

**City of Salem  
Traffic and Parking Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, November 2, 2017**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 6:30pm at 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Commission Chair, Tanya Stepasiuk, and Commissioners Eric Papetti and Lt. Robert Preczewski. Commissioner Jamie Metsch was absent. Director Smith and Assistant Director Downing were present.

**CALL OF MEETING**

Meeting called to order at 6:32pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joyce Kenney of 285 Lafayette Street reported that cars continue to park in the bus zone on both sides of the street. She believes the cars to belong to Salem State University students. She has seen tickets issued, but the problem persists. Signage is needed to prevent more effectively. Lt. Preczewski indicated he has tried to up enforcement in the area, and Director Smith added that he is looking at striping to better mark the bus zone.

Ward 5 Councilor Josh Turiel provided comment on previous changes made to Hancock Street. Residents that had not been affected by the use of the street for commercial parking did not support the change of the street to 24 hour resident parking. Council Turiel suggested a modification to resident parking only from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. There was general agreement from the Commission and Lt. Preczewski was asked to make the modification. Councilor Turiel also asked generally if there is a process to move roads from state control to local control, as doing so might have some benefits within Salem. Staff agreed to provide him with information on this topic.

Ward 7 Councilor Stephen Dibble provided public comment. Councilor Dibble urged the Commission to fill its vacancy with a traffic engineer and requested a future meeting with the Commission or Commission members to discuss issues in Ward 7. Specifically, the Council is concerned with SSU's new policy of ticketing in their own lots driving students into the neighborhood streets. Councilor Dibble also sought clarification on why his recommendation of a 2 hour parking zone on Loring Avenue was changed to 4 hour parking by the Commission. Chair Stepasiuk responded indicating that the change was made in an effort to allow the enforcement of the zone to effectively address the neighborhood concerns while also allowing some use of the street by residents, visitors and SSU students. The goal was that a 4 hour zone would prevent students parking overnight or for multiple days at a time while also

avoiding an undue burden on residents to move their cars frequently throughout the day.

At-Large Council Arthur Sargent provided comment on multiple agenda items. Councilor Sargent felt the changes made at the intersection of Brown Street and Washington Square North should have been on the agenda. Councilor Sargent indicated his support for a change to the parking program on Broadway to offer relief for residents who are having parking issues with the commercial properties on Broadway. The Councilor also indicated his support for the removal of the temporary bus parking on Holyoke Square. Chair Stepasiuk and Commissioner Papetti responded re: Brown Street and Washington Square North. The Commission had requested a general update on projects from the Department of Public Services. As part of that update provided at the September 14, 2017 meeting, the Commission was presented with various proposals for changes at the aforementioned intersection and was told the project was underway and a striping plan had to be approved in advance of the busy October tourist season. The Commission provided its recommendation and the striping pattern was implemented, changing circulation on around the Roger Conant statue at the intersection. The Commissioners agree that the process was not ideal, and will work with Traffic and Parking staff and other City staff to ensure there is ample time for decisions to be made well in advance of implementation. Staff will also look into the question of if Brown Street has, in effect, been made one-way, or if the roadway on both sides of the statue is Brown Street.

## **TRAFFIC AND PARKING DIRECTOR MONTHLY UPDATE**

Director Smith provided a monthly update to the Commission. Traffic and Parking staff has begun its overview of current resident and visitor parking policies and procedures. Assistant Director Downing will work to have a memorandum for the Commission at its December meeting outlining both current practices in the City, as well as best practice research from municipalities in the region, the Commonwealth, and across the country as applicable.

VHB has been issued a work order to begin assisting the City with work on the Neighborhood Traffic Calming program. The first two projects will be pilot crosswalks and bump-outs on Chestnut Street and a traffic calming bump-out at Endicott and Margin Street. Commissioner Papetti asked if VHB would be the only firm doing this work. Director Smith answered no, but they have been given the work order for these first two projects from their existing contract with the City.

Director Smith provided an update on the Zagster bike share system. The system had a total of 54 bikes for October, included 4 specially-branded "Wicked Bikes" with cauldrons as baskets and brooms attached to the rear fender. October had 732 total rides, and nearly 70% of users are local. To date, there have been over 2100 rides and 1100 active memberships. Monthly membership has continued to increase from month-to-month, making the Salem system unique among those Zagster

operates that normally see an initial spike in membership and then a plateau. The system will be shut down on or around December 20.

This year, the City piloted a shuttle service for Haunted Happenings with two routes, free parking at the shuttle pick-up locations, and free rides. The pilot provided free parking at satellite lots away from downtown (Salem High School, Salem Hospital @108 Jefferson, and SSSU O'Keefe Center). Salem Public School buses (20-person buses) and staff operated the shuttles. Over 9400 total rides were taken (4700+ each way) and it is estimated that over 3100 car trips to and from downtown were avoided. Staff is looking into ways to expand the service next year, and potentially charge for some element (either parking at the satellite lot or the ride itself).

September parking revenue data was not made available until October 31 and will be presented at the December meeting.

## **NEW / OLD BUSINESS**

- Broadway Parking Ordinance

As previously discussed by Council Turiel, residents are having parking issues caused by the commercial properties on Broadway. While the residents in question live on Canal Street, their properties extended to Broadway, and their driveways and garages are accessed via Broadway. The commercial properties in question are two body shops/collision repair centers and have been storing cars on the street rather than on their property, in some instances blocking the residential driveways and garages.

On a motion duly made by Lt. Preczewski and seconded by Commissioner Papetti, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to City Council the creation a resident parking zone extending from the rear property line of 218 Canal Street in a Southerly direction along the eastern side of Broadway to the intersection of Broadway and Canal Street.

- Holyoke Square Bus Parking

Parking spaces on Holyoke Square were converted to bus parking, and local businesses have been keeping a log to track usage. Traffic and Parking staff has also been tracking usage to verify the data provided by the local business. While there was some usage on October weekends, the bus parking remained unused and underutilized much of the rest of the year and during October weekdays. Councilor Sargent expressed his support for the removal of the bus parking and that the zone revert back to its previous parking program. The Commission has considered more substantial changes to parking the Holyoke Square/Gedney Street area, but will reconsider those plans in light of this change at a future meeting.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Papetti and seconded by Lt. Preczewski, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the removal of the bus parking spaces on Holyoke Square and that the spaces revert to the parking program that had been in place for those spaces previously

- Handicap Parking – 72 Hathorne Street

Ward 3 Councilor Stephen Lovely has requested a handicap parking space at 72 Hathorne Street for a resident of 72 Hathorne Street. No driveway parking is available for the resident. Lt. Preczewski visited the site and there is sufficient space for a handicap parking space at the address.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Papetti and seconded by Lt. Preczewski, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend the creation a handicap parking space in front of 72 Hathorne Street for a distance of 20 feet.

- Handicap Parking – 52 Dow Street

Ward 1 Councilor Robert McCarthy has requested a handicap parking space on the odd side of the street across from 52 Dow Street for a resident of 52 Dow Street. No off street parking is available for the resident. Lt. Preczewski visited the site and there is sufficient space for a handicap parking space at the address on the opposite site on the odd side of the roadway. The even side is a No Parking zone.

On a motion duly made by Lt. Preczewski and seconded by Commissioner Papetti, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend the creation a handicap parking space across from 52 Dow Street on the odd side of the street for a distance of 20 feet.

- Handicap Parking – 4 Rice Street

Ward 2 Councilor Heather Famico has requested a handicap parking space at 4 Rice Street. The space existed previously for a different resident. The new resident lives at 44 Bridge Street but cannot park in front of her building, nor is handicap parking provided in the lot adjacent to her building. Commissioner Papetti asked if the landlord was required to provide a reasonable accommodation of a handicap space in the lot for their tenant, and staff will research this question and provide a response at the December meeting.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Papetti and second by Lt. Preczewski, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend the creation of a handicap parking space on the northerly side of Rice Street beginning 80

feet from the intersection of Bridge Street and continuing for a distance of 20 feet.

- Repeal of Handicap Parking – 12 Dearborn Street

Ward 6 Councilor Beth Gerard has requested the handicap parking space at 12 Dearborn Street be repealed as it is no longer needed. This repeal was already approved and sent to the City Council. The Commission discussed if they wanted simple repeals such as this to always come before them, and it was agreed they prefer all changes to come to the Commission. No action was taken as the matter is already before the Council.

- Service Zone – 163 Lafayette Street

Ward 1 Councilor Robert McCarthy has requested the creation of a service zone in front of 163 Lafayette Street, the Levesque Funeral Home. The owners of the funeral home have had problems with cars parking in front of the funeral home during services despite the use of temporary no parking signs. Commission Chair Stepasiuk and Commissioner Papetti both expressed some concerns over the creation of a service zone in this location, as it could set a precedent for other funeral homes to request the same. Many funeral homes use temporary, unofficial no parking signs as needed when they have services and they signs are followed. Initial research indicates the sign at this address may be left out beyond when services are happening. The Commission agreed to take no action, and asked staff to look more into this issue specifically and the larger question of funeral home parking generally and to report back to the Commission at its December meeting.

- Residential Parking Process

Director Smith provided a brief update on the initial phases of examining the residential and visitor parking permit system. There is general acknowledgment that the current case-by-case approach has led to a confusing patchwork, and in some cases has merely shifted problems from one street to another. Assistant Director Downing is preparing a memorandum for the December meeting to summarize the existing system and consider best practices used elsewhere. This memo will be the very beginning of the larger, city-wide conversation on this topic. The outreach program will include meetings with councilors, neighborhood associations, and businesses across the City.

- Traffic and Parking Commission Procedures

Assistant Director Downing started on Monday, October 30 and will be the primary staff for Commission meetings going forward.

Commission Chair Stepasiuk has requested that the Commission meet more often. More frequent meetings will hopefully prevent meetings from running too long, but also allow the Commission the time and flexibility to have longer, in-depth conversations about some of the bigger issues that will likely come before them in the near future. There was agreement that scheduling two meetings every month (but avoiding Council meeting dates) would work, but the Commission would maintain the option to cancel a meeting if there is insufficient reason to hold one.

Commissioner Papetti requested that Commission agendas provide more detail, especially in the realm of the Director's Report. He also requested that public comment be more formalized, with time limits made clear at the beginning of the meeting and enforced by the Commission and staff. Commissioner Papetti also indicated that he would prefer the Commission not invite attendees or presenters to sit at the table with the Commission, as it can be confusing for those who might arrive late as to whether or not they can also sit at the table.

The matter of the vacancy on the Commission was discussed, and Director Smith indicated that some applicants are being reviewed by the Mayor's office for appointment. The role of Vice Chair is also unfilled.

On a motion duly made by Lt. Preczewski and second by Commission Chair Stepasiuk, the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Commissioner Papetti as Vice Chair.

## **MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

Meeting minutes from October could not be approved as Lt. Preczewski had not attended the last meeting, so the Commission lacked a quorum to approve the minutes.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Lt. Preczewski and seconded by Commission Chair Stepasiuk, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.