

City of  
Fitchburg



Department of  
Public Works

June 3, 2022

**COMMISSIONER**

301 Broad Street  
978-829-1910  
978-345-9687 FAX

**STREETS & PARKS**

301 Broad Street  
978-829-1900  
978-345-9687 FAX

**WASTEWATER**

301 Broad Street  
978-829-1930  
978-345-9687 FAX

**WATER**

1200 Rindge Road  
978-345-9616  
978-345-9555 FAX

**ENGINEERING**

301 Broad Street  
978-829-1915  
978-345-9687 FAX

**CEMETERIES**

115 Mount Elam Road  
978-345-9578  
978-345-9686 FAX

**Public Works Committee Meeting Minutes**

A meeting of the Public Works Committee was held on Tuesday, May 31, 2022, in person at 700 Main Street in the Legislative Building at 5:00 PM.

Committee Members Present: Councilors Marisa Fleming, Paul Beauchemin, Sally Cragin, Bernie Schultz (remote), and Sam Squailia;  
DPW Commissioner Nick Erickson;  
Superintendent Gary Withington

Committee Members Absent: None

Other Participants: Councilor Derek Cruz; Residents Linda Allaire, Peter Allaire, Jennifer Barlow from Stoneybrook Village

- 1) Vote to approve minutes from previous meeting (4/26/22): Minutes were approved unanimously.
- 2) DPW Updates: Commissioner Erickson provided updates about ongoing construction projects. Polito is continuing combined sewer separation in the South St/Laurel St area. Work should be complete by the end of summer. The water division's contractor has completed construction of the new water transmission main. The cemetery division just completed Memorial Day preparation and ceremonies. The streets division has continued to work on sidewalks in the Day St area and just began working on a small retaining wall at Forest Hill Cemetery which will allow for expansion. Councilor Beauchemin asked that paving after any separation work be done better than Clarendon St. Commissioner Erickson explained that the work done under the current contract is in accordance with our contract with the contractor based upon a decision by the previous DPW Commissioner. Councilor Squailia praised the cemetery and parks divisions for how the cemeteries and parks looked for Memorial Day. Councilor Squailia asked about vacancies in the parks division. Commissioner Erickson explained there are 3 parks employees and asked that anyone who has complaints about parks needing mowing send an email with the information. Councilor Squailia asked about lifeguard and summer staff hiring. Commissioner Erickson explained positions are posted but we are struggling to find the summer help needed to open the pool and encouraged people who are interested to apply. Splash parks are currently open daily with Crocker open daily and Park Hill Park is open daily but restrooms are not currently open. Councilor Squailia asked about the streetlight contract. Commissioner Erickson stated the contract has been signed and our Engineering staff has reached out to setup a meeting with the contractor and hopes they can get someone out here within a few weeks to start work. Councilor Squailia asked about the vacancies for Asst. City Engineer and other engineering vacancies. Commissioner Erickson explained that offers just went out for the Deputy Commissioner of Wastewater and Sewer System Manager and the hope is that we will have the Asst. City Engineer position posted within a month. Councilor Schultz asked about the Forest Hill Cemetery expansion status. Commissioner Erickson explained that a feasibility study/master plan was done under Commissioner Laakso but we have not yet secured funding to proceed with the project and that there are concerns with expansion to that location that will drive costs up. We are currently considering submitting a proposal for the next ARPA funding round in January. Commissioner Erickson also explained the

mausoleum is in desperate need of repairs. Councilor Cragin commended the City and DPW for the new Pawlak playground and stressed the urgency for the cemetery needs. Councilor Fleming acknowledged all the hard work that has gone into the City and thanked all departments for their hard work.

3) Action was taken as follows on NEW petitions:

- a) **027-22. Councilor Derrick Cruz, on behalf of resident Bassem Awad at 8 Boylston St., to install a streetlight on telephone pole #4 on Boylston Street. (REFERRED from City Council on May 3, 2022).**

**Discussion:** Councilor Cruz explained that the area is very dark and that there is a light in the middle of the street but that is not where the kids congregate and play. Commissioner Erickson explained that there are street lights every other pole which is standard but wondered if it was a public safety issue. Councilor Cruz explained that there were probably other solutions rather than installing a new light. Councilor Squailia visited the site and agrees there are lights per standard (every other pole) and didn't think it was necessary to put in a new light but acknowledged that she hadn't visited at night time. Councilor Beauchemin suggested turning the direction of one of the lights in the area and also stated that the condo development going in will also help to brighten the area at night. Councilor Schultz asked if there was another way we could address the issue without installing another new light. Commissioner Erickson stated he will have to see what lights are out there to see if there is a brighter light we could use but also said he agreed with Councilor Beauchemin that turning the light might be a good option. Commissioner Erickson recommended holding the petition to the next meeting so he can look into a brighter fixture, turning them up to full strength, or rotating the light.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be HELD.

- b) **093-22. Councilor Sam Squailia on behalf of resident Nick Hains, to add a 4-way controlled stop at the intersection of Victoria Lane, Industrial Drive and Game-On Way. During times of heavy traffic flow in or out of the Game-On facility, residents of Victoria Lane do not have the right of way to cross, and thus must wait for long periods while the traffic lines go through. If a 4-way stop sign is not feasible, an alternate solution shall be investigated by the City. (REFERRED from City Council on May 3, 2022).**

**Discussion:** Commissioner Erickson is all in favor of conducting a traffic study at this intersection and proposes using some of the traffic signal repair appropriation to fund a traffic study limited to the 4-way intersection of Industrial/Roper/Victoria/Game-On. Councilor Fleming agrees that a traffic study is needed as there is organized chaos anytime there is an event. Councilor Squailia agrees a traffic study should be done by an expert to come up with the best solution.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be HELD pending traffic study.

- c) **108-22. Councilor Fleming on behalf of the residents of Stoneybrook Village, to remove 32 trees which are causing the sidewalks to be impassable for the children living in the area due to the uprooting and erosion.**
- **Starting East on Stonybrook Road:**
    - 2 trees on the corner of Village Cross and Stoneybrook (along the side of 170 Village Crossing)
    - 2 trees in front of 150 Stoneybrook Rd

- 1 tree in front of 160 Stoneybrook Rd
- 2 trees in front of 170 Stoneybrook Rd
- 1 tree in front of 184 Stoneybrook Rd
- 2 trees in front of 194 Stoneybrook Rd
- 1 tree in front of 202 Stoneybrook Rd
- 1 tree in front of 212 Stoneybrook Rd
- 2 trees in front of 220 Stoneybrook Rd
- 2 trees in front of 230 Stoneybrook Rd
- 3 trees in front of 240 Stoneybrook Rd
- 4 trees in front of 256 Stoneybrook Rd
- 3 trees in front of 274 Stoneybrook Rd
- 1 tree in front of 284 Stoneybrook Rd
- 1 tree in front of 294 Stoneybrook Rd
- 1 tree in front of 304 Stoneybrook Rd
- 2 trees in front of 310 Stoneybrook Rd
- 1 tree in front of 330 Stoneybrook Rd

(REFERRED from City Council on April 19, 2022)

**Discussion:** Councilor Fleming started by saying there has been an amendment to the request on behalf of the residents to find an alternative solution rather than removing all of the trees. There are several residents wishing to speak. Linda Allaire from 92 Village Crossing spoke about the meeting of the homeowner association in January where a resident raised concern about the condition of the sidewalks. They would like something done to make the sidewalks passable because right now they are impassable and in disrepair. They do not want to have all 32 trees removed but want to have the sidewalks fixed. Jennifer Barlow from 220 Stoneybrook spoke on behalf of herself and several neighbors that are against removing the trees but are in favor of looking at alternatives to deal with the sidewalks. Peter Allaire from 92 Village Crossing stated that the fire department has stressed concerns about the safety of a ladder truck being able to drive down the road due to the overgrown limbs. He is not for or against the petition just wanted to pass along information he received from his former colleagues at the fire department. Councilor Beauchemin visited the site and is glad the trees will not be removed and the association has changed their mind. Ms. Allaire noted that there are 87 houses in Stoneybrook and not all residents were able to attend the association meeting. Some of the members that were not in attendance do not want the trees removed and the association would like to work with the City on a solution to the sidewalk problem rather than remove the trees as requested. Councilor Squailia visited the village and talked to some residents and suggested trimming the trees to address the safety concerns rather than removing the trees which would be cost prohibitive. Councilor Squailia agreed the trees are damaging the sidewalks and we should look at how we could fix the sidewalks without cutting the trees down. Superintendent Withington suggested raising the tree canopy up so trucks can go by and then trim the sides of the trees. This would be done along both sides of the road and not just the area in the petition as was done 9 or 10 years ago. He also suggested repairing the sidewalks in a manner that will allow the trees to stay and sidewalks be repaired around the tree. Councilor Fleming stated she put the petition in as requested from the residents and would like to revise the petition to read “trim the trees and raise the canopy”. Sidewalk repairs would have to be a separate petition at a later time. Approval to amend the petition as requested by unanimous vote.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED as amended.

- d) **140-22. Councilor Bernie Schultz and Police Sgt. Boudreau to erect “No Parking From Here to The Corner” signs that measure 50 feet from the corner at all four corners of Charles Street at the intersection of Charles and Forest Streets.** (REFERRED from City Council on May 3, 2022)

**Discussion:** Commissioner Erickson and Sgt. Boudreau visited the site and agree that there is a need for this. No parking in this location will improve the safety. Councilor Beauchemin is in favor of the petition but would like to know if we will paint the corners/areas that are no parking. Commissioner Erickson stated we were not planning on doing that at this time but could consider it if there was curbing in all of the areas. Signage will give police the authority to ticket or tow cars which they cannot currently do without the signs. Councilor Schultz has been watching this intersection for a while now and parking is consistently a problem. Signs will be placed where necessary. Councilor Squailia asked what the thought process was around the 50 ft area. Commissioner Erickson said that during the site visit it was determined that this is the appropriate distance for the area and the issue.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED.

- e) **165-22. Councilor Sam Squailia and Derrick Cruz for a traffic study to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety at the Twin City Rail Trail crossing at Bemis Rd and Water St to determine the best solutions for improving safety. ie) a No Right Turn on Red on Bemis Rd turning right onto Water St and on Water St turning right onto Bemis Rd and/or Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon.** (REFERRED from City Council on May 17, 2022)

**Discussion:** Commissioner Erickson read an email from Tom Skwierawski stating that Community Development and Planning are in support of efforts to improve safety at this intersection. The current rail trail design stated that RRFB's were not appropriate at this location. City officials have notified MassDOT and the trail designers about the need for a no turn on right from Water St at this location. Commissioner Erickson noted that a push signal on the trail that forces all traffic signals to red when pushed is probably the solution. Since MassDOT is aware of the issue and willing to work with us on the issue Commissioner Erickson advised we should approve this petition to allow us to work with them on solutions to this safety issue. Councilor Squailia asked how we would enforce a no right turn on red change at the intersection. Commissioner Erickson said we would have to work with the police department traffic division to make sure it is enforced. Councilor Squailia asked if we should conduct a traffic study if we are all in agreement there is a safety issue. Commissioner Erickson said he doesn't think we need a traffic study as we are implementing a no right turn on red which doesn't introduce adding a risk it removes a risk. Councilor Schultz agrees we should add a no-turn on red at this intersection and would like to know where signage would be located. Commissioner Erickson stated he would like to hang it on the traffic signal mast arm and one mounted prior to the intersection on the side of the road so it is very visible. Councilor Beauchemin wants to know what other communities are doing in this situation when a railtrail crosses a major intersection. Commissioner Erickson stated we would look into all options of signage that will draw drivers attention to the sign. Motion to amend petition to strike out the need for a traffic study and suggestion of RRFB by Councilor Squailia. Seconded by Councilor Beauchemin. Commissioner Erickson committed to install no right on red signs, look at the signal timing, and look at visible signage.

**Recommendation:** The Committee voted 5-0 that the petition be APPROVED as amended.

4) HELD petitions for review.

e) **089-20. Councilor Bernie Schultz and resident Alex Freeman to remove the “No Turn on Red” sign at the intersection of John T. Cetrino Memorial Drive and Water Street.** (HELD on the 10/28/20 meeting and the 1/26/21 meeting and the 7/27/21 meeting and the 3/29/22, and the 4/26/22 meeting). (Amended the spelling of Cetrino at the January 2021 meeting).

**Discussion:** Commissioner Erickson would like to use some of the money recently appropriated for traffic signals to complete the traffic study. Councilor Beauchemin asked what the cost is for a traffic study. Commissioner Erickson stated should be \$15k-\$20k. Councilor Beauchemin asked if we were replacing the signals at South St at Wanoosnoc Rd. Commissioner Erickson said that the intention of the \$100k appropriation for traffic signals is to repair 2 signals that total \$60k so we can use the other funds to solve traffic solutions/issues and suggests we hold off on repairs to lights by Kmart plaza until we know what is going into that old store. Commissioner Erickson will go look at the lights at South at Wanoosnoc to see what is going on and what the need and solution could be. A motion to amend the petition to approve a traffic study to remove the no turn on red was made by Councilor Squailia. The amendment was approved unanimously.

**Recommendation:** The committee voted 5-0 that the petition be HELD as amended until a traffic study is completed.