

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 19, 2017**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 6:30pm at 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Commission Chair Tanya Stepasiuk, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Lt. Robert Preczewski, and Commissioner Robin Seidel. Commissioner Jamie Metsch was absent. Traffic and Parking Director Matt Smith and Assistant Director Nicholas Downing were also present.

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. Chair Stepasiuk outlined the new process for public comment, in which general public comment will be taken at the start of the meeting, and then comments specific to agenda items will be taken as those agenda items are discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joyce Kenney of 285 Lafayette Street raised a parking violation issue with the Commission. Ms. Kenney has repeatedly informed the Commission and staff about an individual parking in the bus stop near her home. Staff has sent enforcement officers to the area in question multiple times, and Ms. Kenney has also called the Police Department, but in both the car in question is often gone when enforcement staff arrives. Ms. Kenney also noted that she has seen a car parked in a residential only area without a resident sticker. Staff asked that Ms. Kenney continue to keep them updated as this happens, and will continue to try and direct enforcement staff to the area whenever possible.

NEW / OLD BUSINESS

- Proposed Bicycle Connection from Ocean Avenue to Canal Street Multiuse Path

Assistant Director Downing provided a brief overview of the project. As part of a development project along Canal Street, the developer has proposed providing additional connectivity to the Canal Street Multiuse Path. This would include a five (5) foot wide connection from Canal Street to the Path, beginning across Canal Street from Crosbie's Market, as well as wider connection with a small pocket park with space for a Zagster bike-share station at the intersection of Ocean Avenue and Broadway. These connections could also be part of future connections to the proposed South Salem Commuter Rail station.

Vice-Chair Papetti suggested that the Commission should be aware of the recommendations made by the Bicycle Advisory Committee. Those recommendations related to the width of the paths being at least ten (10) feet and additional lighting for the path be provided, as currently there is no planned lighting for this section of the multiuse path. Vice-Chair Papetti also suggested that staff determine the nature and parameters of the traffic study being proposed, as the set-up of such a study has a dramatic impact on its deliverables. Chair Stepasiuk asked how far along in the process is this project – is it the right time for comments or do we need to wait until the idea is more solidified? Vice-Chair Papetti and Assistant Director Downing agreed that now is a great time to provide recommendations, as these plans will go before the Planning Board for the first time this week.

On a motion duly made by Vice-Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Preczewski, the Commission voted unanimously to support additional connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between Canal Street and the multiuse path, with the recommendation that paths be at least ten (10) feet wide to allow for minimal conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

Vice-Chair Papetti also requested that staff communicate to the Planning Board and Planning and Community Development staff responsible for this project the Commission's desire to be involved in the development of the traffic study for this project.

- Traffic and Parking Commission Regulations

Chair Stepasiuk gave a brief overview of what has happened with the Commission's proposed regulations. The Commission was created by the Council approximately a year and a half ago. In May, we submitted to the Council a proposal that identified the ordinances the Commission thought appropriate to remove from the ordinances and place under the authority of the Commission. This would allow the Commission to act on and pass things without additional Council action being needed. The proposal sat in committee and was not acted on all year, and was not carried over into the next Council session that begins in 2018. Chair Stepasiuk suggested that it is important we resubmit a proposal as soon as possible for the new Council to consider in 2018.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked if anyone has had conversations with councilors yet? Chair Stepasiuk said she has done so informally, but thinks it makes sense to wait until we know what councilors are on the OLLA Committee. She also said the Mayor mentioned traffic and parking as major issues at her retreat with the Council, so her support of this as a priority and potentially new members on the committee could lead to quicker action.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked a general question as to why all Council action requires two passages. Chair Stepasiuk answered that it is likely in the City's charter. Vice-Chair Papetti asked because he was curious if there was a way to provide council

oversight or a check on Commission decisions that wouldn't slow down the process any further. Chair Stepasiuk commented that once the Council has the proposal, they could add such a check or oversight if they saw fit to do so.

Chair Stepasiuk suggested and the Commission agreed that staff update the proposal with the ordinance changes that have been passed in 2017, and Commissioners come to the meeting on January 4 with any comments, suggestions, or edits and be prepared to vote on a proposal to submit to Council at that meeting.

- Downtown Parking Study

Director Smith led a conversation about the 2010 parking study and options about revisiting it. The biggest change between 2010 and today, is now the City has staff to look at these things, and we have electronic systems in place to continuously gather data. This new data compared to what was gathered as part of the study shows some shifts in both demand shifting within the city and generally increasing overall. The goal would be to spend the next few weeks and months gathering as much data as we can internally through the garages, payment app, smart meters, and counts, then maybe bring on a consultant to look at pricing and technology, but on a smaller scale than completely redoing the entire parking study.

Chair Stepasiuk expressed her support for doing much of this work and review internally. She suggested looking at the recommendations from the study, and assessing what has been done, and if something hasn't been done, why? Director Smith answered that staff could examine the recommendations, and in a few months' time draft a memo that provided new data and looked at what had and had not been implemented re: the recommendations. Vice-Chair Papetti asked if the City generally is still on board with the concepts put forth by the parking study. Director Smith answered that there will be some education for new Councilors perhaps, but the Mayor is still supportive and familiar with the ideas. Commissioner Seidel asked if more contemporary parking studies have been completed in cities similar to Salem, or using newer technology? Director Smith answered that the idea would be to get our data updated internally, and then we could bring in a consultant to discuss what technology might serve the City best. Vice-Chair Papetti indicated two issues that were not present during the 2010 study to be mindful of: the new MBTA garage and the presence of ride-share companies like Uber and Lyft.

Chair Stepasiuk suggested and the Commission agreed that staff should present an internal review of the recommendations from the study and new data at a Commission meeting in February.

- Museum Place Garage Operations and Revenue Generation

Director Smith suggested this item be held for a larger discussion at the next meeting. We had hoped to have a report by now, but it is still being drafted. The

report will provide estimates for a ten, twenty, and thirty year life cycle for the garage, as well as what rates would need to be charged to pay the debt service. We have spent about \$1.4 million since Director Smith began a little over a year ago, but it is difficult to determine what was spent in previous years.

- Enforcement Data

Director Smith gave a presentation on enforcement data to the Commission. Director Smith recently spoke with Kelly and Ryan (the vendor that handles fine payments and processing) and got a tutorial on using the data they can provide. He pulled the last four (4) months of data to present. The data is wide ranging, and can be broken down by fine type, enforcement officer, and street. Some interesting patterns already appearing, such as fines for over time at meter going down in October as staff is diverted to the neighborhoods. All of this data will help the Department as it creates its budget requests for next year. Director Smith has also started working with Commissioner Preczewski to pull data on crashes, but this data is more unwieldy and will take some time to sort into a usable and easily presentable format. Chair Stepasiuk asked if we could begin mapping some of this data. Director Smith and Assistant Director Downing indicated this is a direction they want to move in, and they have begun talking with the Planning and Community Development staff as well as the Geography Department at Salem State University about working together on this and other mapping needs. We need to think how to strategically use the data, as it is very compelling that with a small staff of only 2.5 full-time equivalent positions, thousands of tickets are issued per month.

- 2018 Priorities

Director Smith discussed Department priorities for the upcoming year. They included (1) getting the Commission Regulations passed ; (2) Updating the City's residential and visitor permit parking policy and program; (3) developing a city-wide circulation and transportation plan; (4) increasing enforcement levels; (5) examining the feasibility of implementing a parking benefits district (PBD) in downtown; (6) completing the ADA transition plan; and (7) ramping up the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

Chair Stepasiuk indicated her support for these priorities, and added (8) the update of the Downtown parking study discussed earlier in the meeting. Vice-Chair Papetti also expressed his support, but wants staff to consider short-term actions that can help build a constituency for some of the long-term goals. He asked that staff consider ways to use the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program as potentially a way to improve transit operations as well, in the ways that Everett, Somerville, Boston, and other cities have done recently. Director Smith said he would lay these out in more detail in a memo for the January 4 meeting.

- Handicap Parking Approval Process and Policy

Assistant Director Downing gave a brief update. At the last meeting, the Commission expressed interest in examining the handicap parking approval process, as some of the requests from the last meeting were not as clear cut as previous requests had been. However, it has been difficult to identify exactly what information staff could ask for in advance of the Commission making a recommendation. Vice-Chair Papetti indicated that part of his motivation in wanting staff and the Commission to look at this is making sure landlords are providing the parking they are required to provide and not merely shifting the burden to the City's streets. Commissioner Seidel suggested that a very simple form to be filled out by the requesting resident or Councilor may help give the Commission the information it needs. Vice-Chair Papetti suggested staff draft a form and discuss it with the Commission on Disabilities to get their input as well. Assistant Director Downing agreed, and will report back to the Commission with progress in January.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion duly made by Vice-Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Preczewski, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the December 4, 2017 Traffic and Parking Commission meeting (Commissioner Seidel abstaining).

On a motion duly made by Vice-Chair Papetti and seconded by Chair Stepasiuk, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2017 Traffic and Parking Commission meeting (Commissioners Seidel and Preczewski abstaining).

On a motion duly made by Vice-Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Preczewski, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the September 14, 2017 Traffic and Parking Commission meeting (Commissioner Seidel abstaining).

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Lt. Preczewski and seconded by Vice-Chair Papetti, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.