

City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 21, 2021

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021.

Present: Commission Chair Tonya Shallop, Commission Vice Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Traffic and Parking Staff Russell Findley **Absent:** Commission Lt. David Tucker

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 pm by Chair Shallop. Ms. Shallop explains how members of the public may participate during the remote meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Kevin McDonald of 76 Essex Street introduces himself. Mr. McDonald discusses Halloween parking, and notes that it seems the number of visitors this year exceeded prior years, and that next year even more are anticipated. Mr. McDonald indicates that not everyone works a nine to five job, and that some visitors are not out by 5PM, and so the limited visitor parking during the day with resident only in the evenings has been problematic.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

Mr. Kucharsky presents a spreadsheet showing the project list and project status for the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. Due to October being busy there have not been many updates to the spreadsheet. Mr. Kucharsky explains that staff have separated active and inactive projects, and notes there are 10 currently active. Regarding inactive projects, they have collected speed and volume data but do not think action is warranted at this time. Projects identified as completed are implemented, but some have ongoing and annual requirements or maintenance, particularly those that are not permanent solutions.

Mr. Kucharsky notes staff are waiting on quotes for additional work, and that there have been some delays with the new purchasing agents and staffing issues. Mr. Kucharsky mentions funding and potential grant options, and states he is looking to see if some of the ARPA funds can help supplement projects and needs.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Request: West Avenue

Mr. Kucharsky explains a traffic calming application was submitted for West Avenue adjacent to Forest River Park. Mr. Findley presents a summary of the issues reported, namely excessive speeds on West Avenue, West Circle, and Forest River Park. The application indicates it is unsafe for pedestrians, children, and pets, and suggests a speed hump be installed. Mr. Findley explains the project priority scores, noting a priority level 5 for demographics, level 3 for land use priority, and level 5 and level 4 for crash and speed priority, respectively. Regarding speeds and volume, Mr. Findley notes the daily volume is 886 cars, with an average speed of 22 miles per hour. He adds that there is more West-bound traffic away from the park, as well as higher speeds traveling in that direction.

Mr. Kucharsky suggests this might fall lower on the priority list and that there are no recommendations at this time based on observations, and that there is no indication a speed hump is necessary. Mr. Kucharsky indicates an additional crosswalk and crosswalk signage could be beneficial.

Chair Shallop notes the area is near a park but acknowledges that the speed and volume data do not seem alarming. Mr. Kucharsky again suggests the crosswalk signage improvements for safety, as well as fresh striping in the area. He explains he is working with the Parks Department on this area because of the new pool and improvements, and that the hope is to clarify circulation within the park.

Vice Chair Papetti states this is a good opportunity to point at that this area was being restriped years ago, and that there was an opportunity to get things right with respect to traffic calming. He indicates a bike lane was proposed on Clifton, but that at the last-minute residents became angered about losing some parking and worked with their Ward Councilor and others to stop the plans. Mr. Papetti contends he reached out to Dave Knowlton and the Mayor but did not receive any responses. He suggests ward politics should not get in the way of good work, and that ward councilors should not be micromanaging streets. Instead, Mr. Papetti maintains that we must rely on the expertise of consultants and those hired to improve our streets. He states there is no reason the Commission should have to work on this area now.

Commissioner Swartz asks for clarification on the crosswalk on signage improvements, and Mr. Kucharsky explains the area and recent striping improvements, and notes better signage may help where West Avenue meets the road servicing the park, and that an additional crosswalk might be beneficial at Bristol Street or Belleau Road.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment but there is none.

Resident Permit Parking (Year-Round)

Mr. Kucharsky explains that City Council recently adopted ordinance amendments to Section 75 of the traffic ordinance and presents them in order to begin discussions with the Commission to develop and submit recommended policies for designating and modifying resident parking zones to City Council. Mr. Kucharsky discusses the history surrounding

permit parking and discusses the timeline of re-examining and evaluating the ordinance to make it more equitable. Stakeholders included the Traffic and Parking Commission, Mayor's office, Ward Councilors, OLLA, NIAC, and others, and eventually the amendments were adopted.

Mr. Kucharsky indicates the amendments involved designating the Traffic and Parking Director and Department with overseeing the resident permit parking program, and now identify/include university students and active-duty military personnel as eligible. While resident permits were previously valid for two years at a cost of \$10, they will now be valid for one year and cost \$5. Mr. Kucharsky adds that visitor permit fees have increased in cost, with the first being \$10 and valid for a year, and the second being \$20. In addition, the amendments included the creation of a new section which permits the Commission to recommend policies for designating or modifying a street within a resident parking zone.

Mr. Kucharsky notes that previously no criteria had to be met for designating a street beyond an initial request to the Ward Councilor. He then presents staff's recommendation to the Commission. Requests must be submitted by residents through their Ward Councilor in the form of a petition which identifies 90% of the residences on a particular street in support of the designation. Councilor's will then forward the requests to staff from Traffic and Parking and the Salem Police for evaluation. City staff will provide an assessment to the Traffic and Parking Commission, who will then submit a recommendation to either approve or deny to City Council. Finally, City Council will vote to either approve or deny the request.

Vice Chair Papetti asks if any of these procedures are identified in the current ordinance and Mr. Kucharsky says they are not. Chair Shallop suggests pushing back a bit and perhaps streamlining the process by cutting out some of the back and forth between Council and the Commission.

Mr. Kucharsky next provides an overview of existing resident sticker parking zones A through F and explains that they were originally based on Ward boundaries, which have since changed. Currently there are no natural or defined boundaries that separate the zones. Mr. Kucharsky indicates there is a desire to redraw the zones to better reflect the geographic areas and intuitive boundaries. He presents a map and discusses various considerations. He points out that the Derby Street Neighborhood has the highest percentage of passes issued, with 25 permits per acre and many visitor passes. Mr. Kucharsky explains that staff recommend splitting Zone A into different zones and to better define each zone's boundaries.

Commissioner Swartz asks if the information and study of the area were conducted before or after the recent Derby Street improvements, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates it was before.

Mr. Kucharsky continues, noting that in certain areas there is more demand than supply. While other streets, that are designated permit parking, have few to none of the residents' purchasing passes and have had few or no citations issued. He presents a map which shows such streets, where as few as 12 passes were purchased despite there being 178

residents. Mr. Kucharsky also discusses longer term efforts, such as identifying and investing in an online registration system and license plate recognition technology to assist with tracking and enforcement. This would require evaluations of existing systems, budgets, and working with various City offices and departments

Chair Shallop asks Mr. Kucharsky if he is looking for general feedback tonight, and he affirms, and adds that Commissioners can also identify specific things they may want staff to examine more closely. Ms. Shallop next asks about the timeline. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the long-term efforts are being examined for next fiscal year. Chair Shallop suggests it would be helpful to have City Councilors at a Traffic and Parking meeting, in order to work with them further on this, but that at this time she has no specific additional feedback.

Commissioner Swartz asks about the requirement of having 90% of residents in support for a resident permit designation, suggesting it may be a big ask. Mr. Kucharsky explains that under the designation, all homes on that segment of street would need to buy a pass to park, and therefore buy-in is required from most residents. Mr. Swartz asks if the onus is on the residents making the request, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates it is.

Vice Chair Papetti states he appreciates the need for community input but expresses concerns whether the petition process and its potential complexity raises questions of equity. Mr. Papetti asks if the 90% would be homeowners or residents, and whether it is based on number of households or individuals. He also asks what would happen if later in the future only 85% or fewer are in support.

Chair Shallop agrees that the procedures and process could use some changes, and she shares Mr. Papetti's concerns regarding equity. Chair Shallop suggests she would love to form a working group to discuss this over the next couple of months with one or two Commissioners and Councilors. Commissioner Swartz agrees. Chair Shallop asks Mr. Kucharsky to put the topic on next month's agenda and to reach out to Councilor Prosniewski to see if he can join.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Margaret Nickerson of 74 Essex Street introduces herself and states she is representing her condo association, which has three units in her building. Ms. Nickerson suggests her situation is unique because one side of Essex Street is one zone, and the other side is a different zone. She notes that if commissioners came out to see the situation, it would be evident that there is an issue requiring some relief. She states that the small strip for parking in front of the building is free parking for anyone, but that the other side of the street is no parking and the beginning of Zone A. With two AirBnB's nearby and many Zone A cars parking in the free parking area, it makes finding parking difficult. She also notes that the 72-hour parking restriction is never enforced here. Chair Shallop asks Mr. Kucharsky to follow up with Ms. Nickerson after the meeting to see if the issue needs to come on a future agenda. Mr. Kucharsky indicates he spoke with Ms. Nickerson before and understands the issues, also noting that Essex Street is not only the border for two zones, but that the south side of Essex is no parking. He adds that this will require involved

discussions with neighbors, Ward Councilors, and others.

Kevin McDonald introduces himself and notes that he lives next door to Ms. Nickerson. He echoes her concerns, and notes that Zone A residents have designated parking but that he and others on his side of the street have nothing. Mr. McDonald indicates he sees several Zone A cars parked in front of his house and in free parking areas, and yet he is unable to utilize available Zone A spots across the street. He suggests something must be done to make the situation more equitable. Mr. Kucharsky also clarifies that the homes on Essex Street on the South side between side streets within Zone A are not eligible for resident parking.

Chair Shallop thinks these types of issues are perfect to discuss within the working group and worth having in-depth meetings on.

OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Swartz indicates there is an issue regarding insufficient parking for employees in the City, particularly in October. Mr. Swartz states he has heard concerns from business owners at the Chamber of Commerce, whose employees have difficulty. Commissioner Swartz suggests thinking long term and investigating solutions such as a type of pass or city lot for employees so that they do not get stuck during the tourist season with garages filling up.

Chair Shallop suggests putting the topic on the agenda for the December meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The next meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2021 at 6:00PM.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

September 23, 2021

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Papetti motions to approve the September 23, 2021 meeting minutes of the Traffic and Parking Commission. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. The vote is all in favor. **The motion passes.**

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Swartz and seconded by Commissioner Papetti the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.