**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, May 2nd, 2019**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, May 2nd, 2019 at 6:30pm at 98 Washington Street, Salem. **Present:** Commission Chair Tanya Stepasiuk, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Robin Seidel, Commissioner Todd Waller and Director David Kucharsky. Absent: Commissioner Lt. David Tucker.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*Linda Werbner, Salem Family Health Center, 47 Congress Street* stated that the Health Center is located at Shetland Park and crossing Congress Street has become very dangerous due to speeding vehicles. She and her staff are very worried about elderly and disabled patients being struck. Ms. Werbner produced a petition with approximately 120 signatures expressing their concern. She asked that a temporary calming device be installed to slow vehicles down, whilst a more permanent solution be determined. Director Kucharsky said he appreciated the hard work of gathering the signatures and indicated that staff are aware of this location as a highly utilized crosswalk with high volumes of traffic.

*Michael Caggiano, 14 Patton Road* indicated he works at a business at 14 Front Street, he said he was confused by the different parking meter rates throughout the City. He said the meters on Front Street are $1.50 per hour and on Lafayette they are $1.00. He maintains that the parking issues have been the same for over a decade and nothing has been done to alleviate the situation and yet parking fees have increased dramatically. He said he will speak to the City Councilors about this as he believes it is getting out of hand. Chair Stepasiuk advised him to speak with the Director further to learn more about the recent rate increases and why they vary depending on the location.

**TRAFFIC AND PARKING DIRECTOR UPDATE**

* Local Transportation Improvement Plan (LTIP)

Chair Stepasiuk asked Director Kucharsky to give an update on all current projects.

**Bates Elementary School Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS):** Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that a public hearing took place on April 25th to discuss project, he said the DPS Director, David Knowlton, Lt. Tucker, MassDOT and their consultants from Toole Design were present. The State ran the hearing through their normal procedures. He explained that transcripts were being developed, and the State is responding to some of the comments made by the public. Overall, he said the people were pleased with the plans, although there was some trepidation about potential loss of parking near the intersection of Appleton St and Liberty Hill Ave. MassDOT is looking for additional public feedback as it is currently at 75% design.

Commissioner Papetti said he lives close to the area and thought it is a very good project, especially preserving some of the mature trees. He said he would like to see some consideration given to extending the scope of the project further down Liberty Hill Ave to North St. He also suggested the City should consider funding some of the costs if it cannot be addressed by the State funding. He went on to say that there is no connection to the northeast corner of the intersection to the cemetery entrance which is heavily used by the neighbored residents. Chair Stepasiuk agreed and asked it be considered as part of the overall scope of the project. Director Kucharsky mentioned that the public had 3 more days to submit comments/suggestions.

MOTION: Commissioner Papetti made a motion instructing Director Kucharsky to draft and submit a letter to MassDOT and their designers requesting that they consider the additional improvements and extending the project’s scope based on the Commission’s discussion as well as offer assistance with continuing to work with abutters on parking concerns. Separately, to recommend the City examine all options to supplement the project budget to make these scope adjustments happen, if the MassDOT budget is not sufficient.

Commissioner Seidel seconded the motion. All were in favor, and so the motion passed.

**Downtown Bike Upgrades:** Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that the City Engineering Department met with MassDOT on April 16th to discuss the schedule, he said there are talks to push this project out to July or August due to ongoing development projects, including the demolition of the Old District Court, the roundabout pilot at Norman-Chestnut-Summer, the Essex Street reconstruction project and the ongoing construction of the Hampton Inn Hotel. Due to the courthouse demo delay, there was a discussion about whether to stop the striping on Washington St at Church St. Director Kucharsky also indicated that Hiway Safety Systems, has been awarded the MassDOT project, which is the same firm the City is working with to install the pilot roundabout.

**Boston Street Design:** Director Kucharsky said there was a Road Safety Audit (RSA) conducted on April 8th and a draft RSA has been developed and distributed. In addition, MassDOT’s Project Review Committee, recently approved the project, which is another step in getting the project programmed for funding on the MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Vice Chair Papetti asked if the DPS Director would meet with the Commission to discuss the timeline, as this project may not happen until 2025, he said the public would be better served if they were aware that this project was not going to happen in the near future. Chair Stepasiuk agreed, she said this was a topic that came up with Councilor Flynn when she and the Vice Chair met with him, who thought it would happen soon and this is inaccurate.

**Bridge Street Reconstruction (Flint to Washington):** Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that the DPS Director attended the MPO meeting on May 2nd and requested they work with the City to develop new design plans which includes Complete Streets features reducing the number of lanes. The current concept, which was developed back in 1992 as part of the Bridge St bypass road to Beverly, has 4 lanes of traffic which is not what the City intends to construct.

Once the new concept is developed the plan is to then bring it back to the Historical Commission for their review. He said the City is moving forward and hoping to share the design plans as things proceed.

**Bridge Street Complete Streets (Boston to Flint):** The Director informed the Commission that on April 25th the Mayor and the DPS Director had met with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to discuss compensatory storage needs and the design of the project. He said he believes there is a way to move forward with this project. He explained the shared use path along the canal, the idea is to make that path as the same level as the roadway separated by a curb and a green strip which would address some of the compensatory storage requirements. Vice Chair Papetti asked if this would commence in 2020, the Director said yes, that is the plan at the moment.

**Essex Street Reconstruction:** Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that no bids were submitted, and the RFP was re-released with a deadline of May 13th. Vice Chair Papetti expressed disappointment that the Engineering Department had not taken the Traffic and Parking Commission’s suggestions on this project as the City needs to rethink how roads are designed. He said he would like to have a discussion as to what the Commission’s role is. Chair Stepasuik said she agreed 100% and she would like to have the DPS Director meet with the Commission to discuss this and other items.

**Museum Place Garage Elevators:** Director Kucharsky said the work is on schedule and the first elevator is to be completed by mid-May. Once the State inspector signs off we will proceed work on the second elevator.

**Norman/Chestnut/Summer/Roundabout Pilot Program:** Director Kucharsky said the procurement is complete and the City is working with the contractor to set a schedule for installation.

**North Street Bridge (MAssDOT):** Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that work is underway. He said there are still issues with the railing and whether some lights can be replaced, he said there is a difference of opinion that the Engineering Department is working out with the State. He also said there was some discussion about enhancing the path under the overpass which provides access to the T station. He said these items are ongoing with no specifics at this time. Vice Chair Papetti welcomed this idea, he acknowledged it would not be an easy thing and a more viable maintenance plan is needed.

**Paving Program:** The Director told the Commission that a new city engineer was hired on April 16th and would be meeting with the BETA Group on May 3rd to discuss the status of their roadway and sidewalk pavement inspections work and maintenance plan. He indicated he is working with him and the DPS Director to identify where traffic calming and complete streets features can be incorporated into the overall paving work.

**Swampscott Road and 1st Street Roundabout:** The Director said that construction began April 16th and approximately 80% is scheduled to be completed by mid-July.

**Szetela Lane Multiuse Path Extensions:** The Bike Committee submitted comments to VHB and are under review. Plans to mitigate contaminated soils are being developed which will help determine where the extension occurs.

* General Departmental Updates

Vice Chair Papetti asked that the Director look into re-striping the Church Street parking Lot. The Director said he would look in to this.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS.**

* Traffic Calming Program

**Congress St @ Harbor St –** The Director addressed the request and petition submitted by Ms. Werbner. He said he is aware of the issues along this stretch of Congress Street, due to curbside parking and visibility issues, he said he planned on speaking with the Engineering and Police Departments to discuss improving signage and sight lines. A site visit with the engineering staff and Lt. Tucker will also be conducted. Traffic counts conducted in 2017 as part of a development project will also be reviewed.

Vice Chair Papetti suggested coming up with some temporary solutions if there is a true public safety issue, he said we should be able to go out tomorrow morning and put up signs restricting parking within 20 feet of that crosswalk. He said if there’s anything that the Police can do immediately, it should be done the go to City Council for any formal approvals. Chair Stepasiuk asked that we give ourselves a better timeline for review and implementation of these types of traffic calming projects. The Director said he can work with Lt. Tucker to get this taken care of in the interim. Director Kucharsky also noted that he plans on discussing this topic with the North Shore Community Development Coalition (NSDC) as they have recently approached the city about reconfiguring the intersection of Congress/Peabody/Ward. The Director and Lt. Tucker will visit the site and implement a temporary measure for safety purposes, he said he would keep the Commission updated.

* Traffic Ordinance Recommendations

**Discussion and Recommendation: Beaver Street One-Way –** The Director and Lt. Tucker recently met with Councilor Flynn and a resident, on site, to discuss the on-street parking issues related to the ongoing residential developments being built in this area. In addition, there was a discussion regarding trucks traveling up Beaver Street only to learn that it becomes one-way near the Ancient Order of Hibernian’s (AOH) parking lot. This has created some safety issues with trucks trying to back up and maneuver in what is a constrained residential area. Director Kucharsky informed the Commission that he drafted an ordinance amendment which seeks to restore Beaver Street to a one-way street from Silver to Grove Street as well as permit some on-street parking along a southern portion of Beaver St. He said Councilor Flynn was supportive of this. Chair Stepasuik said she was very much on board with this idea.

MOTION: Commissioner Seidel made a motion to approve rescinding the current ordinance and reinstating the original ordinance which makes Beaver Street one way from Silver St to Grove St. Commissioner Waller seconded the motion. All were in favor and so the motion passed.

**Discussion: Hawthorne Boulevard Parking –** Director Kucharsky said he would like to discuss with the Commission the existing traffic regulations along Hawthorne Boulevard as it relates to resident and visitor parking. He said Councilor McCarthy requested that the Commission evaluate existing ordinances and how they are enforced. Director Kucharsky said he had looked back at the various regulations on this stretch of road from the 70’s and there have been several ordinances adopted which in some cases conflict with earlier ordinances that were never rescinded. Chair Stepasiuk asked about enforcement in the area. The Director said that when a 2-hour limit from 9AM-5PM was implemented along the easterly side of Hawthorne, there was push back from some residents due to ticketing. Chair Stepasiuk said the Commission should attempt to clean up this issue and submit a recommendation to the City Council. Vice Chair Papetti asked if the residents on the street assumed it was their parking space. Director Kucharsky said he believed this to be the case. He pointed out there are three residential buildings along this side of the road. One idea is to have parking in front of the residences designated as resident only parking and the rest of the street could be signed for 2-hour parking for the general public which could assist with some of the enforcement. However, this would be establishing a precedent that may create issues elsewhere.

Commissioner Seidel suggested determining the number of houses and people living on the street to identify the magnitude of residences being affected. Vice Chair Papetti agreed and said implementing ad hoc regulations are not helpful He also asked how urgent this issue was, as he thought Assistant Director Downing could look into this further. Chair Stepasiuk agreed.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Valet Parking:** The Director informed the Commission that the service is two weeks in. This past weekend there were 27 cars served, he said they are still working with the Chamber of Commerce to get the word out. Chair Stepasiuk asked if the vendor had a target number, he said based on insurance and other costs, they are looking at 70 to 80 cars per weekend.

**Scooter Update:** The Director informed the Commission that there will be a scooter stakeholder meeting on May 9th in the Annex, four councilmembers are attending. Lt. Tucker, DPS representation and Vice Chair Papetti will attend as well as the Chamber of Commerce, Salem Main Streets and NIAC representatives.

**Traffic Calming Projects:** Chair Stepasiuk asked the Director to give an update on the overall Traffic Calming Program, in terms of funds etc. Director Kucharsky said the Police Department recently purchased a device that will capture two- way speed and volume data and it has been deployed to First Street. Vice Chair Papetti asked if Mass in Motion could be assigned to collect pedestrian data with the devices they have, as it would be interesting to see what the activity is. The Director said he would work with Russell Findley (Mass in Motion) on this. Director Kucharsky went on to say that they currently plan on using the device on Valley Street, Fort Avenue/ Columbus St and Congress Street.

Chair Stepasiuk asked if there were enough funds in the budget to address all of these locations. The Director said that FY 19 funds are for the Norman/Chestnut/Summer Street roundabout project which is scheduled to be implemented on May 19th as well as the Pickering/Chestnut crosswalk. He said there should be some additional funds that can be used elsewhere. He also indicated that he has requested additional funds in the FY20 budget, however, he will not know whether the requests are approved until the Mayor and City Council have their budget meetings.

Ms. Werbner asked for a description of the device being used at First street. The Director explained that it was a small device intended to capture actual speed and volume data. Ms. Werbner suggested taking a look at the device used on Humphrey Street in Swampscott. It is a crosswalk sign which has LED lights around the perimeter that light up to remind drivers to slow down.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

Chair Stepasiuk noted that only two people were present from the January meeting minutes and could not be approved until Lt. Tucker was present.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Seidel and seconded by Vice Chair Papetti, the Commission voted to approve the minutes from the April 11th, 2018 Traffic and Parking Commission meeting.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

The next Traffic and Parking Commission meeting will take place May 30th, 2019.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Seidel and seconded by Vice Chair Papetti, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:23PM.

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

* Local Transportation Improvement Plan Spreadsheet