

CITY OF BEVERLY

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

BOARD: Parking and Traffic Commission
SUBCOMMITTEE:
DATE: July 13, 2021
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Benevento (Chair), Darlene Wynne (Vice Chair), George Binns, Michael Collins, Jonathan Salt, Sgt Michael Henebury
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Leslie Gould, Capt Ryan Laracy
OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Alexander; Matt Leighton; Steven Cohen; Kirsten Braun; Estelle Rand, Ward Councilor 2; Ari Grosvenor
RECORDER: Sharlyne Woodbury

Benevento chairs and opens the meeting at 8:33 am.

This is a hybrid virtual/in person meeting with special format as required to honor Governor Baker's State of Emergency declared due to the national crisis of COVID-19.

1. Approval of Minutes

Lozada moves to approve May 4, 2021 minutes as amended. Binns seconds. The motion carries 5-2-0. Lozada and Henebury abstain.

Approval of June 1, 2021 minutes will be moved to the August 3, 2021 meeting.

2. Discussion post construction Traffic Study Scope of Services – Site Plan Review #113-14, Special Permit #139-14 – 140 Brimbal Ave – North Shore Crossing – CEA Beverly LLC

Benevento begins discussing the traffic study. Benevento reviews the expected components of the traffic study with Tom Alexander on behalf of the applicant. Tom Alexander, Kirsten Braun, and Steven Cohen represent the client taking note of traffic study expectations. Lozada inquires if the study can be available for the public or if a public meeting is appropriate. Benevento supports the study made available to the public as a demonstration of transparency and good faith due to the controversial nature of the project. Lozada discusses the carelessness of drivers on the roundabout. People are still not following proper traffic circle rules for flow and yielding when required. Salt inquires about the result and implementation of needed improvements. Binns concerns center on identifying any residual effects of the pandemic. Alexander explains they are looking to assemble the study in September 2021. Binns would like confirmation the residual effects of covid will be addressed, has concerns with increased traffic overflow not taken into consideration. Braun informs the commission they have been reviewing historical data in lieu of covid as well as adhering to updated MassDOT requirements. Alexander would like it noted the commission reviewed and approved the scope of today's meeting. Benevento informed Alexander the commission will follow up with a letter recapping agreement to the scope of the traffic study.

Wynne notes the commission would need to take a vote for the study. Benevento informs commissioners the first study was supposed to be 6 months post project completion with a second

study 12 months after. He notes the 6-month study is moot at this point due to covid. Benevento suggests only requiring one traffic study.

Lozada moves to accept the scope of study as presented by the applicant with the comments noted and required during the July 13, 2021 meeting. Binns seconds. The motion carries 7-0.

3. General Business

a. Goat Hill and Harbor front parking (informational discussion)

Wynne discusses the parking issue and suggests figuring out the scope of work needed for the traffic study. Wynne reviews some of the technology available to capture various components of the potential scope of the study. Commissioners acknowledge this area has a lot of concerns and needs to balance out between commercial entities and residents.

Benevento opens the floor for public comment.

Nancy Marino, Goat Hill resident.

Marino expresses concerns with traffic flow. Suggests reviewing that before parking issue. Asks the commission to open School Street back to two-way traffic. Residents are seeing overflow of business traffic. This issue has been brought forth several times in other PT&C meetings by other residents. Notes the overflow is a problem in the area. The public are traversing the neighborhood without knowing the area creating safety concerns. Residential parking is tight, example Wellman Street; firetrucks seem to not have room for turns on tight streets. Finding another safer way in and out of Goat Hill is vital. Benevento confirms the residents are looking for balance and the commission will review all information to find a suitable outcome for all parties.

Dan Finn, Goat Hill resident

Brings up the Mission Boathouse project its impact on the neighborhood. Believes the parking study done on the restaurant was incomplete and fraudulent. That the concerns of the residents were ignored in favor of commercial development. Finn does not believe the restaurant at max capacity and the neighborhood can accommodate parking and traffic. Finn notes the current parking situation for residents is already tight. The new restaurant will create more parking issues. Finn also address restaurant patrons coming out of the parking lot and turning right only onto Water Street. Taking a left onto Front Street onto Water will not be good for traffic flow encouraging a tight hand turn onto Water Street for consideration. Finn suggests strict resident parking. Finn notes this is the historic district and the neighborhood is worth saving and believes the overdevelopment of he water front is ruining the character of the area.

Benevento reviews the past concerns and note the commission does not want to take parking away from the street or from residents. Benevento reviews the satellite parking options mentioned in prior meetings confirming the concerns presented by the residents. Finn presses for resident parking. Benevento admits the commission discussed resident parking in that area, and other prominent downtown areas such as the Depot per the logistics and effectiveness of resident sticker parking. There must be a balance between the commercial enterprises and residents. Benevento acknowledges the opinion of Finn regarding traffic study. At this point the commission has to rely on the study and information previously presented. Wynne notes the expansion of the residential parking in that area, and it is on table for discussion.

Commissioners weigh in with thoughts, concerns and comments. Lozada echoes and agrees with the concerns of Finn. Suggests monitoring the area consistency and frequently. Salt inquires what other restaurant in Beverly is required to present the same type of parking/traffic concerns. Salt would like the scope clarified believes there is more to the discussion in the water front area with too many things happening at once. Salt agrees two-way traffic on School Street would be ideal. Salt would like make sure this discussion does not turn into parking at the restaurant as that topic has already been reviewed and agreed upon. Benevento inquires of Wynne what the scope of study is and all the areas concerned. Wynne notes they are not going to redo the parking for the restaurant and discusses the parking requirements for other Beverly restaurants and businesses. Usually if they are near a parking garage those other businesses do not have to provide/meet additional parking requirements.

Henebury notes the traffic study should not be confined to one area discussing the variables contributing to concern. It should review Fish Flake Hill, Lothrop Street; essentially the whole of waterfront, downtown, and uptown areas. He urges to not piecemeal the study. The whole problem must be viewed in both the macro and micro scope. Continuing discussion, Collins discusses resident only parking. He notes the intent of resident parking was to keep the commuters from taking over the neighborhood for long hours while they are away as this would stunt parking rotation and availability. Collins cautions the commission should consider the residential parking should not be overused. He comments everyone wants exclusive parking to their homes, however; the city cannot guarantee that as these are public streets for public use. Binns agrees that waiting for the data on the situation is best before moving forward.

Benevento asks Wynne what is the process for implementing the study. Wynne would need to review the past studies. Suggests this would be initiated in the planning department in concert with the mayor's office and at a minimum shared through the city council. Wynne reads comments from Councilor Rand. She suggests a hybrid residential parking solution and agrees with Collins that public streets are public and should be available for the public. Salt urges the commission to be cautious of the study. They are in danger of losing the character of area. Fish Flake Hill, Goat Hill, and lower Cabot Street are being lost as time goes on. Do not damage the character of those distinct areas of Beverly.

Benevento notes the city has not adopted a "streets" policy in Beverly yet. It is not all about parking cars and moving cars; calling attention to walking, biking, pedestrians, and other street/side walk amenities needed. Salt's final comment, lower Cabot Street used to be considered the grand entrance into Beverly. That character is being lost. Commissioners jointly agree some issues will have to play out before they can address the area in totality.

There being no further comments or questions. No additional actions at this time.

b. BBC follow up discussion

Salt asks for updates on the current intersections under reconstruction informing commissioners the BBC is very interested in those intersections; would like to provide input and data where appropriate. Benevento notes all three intersection and designs are approved and underway. Wynne reviews Cabot Street, Bridge street, Tozier Road, McKay Street, Balch Street and the North Beverly fire station. Benevento reviews the shared use path near Henry's Market where the BBC actually did not recommend it due to safety concerns. Bridge Street will have buffered bike lanes on both sides.

Eliminates parking on side left side the street in order to accommodate bike lanes. It's in 75 % design phase.

Collins left the meeting 9:31 am.

Wynne reviews the Tozier Road intersection. Initial design was part of the anchor point project. Wynne informs them the project will not come back to the commission. Benevento reviews the project plans and mitigation plans presented asking Wynne to share the project plans and summaries to the BBC and Dan Bresnan. City council is extending barriers for outside dining until April 2022. Barriers were removed for the winter season. Wynne notes there is a shared street grant. Salt discusses the Cabot Street repaving up to City Side diner and restriping the parking spaces. Wynne will have to confirm once the barriers are removed if the parking spaces will be repaved.

Salt inquires if there is a bike parking ordinance. Wynne clarifies it will be a bike section added to the parking ordinance, not a separate ordinance for bikes. The BBC members are continuing their bike count. Salt informs them a BBC member is interested in meeting with Collins to further develop the bike infrastructure plan. Salt advocates for scheduling that meeting between Collins.

There being no further comments or questions. No additional actions at this time.

4. Adjournment

Lozada moves to adjourn. Salt seconds. The motion carries 7-0.
Meeting adjourned 9:40 am.

Next meeting scheduled for 8.3.21.