



Transportation Committee - Board of Representatives

David Watkins, Chair

Mavina Moore, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Meeting was held remotely.

The Transportation Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Watkins, Vice Chair Moore and Committee Member Reps. Curtis, Di Costanzo, Giordano, Michelson and Wallace. Absent or excused were Reps. Patterson and Pendell. Also present were Reps. Adams, Coleman, Figueroa, Lee, McMullen and Zelinsky.

Chair Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. T30.054	REVIEW; Process of Determining Need for, and Locations of, Pedestrian Crosswalks in the City of Stamford. 07/08/20 – Submitted by Rep. Adams, Figueroa and Watkins 07/23/20 – Held in Committee	Report Made

Mr. Travers explained that the Transportation, Traffic and Parking Bureau reviews all development plans. Items reviewed include vehicular access, traffic impact, cyclist access and pedestrian safety. The bureau also responds to citizen requests for crosswalks, and evaluates the request looking at the nearest crosswalk, alternative paths and access for people with disabilities. A determination would be made based upon the review and federal guidelines.

Mr. Silber noted that he has been a Stamford resident for over 40 years and formed “People Friendly Stamford.” He read the attached statement into the record:

I want to thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I was going to speak at the public hearing two months but I saw that the mid-block issue was deferred so I didn't think that it would be the subject of public comment, but it was. A few people talked about the fact that they don't want mid-block crosswalks. I appreciate the ability to share my thoughts today.

Talking about change: Much of Stamford designed in the Mid-50s with objective of enabling cars to move as fast as possible. Those towns that thriving today are adding priority for people who want to walk or bike. We'll save talking about bikes for another meeting, but just to note that in past two years with installation of bicycle lanes - 50% reduction in bicycle accidents. And there are more people bicycling than ever. The bicycle stores in town can't keep with demand. And these riders will be here after Covid. This statement is validated by the many supportive letters that we have recently received.

Today's focus is on mid-block crosswalks, Not having cars parked right up to the cross walk is important for visibility. It's hard for pedestrians and drivers to see each other if there are cars parked on the whole street.

We've had too many fatalities in Stamford when people trying to cross the street were killed by drivers. We're still waiting for details on the tragic accident of a pedestrian who was killed this morning

I understand that people like to park directly in front of their destination. But I submit to you that reducing injuries & deaths is more important than having someone having to walk a block or so to park. And remember at some point we all become pedestrians.

A study in the early 1990s involving several states showed that mid-block events were the second major grouping of pedestrian crash types and accounted for 26.5 percent of all pedestrian crashes . (Transportation Research Board). (UCONN, Dept. of Engineering)

So it is important that cross walks be in specific designated locations where we would expect reasonable pedestrian traffic - e.g. long distance to an intersection, popular location, etc. Where to put these should be left to the professionals. We're fortunate that our Transportation Bureau has more than proven their professionalism. They applied for and obtained numerous State and Federal grants to improve our streets often at no cost to our City. As an example just look at Boxer Square which has transformed a key West Side intersection from being both dangerous and an eye-sore to one that is much safer and the community can be proud of. There are many other examples.

I'm glad that we live in a democracy & can have a meeting like this, but please, micro-managing where we put crosswalks is not an appropriate or efficient use of the time of the Board of Reps. Please let the professionals do their job!

And please correct the egregious error that you made at the last meeting of not requiring 25 feet of space on either side of a mid-block cross walk. That's one parking space on either side of a cross walk. The State mandates it at intersections. It is at least as important at mid-block.

Finally, I admire and respect countless hours that you spend for no pay to make this a better city. I'd like to close by quoting from a letter recently sent to the Board on this issue from a new entrepreneur that just moved to town from NYC, looking to establish his business here: "Infrastructure that prioritizes pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users is not only an integral part of attracting the next generation of talented young minds and innovative companies that will help our community thrive, but is also foundational to building a more equitable and sustainable city. I urge you to do everything in your power to support it: our lives and our future depend on it."

Committee members discussed the process with Mr. Travers. Items discussed included the following:

- Any intersection is a legal crosswalk, whether or not it is marked

- The Henry Street intersection was created when the firehouse was in disrepair and the sidewalk was closed in order to enable people to get across the street
- There is no parking within 25 feet of an intersection under State law. When bump-outs are created, the 25 feet is incorporated in the bump-out.
- No public hearing is required for the designation of a crosswalk
- All crosswalks have the 25 foot parking restriction; as traffic chief for the City, Mr. Travers has authority to put this in place
- Last year the City had the lowest rate of pedestrian fatalities and the lowest rate of bicycle accidents in 8 years
- It is necessary to enforce the parking restriction in order to ensure sight lines for the pedestrian and the driver; a driver must have time to stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk.
- Every City must have a legal traffic authority under State law. If there is no traffic department, the Police Chief is the legal traffic authority; the traffic authority is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are followed
- New Have, Norwalk and Hartford all prohibit parking within 25 feet of a crosswalk
- Removing spaces near crosswalks increases safety, e.g. near the Springdale Train Station
- The Education Committee had many discussions about crosswalks near schools; there was an immediate backlash but residents are now happy with the crosswalks

2. [T30.055](#) **ORDINANCE for publication**; Amending Code Sec. 231-36.I to Permit the Use of Valid Beach Parking Permits in Residential Parking Permit Zones Established under Code Sec 231-36.I. **Failed 2-5-0**
08/04/20 – Submitted by J.R. McMullen

Rep. McMullen stated that he introduced this item in order to address people parking on streets in order to avoid buying beach permits; it would permit people to park in the seasonal residential parking permit zone. Committee members discussed this item. Items discussed included the following:

- There is no beach parking overflow issue; people with permits can park in the beach lots
- The people in the neighborhood of the beaches are not in support of this
- The public won't know how the residential parking permit zone was created
- The problem is that people are trying to avoid paying the daily rate, not that the beach lots are full
- People with more than 3 cars could buy beach passes to get around the 3 car limit of the residential parking permit zone
- People with residential parking permits might not be able to park

A motion to approve Item No. 2 was made, seconded and failed by a vote of 2-5-0 (Reps. Watkins and Curtis in favor; Reps. Moore, Di Costanzo, Giordano, Michelson and Wallace opposed).

3. T30.057 **REVIEW**; Location of Bicycle Lanes on Washington Boulevard. **Report Made**
09/01/20 – Submitted by Reps. Coleman, Adams, Sherwood, Zelinsky and Matherne

Rep. Coleman explained that she put this on because road widening is going on and driving is difficult.

Mr. Travers stated that he considers his department a safety department. Bikes are traffic and creating bike lanes increases safety. He can't control somebody who drinks too much and jumps a curb. Bike use is increasing. He examines all forms of traffic and pedestrian safety. Last year was the lowest number of bicycle accidents in 8 years. Sharrows are appropriate for narrow gaps in bike lanes, but he prefers dedicated bike lanes. Consistency in travel lanes facilitates safety.

Chair Watkins adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Watkins, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)