

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES  
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
February 3, 2020**

Present: Ken DiFazio, Chairman  
Arthur Mathews, Councilor  
Rebecca Haugh, Councilor  
Christopher Heffernan, Councilor

Also Present: Joseph Callanan, Town Solicitor  
Robert Luongo, Director of Planning  
Owen MacDonald, Traffic Engineer

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair DiFazio called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

**19 107-Rezoning Request for the Historic Mill District**

This is to make sure the other members are aware this was voted out at committee on December 9, 2019 and is before the full town council during its meeting. Councilor Haugh reported that the Mayor had requested a delay. Will it be voted at council in spite of that?

Mr. Luongo responded the mayor is neutral on the project; he had reiterated that any plan presented is subject to Special Permit and was assured that the public would be heard at that time. The mayor is satisfied with that. (During this discussion, Councilor Mathews arrived.)

**20 013-Traffic Regulations Chauncy Street**

Owen MacDonald presented this measure with a power point. A community meeting was recently held at Old South Union Church. A plan had been prepared for Columbian Square and the funding was supposed to come from the Union Point developer. That didn't happen, so they explored some low-cost solutions which include crosswalks at main intersections of Pleasant, Union and Columbian Streets, and corners will be bumped out to create visibility for pedestrians. This will result in the loss of approximately 7 parking spaces at the corner that will be made up elsewhere in the area.

Another part of the proposal is to make Chauncy Street one-way, and create angle parking, that will provide 9 additional spaces. These will not require curb work; just re-striping. It will allow for 30 angled spaces along Chauncy Street; up from current 21. This leaves only enough width on Chauncy Street for a single travel lane, requiring the street to be made one-way. Most will approach from Pleasant Street and make the turn easily into the parking spaces. Given the width of the street, parking will be constrained on that side of the street. Part of the proposal is to make the south side of the street "no parking." With a one-way designation, cars traveling on Pleasant Street, go around a portion of Chauncy to Central Street or Camelot to Union Street. Mr. Luongo added, last Thursday a public meeting was held at the Old South Union Church. They sent out letters to abutters, and area businesses to obtain feedback. Some of it was contentious around issues debated in the Master Plan. This is an incremental implementation of the master plan for Columbian Square. They are having the detail engineering work now. Complaints about South Shore Hospital parking, and enforcement of parking regulations were the two most contentious items. Mr. Luongo called the head of security at South Shore Hospital, and as of today, he has been assured they will enforce parking and send letters to employees about the policy. The mayor

has also assured he will contact WPD to enforce parking regulations. Otherwise, there were no major concerns. There is a modification needed, a parking space will need to be eliminated to create a curb cut for handicap accessibility. They did do an outreach. Mr. MacDonald noted they will need to avoid having trucks idle in the street to offload to the area businesses.

Chair DiFazio asked why drivers use Chauncy to access the parking lot. Mr. Luongo responded there are residents, an apartment building, parking for the playground, and the Knights of Columbus. It is currently a 2-way street. If the pattern is adopted it shouldn't create a hardship. A modification creates a few more parking spaces and makes the intersection of Pleasant and Chauncy safer. It will close off the drive to the former South Shore bank. There is a new owner who is redoing it into office space and will have access from Fogg Road. Coming out from Chauncy one can access via Camelot, or Central. The advantage of this is there won't be cars coming out from Chauncy onto Pleasant and it makes the crosswalk more pedestrian friendly. This is a public process, but the longer it isn't implemented it will continue to be tweaked and the problems never solved. This is the fourth tweaked plan. It's a compromise plan that meets three objectives: to control speed, make the area more pedestrian friendly and not harm the merchants. They will determine funding sources for the construction.

Councilor Mathews noted he has mixed thoughts about the bump-out on Pleasant Street. While the one by Pingree is successful, the one at Oak and Pine Streets is atrocious; people drive over it, plows hit it during snow, and they've received a number of complaints about it. He doesn't want to see the same thing here, although he knows pedestrian safety is key. Mr. Luongo responded that the purpose of the one at Oak and Pine was to slow traffic down. If a driver approaches at the speed limit, which is 20 mph, they clear it, and school busses can maneuver it. Councilor Mathews noted the one at Commercial Corridor (Pingree) is wider. Councilor Mathews noted the bump-out is not in the ordinance. Mr. MacDonald responded that since it is part of the sidewalk, the language is contained under General ordinances- sidewalks (prohibited).

Councilor Heffernan asked about the bump-outs and loss of parking spaces. Mr. Luongo responded that all were aware the plan included loss of parking spaces on the main street, which is why they added additional spots along Chauncy Street. There probably shouldn't be any angled parking spaces in the square, so this was a compromise. Previously, drivers parked in the crosswalks along the corners, which are pedestrian and public safety issues. "No parking" signs will be installed. All of the residents have driveways and if they want to park on the street they are welcome to use the angle parking.

Councilor Haugh was at the public meeting. She was surprised at how much the hospital parking was addressed. She also spoke with hospital employees, who noted they had sufficient hospital parking. Is there a time limit on parking? They had previously approved the ordinance for Jackson Square with expanded timed parking. Mr. Luongo responded the time limit is 2-hours, and it is part of the ordinance. They can increase it if necessary. If merchants park in the lot all day it won't be a problem, but they want to see if it is being filled by hospital employees. The idea is to keep it a vibrant area. As long as there is sufficient space then apartment guests could park overnight. As long as there are enough spaces for customers to do their business, they should be okay. Mr. MacDonald noted there is 2-hour parking limit including overnight.

Councilor Mathews noted that at the bump out; they queue to take the left into Chauncy Street and questions if cars are able to drive around them? As part of the mitigation, there will be signalization installed eventually, under the MEPA certificate. Councilor Mathews questions if the bump-out will be in the way. Mr. Luongo responded that they are temporary; the permanent

plan calls for construction with permanent materials. This is a good test to see that the plan works and traffic flows. The street will get realigned with the permanent plan.

Chair DiFazio noted this measure is scheduled for public hearing at a future date and will be voted following the close of it.

**Electronic Billboard Concerns**

The chair reported this was voted out in December. Since then, some publications were sent as a result. The town council sent a letter to the Attorney General, and then the response received. The third is a document issued by the mayor indicating what he decided with the neighbor representatives. The final document is notice of the public hearing by MassDOT for permit siting a billboard at zero Finnell Drive. Councilor Mathews asked the chair to read the notice into the record at the town council meeting. He does not want a lack of notice to the residents as occurred with the Century Road residents.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:08 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Haugh to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

- Attachment:
1. Correspondence from Town Council to Attorney General
  2. Response from Attorney General's office
  3. Correspondence from Mayor Hedlund – billboard mitigation
  4. Notice of Public Hearing - MassDOT

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary.

Approved by Ken DiFazio as Budget/Management Committee Chairman  
Voted unanimously on 18 February 2020