**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, September 5, 2019**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, September 5, 2019 at 6:30pm at 98 Washington Street, Salem. **Present:** Commission Chair Tanya Stepasiuk, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Todd Waller, Commissioner Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Assistant Director of Traffic and Parking Nick Downing.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*No members of the public provided comment at the beginning of the meeting.*

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS.**

* Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program – Buffum Street

The Commission had an initial discussion with residents about the request submitted for traffic calming on Buffum Street. Director Kucharsky gave a brief overview of work done to date, including looking at existing parking regulations, the posted speed limit, and volume and speed counters will be placed on the roadway after Labor Day. Buffum Street is scheduled to have sidewalk improvement work done this season, and we may have some of that work held off until we can come up with additional ideas and designs. There is a North Street area walk audit scheduled for September 20 that will also include Buffum Street.

*Mr. Lee Dearborn, 32 Buffum Street*, provided additional background and comments about the issues he and his neighbors have seen on the street. Buffum gets used as a cut through to avoid traffic on North Street. Buffum is long and straight with parking on both sides, and it si relatively narrow which causes conflicts with drivers shouting and honking who then speed up after a bottle neck. The street has a lot of foot traffic but does not have anywhere to safely cross the street. Most issues happen during the regular morning and evening commute times, but issues also persist well into the late evening/early morning hours.

Vice Chair Papetti lives in the area and walks or bikes Buffum Street multiple times per day and agreed with the issues Mr. Dearborn noted. He added that he would recommend we combine this with work at School Street and Buffum Street as well. Mr. Dearborn and Vice Chair Papetti agreed the speeding issue happens in both directions.

*Meg Riccardi, 23 Orchard Street*, commented that the same cut through issues on Buffum are issues on other streets, so whatever work is done, we should be careful not to just push the issue from Buffum to another street nearby.

* Resident Sticker Parking Ordinance Recommendations

Director Kucharsky updated the Commission on recommendations for short term changes to the current resident sticker parking program. Based on feedback from the Commission, Councillors, and the Mayor, we are presenting tonight short term changes to recommend for passage to the Council.

The recommendations include:

* + formalizing the process to petition for a street to be designated as resident sticker parking, requiring at least 50% of residents on the street in support;
	+ limiting number of permits issued to two (2) per residence;
	+ clarifying eligibility to include college and university students other than those at SSU, and renters who have legitimate reasons for a car to not be registered in Salem;
	+ giving Traffic and Parking Director authority to alter requirements, along with Police Chief or designee (currently City Collector along with Police Chief or designee);
	+ adding new eligible addresses and areas for parking – Essex Street from Calrton to 50 feet east of Carlton, 7:00am to 9:30am (mirrors regulation on Essex near library); Derby Street form India Street to Webb Street designated as overnight resident parking 6:00pm to 8:00am; residents between 66 and 159 Derby Street be eligible for resident stickers but not visitor passes (mid-block residents); designate portion of Blaney Street lot (44 spaces) as resident parking 6:00pm to 8:00am

Chair Stepasiuk commented that these seem like band aids vs. a more holistic change, and Director Kucharsky agreed. It will address some of the issues we’ve identified, but certainly not all. Chair Stepasiuk commented further that the 50% requirement seems like too high a bar for the petition process, and would need to be more specific, or we should give more flexibility to staff to implement if this threshold isn’t met. Vice Chair Papetti agreed. Chair Stepasiuk suggested language that would direct T&P staff to adopt policies for designating streets in coordination with the Ward Councillor for that street. Vice Chair Papetti agreed that more flexibility should be incorporated into the ordinance language.

The conversation continued with the recommendation on a limitation of no more than 2 permits per household. The City can’t move forward with the previous recommendation about charging a higher rate for a 3rd or 4th permit, but we feel it is important to begin placing some limitations on the number of permits issued. The Commission discussed how best to define household/residence, and asked staff to follow whatever definition is currently in City ordinance’s elsewhere.

The Commission discussed changes to eligibility for college and university students. The current ordinance is specific to SSU students, and does not allow for other college and university students to be eligible nor other temporary residents. Staff indicated that extending this eligibility to other college and university students and temporary residents would NOT come with access to visitor passes.

The Commission supported the recommendation to allow the Traffic and Parking Director to make exceptions to the eligibility criteria in limited circumstances.

Vice Chair Papetti asked about visitor passes not being made available to college and university students and other temporary residents. He asked if we were also planning to implement changes to how we issue and enforce these passes. Director Kucharsky answered that no, right now we are not proposing changes to visitor passes nor planning to implement new technology for enforcement as that is a longer term effort that will require capital investment.

The proposed additions to the eligible street list would allow residents of mid-block properties to be eligible for resident sticker parking on Essex and Derby Streets. This is being paired with formalizing some currently unregulated parking as overnight resident parking. Vice Chair Papetti asked about the additions not specifying one side of the street or the other. The Department is trying to move away from doing that in these recommendations as it has caused confusion re: eligibility. The no parking ordinance would supersede the resident sticker parking designation. The mid-block addresses identified in the proposed additions would NOT be eligible for visitor passes.

The section of the Blaney Street lot that would be designated as resident parking would only be overnight resident parking (same as the section of Derby Street that would be designated). This section of the lot is 44 spaces.

Overall the Commission is supportive of these changes, but understands this is the beginning of a longer process. It is very likely these changes will result in residents on other nearby streets with unregulated parking to feel the burden on their streets, and they may reach out to their Ward Councillor and the Commission to seek relief as well.

Director Kucharsky added that in addition to these changes, we are recommending the Council also take up the previously submitted recommendations to increase parking violation fines throughout the City.

Staff will modify the language as discussed at the meeting tonight and will send to Chair Stepasiuk for review before submission.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Waller, the Commission voted to unanimously to approve the proposed changes to the resident sticker parking, as discussed and edited at this meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Waller asked about signage at the Church Street lot re: timing of enforcement. He saw people on Labor Day trying to pay, but thought they shouldn’t be, but the signage is unclear. Director Kucharsky indicated we are developing new signage for DPS to install.

Lt. Tucker brought a request from Ward 4 Councillor Timothy Flynn for an accessible parking spot at 156 Boston Street. The resident has off-street shared parking but has difficulty using the rear entrance to his home so is requesting a spot on Boston Street to more easily access his front door. The Commission supports the designation of this space at 156 Boston Street.

Lt. Tucker brought a request from Ward 2 Councillor Christine Madore for a resident at 319 Essex Street. The resident has no off-street parking available. Lt. Tucker still needs to go and measure to confirm there is sufficient space. The Commission supports the designation of a space for the resident at 319 Essex Street, with the final location to be determined by Lt. Tucker.

**MEETING SCHEDULE**

The next meeting scheduled is for September 19th with VHB to present findings re: the analysis the reverse the directions of Pope and Proctor Streets. Staff will also be reporting back on parking enforcement policy. Vice Chair Papetti asked for an agenda item re: snow plowing operations at a future meeting.

There is only one meeting scheduled for October right now on October 17th.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

On a motion duly made by Lt. Tucker and seconded by Commissioner Waller, the Commission voted to approve the minutes from the August 8, 2019 Traffic and Parking Commission meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Waller, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:11 PM.

The following documents were used at the meeting and can be viewed by making a request to the Traffic & Parking Department:

* Proposed Ordinance Change – Resident Sticker Parking
* Resident Sticker Parking Changes – Red Lined