson – Speed Study Sgt. Saunders:** Commissioner Saunders said that there has been a significant amount of construction in this area and he did not have the study done. He felt that the study would not be accurate due to the construction. He said the construction should be done soon and he will have the study done as soon as it is complete. Commissioner Boldini said he was opposed to the stop sign which is why he requested the speed study. He said he understands why Commissioner Saunders was unable to do the study. Commissioner Boldini made a motion to leave the stop sign up on a continued trial temporary basis until the construction on Western Ave is complete and the speed study can be done. The commission can readdress this topic after the speed study is complete. Commissioner Clark seconded that motion. All in favor.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**No Parking Root Rd at brickyard area pull off:** Resident John Keilch addressed the commission. He said that there are problems with people parking vehicles along the brickyard area. This is a no parking area. He is looking to have more signs installed. He wants to see 5 more signs installed specifically throughout the brickyard pull off area. City Councilor Babinski said that there are no parking signs in front of Roots Athletic Center and people think they can park in between the signs. They don't realize that the no parking signs mean no parking in that whole area of the road. Commissioner Billips said he will have the additional signs installed.

Commissioner Boldini made a motion to move item #6 of new business to the next item. Commissioner Cressotti seconded that motion. All in favor.

**Fowler St parking restriction change – Councilor Emmershly:** Councilor Emmershly said that the residents of Fowler St are requesting a change to the parking restrictions on Fowler St. They would like to remove the parking restriction from the eastern side of the street to the west bound side. They want parking to be allowed on the east bound side and no parking on the west bound side. Both changes would be for the entire length of the street. Commissioner Cressotti asked Councilor Emmershly if he has spoken to residents of the eastern side of the street. Councilor Emmershly said he has and they do not mind the proposed change. Commissioner Cressotti said he is hesitant because the original request was due to issues with parking on the eastern side of the street. Commissioner Saunders made a motion to remove the parking restriction on the eastern side of Fowler Street and change the western side of Fowler Street to no parking for the entire length of the street. Commissioner Boldini seconded that motion.

Roll call:

Commissioner Saunders: Yes

Commissioner Billips: Yes

Commissioner Cressotti: Abstained

Commissioner Boldini: Yes

Commissioner Clark: Yes

**No parking posted Sibley Ave at Dwight St – Commissioner Billips:** Commissioner Billips said that his foreman brought this to his attention. They are looking to have Dwight St changed to no parking. This will help the DPW trucks turn around in that area. Commissioner Saunders said he agrees with this recommendation. Commissioner Boldini made a

# The Westfield Traffic Commission

September 18, 2019

motion to make the north side of Dwight St no parking from the intersection of Sibley Ave to 100 feet west. Commissioner Cressotti seconded this motion. All in favor.

**Relocation of Verizon poles on Honey Pot Rd – Councilor Burns:** City Councilor Burns said that back in November he met with residents of Honey Pot Road. They are looking to have the Verizon poles moved. They contacted Verizon. Verizon was receptive to moving the poles. The road is narrow and the poles are very close to the road. This makes plowing difficult. Commissioner Billips said he does not feel this is a traffic commission issue. He said if Verizon has agreed to move the poles, then there is nothing that the traffic commission needs to do. Commissioner Cressotti said somewhere along the way, Verizon was given the right of way by the City Council to put up the poles and if Verizon is open to moving the poles then it is not a traffic commission issue. Councilor Burns said that he is not saying Verizon is willing to move the poles. Commissioner Boldini said that he is not sure the traffic commission has anything to do with moving Verizon poles. Commissioner Billips asked resident Debbie Samwell what she is looking to have the traffic commission do. Debbie said she made the call to Verizon and they told her that the request to move the poles would need to come from the DPW Superintendent and that the request will need to identify which Verizon poles need to be moved. Commissioner Billips said he will take care of this.

**Eliminate parking spot at #236 Elm St – Chief Valliere/Sgt. Saunders:** The commission noted that they have previously discussed this issue and at the time they were told that this parking spot did not create a safety concern. Commissioner Saunders said he does feel this parking spot is a safety issue. He said that when a vehicle is parked in this spot, it impairs the view of a pedestrian in the crosswalk by oncoming traffic. The crosswalk is located on Elm Street to Bartlett St. Commissioner Clark made a motion to recommend to City Council to change the ordinance and eliminate the parking spot in front of 236 Elm St closest to the crosswalk. Commissioner Boldini seconded that motion. All in favor.

**Truck Exclusion Holyoke/East Mt. Rd. – Councilor Emmershly:** City Councilor Emmershly said this has been discussed before, but he was hoping with a new chief, there can be some discussion to request the current exclusion on Papermill Road be extended. The residents feel there is nowhere for the trucks to go once they are in this area with the current truck exclusion. They would like an exclusion for Holyoke Road and Eastwood Drive and an increase to a 24 hour exclusion for Papermill Road. He understands the trucks are traveling this road due to the GPS system they are using, but with the current truck exclusions, trucks have nowhere to go and are turning around onto smaller side streets. Commissioner Boldini asked Chief Valliere if former Chief Camerota left him a file on this. Former Chief Camerota was trying to get the railroad bridge on East Mountain Road raised as he felt this would solve the problem. Chief Valliere said he received an email this afternoon regarding a meeting to discuss a possible grant that would go towards the pioneer valley railroad bridge on Holyoke Road. The meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at 4:00 pm. Commissioner Billips said that this is not an easy task. City Councilor Onyski said he has been discussing this for the last 3 years with the Traffic Commission. He is looking for solutions and suggestions. He said right now, Holyoke Road is being used as a cut through from the Mass Pike by truck traffic. Commissioner Billips said that a solution is to enforce the truck route. Commissioner Cressotti said he believes that it was already decided at a previous meeting to add signage that shows the truck route for traffic exiting the pike. Commissioner Billips said if the trucks would just use the truck route, this would not be a problem. City Councilor Emmershly said ultimately he is asking the commission to approach MA DOT and find out, based on their requirements, what can and can't be done to solve this issue. Commissioner Billips said he thinks they have the solution, they just need to figure out how to enforce it. Commissioner Cressotti said MA DOT will not do an analysis for the city. That is up to the city. MA DOT will review a proposal brought forth by the city and determine if it qualifies for approval. City Councilor Onyski asked what the commission's solution is. Commissioner Boldini suggested that the commercial enforcement officer be assigned to enforce the truck route. Joanne Barnes from Papermill Road addressed the commission. She said the signs regarding the truck exclusion on Papermill Road have never been posted. She asked what is in the works to get this done. Commissioner Billips said he will look into it. Commissioner Boldini said the roads were not built for the amount of traffic there is now. Almost every household has numerous cars. Nobody walks anywhere nowadays. The traffic far exceeds the expectations from the time the roads were built. Commissioner Billips said that more signage showing the truck route will help. Commissioner Saunders said that he has notified the park & rec. dept. that the trees have overgrown the signs. This is an ongoing battle each year.



# The Westfield Traffic Commission

September 18, 2019

At 8:39 pm the commission took a recess.

At 8:43 pm the meeting was called back to order by Chairman Saunders.

**Stop sign at East Mountain Road and Holyoke Road:** City Councilor Onyski said there is a 3-way stop sign at this location. He received a complaint from a resident in this area regarding cars not stopping at this intersection. He said he has seen this himself as well. He thinks that motorists are not able to see the stop sign. There is a sign prior to the bridge which reads stop ahead, but the stop sign itself is hard to see. Commissioner Boldini said there used to be a stop sign before the bridge and then another immediately after the bridge, but a truck hit the one before the bridge and it was not replaced. Commissioner Billips said he is going to put up more visible signs in that location.

**Update 25-miles-per-hour in business district:** Commissioner Saunders said that in July, Chief Camerota received a letter from the MADOT regarding existing speed limits on Franklin Street, Main Street and Court Street. This does not allow for the council to reduce the speeds in those areas. The speed limit signs on those streets have been put back to what the speeds were before.

**Review Foch Ave for speed and No Parking Signs:** City Councilor Morganelli said that the current ordinance on Foch Ave states no parking on both sides for a specific length of the road. The residents feel parking is necessary for parents bringing their children to and from the bus stop. Commissioner Billips said he thinks this road was made no parking due to people using this street to park on during sporting events at the high school. Councilor Morganelli said that the residents would like to see either parking allowed on one side of the road or allow parking at the beginning of the road only closest to the bus stop. Commissioner Boldini said it is safer to have no parking on this road. The commission feels that moving the bus stop to a location where parking is allowed might be a better solution. Commissioner Saunders said he will look into it and speak to the school transportation department.

**Review Foch Ave @ Montgomery St for speed signage or blinking signal:** City Councilor Morganelli said speed is an issue in this area. This is happening at all hours of the day. This area is used a lot as a cut through. He went on to say that he remembers the Police Dept previously doing enforcement in this area and they caught numerous violators. The residents are looking for either a speed reduction in this area or more signage; possibly even a blinking yellow light. Commissioner Boldini said that reducing the speed will not help. He suggested that the police department put out the sign that shows the speed limit and the speed of the driver on this road. Commissioner Saunders said he will put the speed trailer on this road. Councilor Babinski suggested notifying the high school as well. She suggested the high school have a talk with the students regarding parking privileges being revoked if a student is caught speeding in this area. Commissioner Saunders noted this will only help if it's the students speeding. He said this area was already scheduled to have the speed trailer put up. It will be put up.

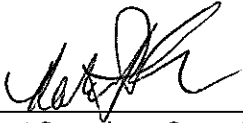
Commissioner Cressotti said that while at another meeting, the Commission for the Disabled addressed having a crosswalk put in on Union Street near the Powdermill Village Apartments. There is a resident there who is almost blind that needs to get to the other side of the road to the bus stop. There is currently no crosswalk at all in this area. They would like a crosswalk put in that will address the safe use for this resident. He is aware that this is not on the agenda, but he wanted to make the commission aware. He directed them to contact the commission. He is asking that the commission look into this so when the request comes through they can make a recommendation.

The Westfield Traffic Commission

September 18, 2019

Next Meeting – December 18, 2019

9:12 PM Commissioner Boldini made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Billips seconded the motion. All in favor.



Robert Saunders, Commission Chairman



Mark Cressotti, Member



David Billips, Member



Brian Boldini, Member



Richard Clark, Member

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