**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, April 11th, 2019**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 6:30pm at 98 Washington Street, Salem, MA. **Present:** Commission Chair Tanya Stepasiuk, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Robin Seidel, Commissioner Todd Waller, Commissioner Lt. David Tucker and Director David Kucharsky.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS - NONE**

Chair Stepasiuk officially welcomed the new traffic commissioner Todd Waller to his first meeting.

**TRAFFIC AND PARKING DIRECTOR UPDATE**

* Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP)

Director Kucharsky gave an update on the numerous projects going on throughout the City.

**ADA Transition Plan:** A kick off meeting took place on April 10th for Department Heads with the Executive Director of the Institute for Human Center Design (IHCD) from Boston. IHCD is a very highly regarded firm who has worked with multiple municipalities throughout the Commonwealth as well as the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the MBTA. In addition to Department heads, the meeting was attended by the Mayor, the chair of the Commissioner on Disability and the Council on Aging Director. IHCD provided an overview presentation on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as the specific activities they will be undertaking to conduct the assessment for the city.  During the meeting, self-assessment survey forms were shared with Department Heads.  A digital survey version was created and shared with Department Heads for their completion.

Eric asked about inclusion of people with disabilities in the working group. The Director explained that IHCD will be working with the Commission on Disability to identify individuals who participate in the effort including the surveys and evaluating existing city services and programs.

**Bates Elementary School**: MassDOT is holding a public hearing on April 25th at 7pm at the school. This meeting will be an opportunity to discuss improvements being proposed along Liberty Hill Avenue and the intersection with Appleton which will include new signage and bump outs with crosswalks. He said that MassDOT had presented their plan to the School’s Grounds Committee and they were pleased with the plan.

**Bike Master Plan**: Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that the plan had been finalized and the design firm Toole was moving forward with developing preliminary design services for the following locations; Bridge Street Neck, Fort Avenue, Jefferson Avenue, North Street, Washington Street and Riley Plaza. Chair Stepasiuk asked about the start and finish dates on the LTIP chart. The Director explained that the dates and other fields need to be updated.

**Canal Street Bike Path**: MassDOT is proceeding with the second phase of the path. A contractor has been selected and work is expected to commence in the coming months.

**Downtown Bike Upgrades (HSIP):** Engineering Department will meet with MassDOT on April 16th to discuss the implementation schedule. Due to delays with the demolition of the Courthouse and ongoing construction of the Hotel project on Washington St there might be some restrictions as to where the striping can go. In addition, the City is in the process of installing the pilot roundabout at Normand/Summer/Chestnut. Vice Chair Papetti said that he understood the desire to achieve efficiency by combining the roundabout with the State striping project, but he was against further delaying the HSIP installation even if it cost more money.

**Boston Street Design:** A Road Safety Audit (RSA), coordinated by VHB, took place on April 8th. City staff from Police, Fire, Traffic & Parking, Electric and Planning attended as well as MassDOT, MBTA and CTPS staff. VHB collected and reviewed crash history of the Boston/ Bridge and Boston/Essex intersections. Director Kucharsky indicated he would share a drat of the RSA with the commission once submitted by VHB.

Vice Chair Papetti noted he had attended an MPO meeting earlier that day. One of the projects discussed had to do with the construction of Bridge St from Flint to Washington. He noted that according to CTPS staff, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had been created dating back to 1992 which indicated there was some requirements regarding the placement of the roadway as it related to the proposed widening of four lanes. He said the discussion was whether the State had fully reviewed this MOU and were looking to get the City Solicitor’s opinion on whether the MOU was still valid. Another project that was discussed was the reconstruction of Route 107, in the context of the MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He said Lynn’s portion is budgeted for $26 million and Salem is budgeted for $12 million, he said that does not make sense to him since Salem’s portion is much wider and longer. He said Lynn has a preliminary design to be completed this Spring. Finally, he asked the Commission note that the Kernwood Avenue drawbridge is still in the LRTP and still budgeted for $50 million and the discussion is to determine if this is a bridge rehabilitation or replacement project. He said there are a number of people who will be attending the next MPO District 4 meeting including Aaron Clausen, Beverly’s Director of Planning and Community Development and this could be an opportunity to coordinate. Typically, these types of bridges are funded by MassDOT.

**Bridge Street Complete Streets:** The Mayor and DPS Director have a meeting scheduled with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on April 25th to discuss the compensatory storage needs and the overall design of the shared use path along Bridge St that is causing a delay in moving forward with this MassWorks funded project. Director Kucharsky said this may be a last-ditch effort to see if a compromise could be reached and he would notify the Commission when received any updates.

**Derby Street Neighborhood:** Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that Dave Knowlton has been working with VHB, who submitted a cost estimate of approximately $4.5 million. VHB will be developing preliminary design plans for this project.

**Essex Street Reconstruction:** Project currently out to bid and bids are due April 25th.

**Museum Place Garage:** Work has begun on the first of two elevators, both elevators will be shut down on Wednesday, April 17th between the hours of 10AM and 2PM. He said that this has been posted on the City website, and signage is being prepared. Vice Chair Papetti asked if he had found anything to suggest an agreement with the Mall and the City regarding access to the elevators after the mall closes. Director Kucharsky said he had not identified any formal agreement with the mall but learned that the reason why access to the elevator is shut down to the mall is due to homeless people coming in through the garage and staying in the mall overnight. He said he brought this issue up during the ADA meeting noting this is an instance where you have access issues associated with both a public and private entity. IHCD said they could look at the issue and possibly come up with a recommendation for working with the Mall owners on a compromise. Perhaps some fencing that closes off the elevator area from the rest of the mall. Chair Stepasiuk asked if the Director could look into whether there was ever a possible past agreement in further detail.

**Norman/Chestnut/Summer Roundabout Pilot:** The Director said the estimates are in and it looks like $25,000. He said he is going through the procurement, and some data collection took place last week to capture existing conditions. Once installed they will monitor the conditions to see the effects.

**North Street Bridge (Rte. 114) over Bridge Street (Rte. 107)**: The Director informed the Commission that work was underway and that there had been closures of the ramp over the weekends. He said Engineering staff would meet with MassDOT on April 16th to discuss the overall progress as well as some issues with barriers and light fixtures.

**Paving Program:** The Director met with DPS Director Knowlton, who has requested an estimated budget of $3 million. The city has hired a traffic engineer who will be responsible for evaluating the pavement management data collected by the BETA Group (traffic consultants) for both sidewalks and roadways. The Director will work with engineering staff to identify roadways and sidewalks where traffic calming request have been made as well as where complete streets measures can be applied.

Vice Chair Papetti asked if the $3 million were to be spent on paving this fiscal year. Director Kucharsky responded yes, but it includes some roadways that will require full depth reconstruction, he said Mr. Knowlton has a preliminary list, but he is waiting to get the data back from BETA which will then be evaluated by the city’s Traffic Engineer. The goal is to develop a 5-year plan to move forward with. Vice Chair Papetti thought it a good idea to have the new traffic engineer and Mr. Knowlton join the next Traffic and Parking Commission meeting to discuss and review. Chair Stepasiuk agreed that it would be beneficial to meet the new Engineer along with Mr. Knowlton.

**South Harbor Garage Maintenance Study:** Bids are in and are currently under review to select the contractor to do the assessment.

**Swampscott Road and 1st Street Roundabout**: The Director informed the Commission that construction is scheduled to begin April 16th and should be substantially complete by July 2019.

**Szetela Lane Multiuse Path Extensions**: The Director said that the Bike Committee comments were submitted to VHB and are under review. He said there is an estimated budget of $500,000. He noted Tom Devine, from Planning, submitted a grant request to DCR for $300,000.

Vice Chair Papetti asked for an update on the status of the Department’s FY 19 Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Chair Stepasiuk asked if there was a FY 2020 yet. Director Kucharsky noted he submitted the Department’s budget and CIP requests but they have not been approved yet by Mayor and City Council. She suggested bringing a draft of the FY 2020 along with the FY 2019 to a future meeting.

* General Departmental Updates

Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that the Planning Department had received a grant to install an electric charging unit at the Sewall Lot next to the YMCA. It will be installed on April 17th providing one space to a city electric vehicle and the other will be available to the public. He also informed them that the Valet parking service will go into effect on April 19th Fridays and Saturdays only from 5:00PM to midnight.

Director Kucharsky also notified the Commission that there is a job posting for two part-time parking enforcement positions. Chair Stepasiuk asked if there were any new traffic calming applications and the Director said he had received one for Congress @ Harbor Street, First Street and recently Columbus St @ Fort Avenue. Vice Chair Papetti asked where they stood on the spending down of the entire appropriated balance for the traffic calming budget this year. The Director explained he is using the funds to implement the pilot roundabout as well as the improvements at Chestnut Pickering. If there are additional funds, he said he would like to use it for any of the recent request he has received. Chair Stepasiuk asked if the funding could be rolled over to next year, Director said yes.

**NEW / OLD BUSINESS**

**Scooter Pilot Program:** Director Kucharsky introduced Chad Jacobs who works for Zagster, the city’s bike share vendor, who recently approached us with the idea of piloting a scooter program. The Director indicated that they met with the Mayor and wanted to bring it to the Traffic and Parking Commission to discuss and get public input, he said it is in the very preliminary stages to see how it would operate. Any agreement would ultimately require ratification by the City Council. Mr. Jacobs was in attendance to give a short presentation and answer questions.

Mr. Jacobs prefaced the introduction by explaining the popularity of the Scooter program and how quickly it has grown. He said the rate of innovation in terms of mobility is the fastest it has ever been in human history. He said cars are now driving themselves and scooters are now increasing in popularity and usage throughout the country noting that scooters see 10 times the ridership of bicycles. Municipalities are alarmed at the growth of innovation and the market for these types of devices can be unstable, creating hardship for communities to come together and adapt in a cohesive and controlled fashion. He said Zagster’s goal is to meet with cities and towns and develop a strong coalition of support in the Communities.

Zagster is proposing to introduce scooters to Salem by partnering with a scooter company called “Spin”. From a customer’s perspective they are renting a “Spin” scooter but from the City’s perspective the program is really Zagsters’, as they are the operator of the program. Mr. Jacobs explained that “Spin” is a division of Ford mobility. He said Ford Motor Company is rebranding and renaming itself Ford Mobility. They will discontinue making all of their cars, with the exception of the Ford Mustang, the F150 and a couple of SUVS. They will invest in a couple of Electric vehicles and will invest heavily in micro mobility. They are not looking at bigger cities like Boston or New York due to congestion. They believe that parking in the next 10 years will be a major issue. He said they are also gearing up for autonomous taxis in Boston. Mr. Jacobs explained that the major problem for cities is the uncertainty that comes with the rapid growth of mobility and he said that they are determined to adopt a cohesive and controlled program that works with the City’s needs.

He explained that the data sharing, and reporting will be through monthly reports and a customizable web-based dashboard that the City can log into, he also said the scooters were only operable during the day and would be collected at night and set up at recharging stations. He said the scooters have a brake, bell and maximum speed is 15 miles per hour. The service area can be defined with a GPS that would control the speed of the scooter depending on the area, they can power down the scooter if there is construction in the area, they can also stop scooters from going where they are not designated to go. There would be designated parking zones as well.

Chair Stepasiuk asked if the Mayor had seen this presentation and wanted to know where they were in the process. Director Kucharsky said the Mayor had received similar information. If deemed feasible, the goal would be to have something in place by late Spring. This would involve meeting with other stakeholders and bringing it before the City Council who would need to ratify any agreements. He said that the Commission should provide thoughts on the program.

Vice Chair Papetti asked about the action that Councilor Turiel brought before the City Council last year. He wanted to know if it were an order or an ordinance and what were the legal ramifications of its passage. Director Kucharsky said it was an order and that after checking with the City Solicitor, she said the agreement would need to be ratified by the City Council. Vice Chair Papetti said he had a great number of concerns himself but at the same time he felt that other cities had made it so complicated that it was hard to follow. Mr. Jacobs said one reason for these complications was the sudden bombardment of scooter companies and having no control over them. Mr. Jacobs thought that since the intent would be to have this operate under the existing bike share contract, the city would have a direct line of contact with Zagster. Chair Stepasiuk agreed that this is definitely the best way to pursue the program and they have had a good relationship with Zagster in the past. Chair Stepasiuk asked Mr. Jacobs to give a brief explanation as to how it would work in Salem.

Mr. Jacobs said for Salem they would recommend designated parking spots with geofencing and fines would be imposed for incorrect parking. Vice Chair Papetti said his impression in other cities is that there would need to be a lot of parking zones and he asked Mr. Jacobs if they had experimented with scooter docks. Mr. Jacobs said no, perhaps a year from now. Vice Chair Papetti asked who would own the data. Mr. Jacobs said that Zagster would but that some of the data could be shared with the City. Chair Stepasiuk asked how much it would cost to use. Mr. Jacobs explained $1 to unlock the scooter and 15 cents per minute. Commissioner Waller asked what number of scooters would be on the streets. Mr. Jacobs said the maximum would be 125 scooters initially; but depending on the data they would increase or decrease. Commissioner Waller asked about manpower and Mr. Jacobs said there will be enough staff to cover picking the scooters up charging them overnight before deploying them the next morning. They would have GPS systems to track down the scooters and assist with collection.

Chair Stepasiuk asked if were possible for her as a non-scooter rider to report a scooter abandoned on a ramp for instance and Mr. Jacobs said yes, there is a phone number on the vehicle for a person to call. Commissioner Seidel asked about “SeeClickFix” and how it is operated. Director Kucharsky explained that DPS staff monitor the program and depending on the issue it is then designated to the correct department to be resolved.

Commissioner Siedel also asked where their headquarters would be. Mr. Jacobs explained they are currently looking for a place on the North Shore. Vice Chair Papetti asked what other cities do they operate in and Mr. Jacobs said 12 cities including St. George Utah which has the highest scooter use in the USA. They also operate in Troy, Alabama; Boise, Idaho and Oklahoma State. Director Kucharsky asked what the operating hours would be. Mr. Jacobs said 7.00am to 9.00pm but they would follow the City’s preference on a time that works.

Commissioner Seidel asked Lt. Tucker what his safety concerns are; he said no more than riding a bicycle. He said that a driver’s license is required for the operation of the vehicle, he asked that the rules of safety and the laws should be provided to all operators of the scooter. Commissioner Seidel added that having a scooter station close by the train station would work really well. Chair Stepasiuk agreed and said it was an exciting venture. Vice Chair Papetti said his main concern is the City roads, he said Dave Knowlton should get out and ride a scooter as well as City staff in order for them to understand what it is like to hit a cobblestone or a crack in the road. Chair Stepasiuk asked about liability insurance and Mr. Jacobs said that the City would be put on Zagsters seal.

Director Kucharsky asked if the scooters would ride on bike lanes and if the scooters make noise. Mr. Jacobs said yes usually on bike lanes and are quiet like riding a bicycle. Chair Stepasiuk asked if the Commission were supportive of the program and everyone said yes, she added that it will be a challenge getting it through the City Council and advised Mr. Jacobs and Director Kucharsky to get the word out to the public. Mr. Jacobs asked if there were a forum that they could meet with the Council; Chair Stepasiuk said most likely it would be a one on one meeting with the members. Director Kucharsky said that City staff and the Mayor’s office would coordinate these meetings.

**2019 Priorities:** Chair Stepasiuk thanked the Director for compiling the list for 2019. She suggested running through the list to see what should be addressed this year. Parking Benefits District is a huge undertaking. Parking enforcement is an ongoing effort which will involve further coordination between Police and Traffic and Parking staff. Developing a sustainable transportation system requires additional time and thought. Chair Stepasiuk asked if Nick Downing, the Assistant Traffic Director, could take charge of some of these projects. Director said he is working on some of the projects and some items will be taken over by Mr. Downing when he returns.

Vice Chair Papetti questioned the establishment of a Parking Benefits District and wanted a better understanding of the City’s overall transportation budget before establishing a fund specific to parking. Director Kucharsky indicated he is working with each department involved with transportation infrastructure and projects to get a better sense of who is responsible for what and how resources can best be allocated. Vice Chair Papetti suggested discussing this further with Mayor’s Office to get a better understanding of the intent of the parking benefits district and how it fits in with an overall transportation budget for the city.

Chair Stepasiuk noted that funds identified for future years are not always available due to fluctuations in revenue streams. Vice Chair Papetti noted there are multiple projects identified in the city’s budget that are sometimes competing for the same funding sources. Ideally, he would like to get to a point where the Commission knows what the total budget is for transportation. He suggested that criterion be developed which can be used to score and rank projects in order to make rational decision based on available funds.

Chair Stepasiuk noted that would be difficult to achieve given the fact that each department does not necessarily know how much money will be designated towards capital improvements on a year to year basis. Vice Chair Papetti noted that MPOs around the country develop an estimate of what is available for the upcoming year and then try to divide it up based on the projects. Chair Stepasiuk said that it is a good idea to have a 5-year plan on what the City needs to do but given all the departments it is very dynamic, and the Mayor has to juggle a lot of different needs and priorities. Director Kucharsky also noted that the City Council is involved with approving the city’s budget and in the case of the parking benefit district he will need to work with the Finance Director to get a sense of what percentage of parking revenues could in fact be dedicated to this fund if it were successfully established.

Chair asked if there was anything else related to the priorities list or the annual items schedule. The Commission reviewed the list and Commissioner Seidel requested that a staff provide a review of the parking revenues as a result of the new parking rates as well as provide a report on overall parking utilization. Director Kucharsky said he would have Mr. Downing look into this when he returns.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to attend to.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Seidel and seconded by Vice Chair Papetti, the Commission voted to approve the minutes from the November 1st, 2018 Traffic and Parking Commission meeting. Commissioner Waller and Lt. Tucker abstained

On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Seidel, the Commission voted to approve the minutes from the February 21st, 2019 Traffic and Parking Commission meeting. Commissioner Waller abstained

On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Seidel, the Commission voted to approve the minutes from the March 7th, 2019 Traffic and Parking Commission meeting. Commissioner Waller abstained

**UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

Director Kucharsky recommended May 2nd, 2019 for the next Traffic and Parking Commission to meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Seidel and seconded by Vice Chair Papetti, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:25PM.

LIST OF ITEMS PRESENTED

Zagster Presentation

2019 Traffic and Parking Commission Priorities (DRAFT)

Traffic & Parking Commission Annual Items Schedule (DRAFT)