**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, June 20, 2019**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, June 20, 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, Director David Kucharsky, and Assistant Director Nick Downing.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:46pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*Eric Sayce, 7 Milk Street* is here to follow-up on the Salem trolley parking agenda item, He emailed the Commission earlier this week to indicate that he felt the agenda item did not accurately reflect what he hoped the Commission would discuss. He also wants to go on record as saying he presented several solutions, but his hope is to have a temporary parking spot added where the current B trolley stop is situated, and to use the space when the trolley is done operating for the day.

*Jim Hurrell, Owner Salem Trolley*, expressed his opposition to making any changes to the Salem Trolley stops on Essex Street. The trolley has never had an accident in 17 years, and he is concerned that any changes might impact that record. Moving the trolley stop to New Liberty would not be safe. The 2 spots on Essex Street were designated so trolleys could pull in without backing up. Mr. Hurrell mentioned Salem Trolley has contracts with the City and Boston Harbor Cruises to provide rides for residents and ferry riders.

*Megan Riccardi, 23 Orchard Street*, wanted to thank Director Kucharsky and Lt. Tucker for attending their North Salem neighborhood meeting. She also expressed excitement on the potential for a pop-up bike lane on North Street, but some concern about the loss of parking.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS.**

* Pop-Up Bike Lanes & Parklets

Director Kucharsky gave the Commission an update on Mayor Driscoll’s Space for People Project to evaluate spaces we are using for parking to be sued for parklets or bike infrastructure. There are 2 pieces to this – establishing parklets by taking 1 or 2 parking spaces and adding barriers and seating to create small public spaces open to the public. Some businesses may also want their own private parklets and we are working on how that could be permitted. The second piece is looking at certain corridors coming into the City and taking parking from one side to create buffered bike lanes on weekends only. We are reaching out to businesses now to gauge interest and researching the materials we will need. The routes for the bike lanes would be from the end of the bike trail near SSU on Loring Avenue to Lafayette Street, Lafayette Street to Leach, then along the waterfront to Palmer Cove and up Congress Street. On the north side, we are looking from North Street at the City line to the bridge where North turns on to Commercial Street. The hope is to have these all launch in July. The parklets would be open to the public and we would be open to all types of businesses if they were interested in having parklets just for their business. Chair Stepasiuk asked staff to look at non-retail and non-commercial sues as well.

Chair Stepasiuk and the Commission also urged staff to look at potential locations outside of Downtown for parklets. Vice Chair Papetti noted that the bike committee hasn’t discussed the specific pop-up bike lanes proposal yet, but did discuss other similar items. He noted that the Committee would likely not want to see this effort delayed and could send in comments electronically if needed. He added that we should make it easy for restaurants to add outdoor space, but the City should also try to have public space on every street that is open to everyone, not just patrons of a particular business. Lastly Vice Chair Papetti encouraged staff to consider keeping the bike lanes and parklets up into October to provide public space and more ways for people to get downtown in the City’s busiest season.

There was a general discussion about both proposals and the Commission expressed interest in pushing the Department and City further to consider other ideas such as fully closing streets to cars and only allowing pedestrians and cyclists as more of an open streets event.

*Megan Riccardi, 23 Orchard Street*, wanted to emphasize that it would be best if the bike lane on North Street go over the bridge to be most useful to North Salem residents.

* Salem Trolley Parking on Essex Street

Assistant Director Downing summarized the information sent by Mr. Sayce as having two aspects, one being potentially moving the B stop and expanding the existing parking zone currently on Essex Street, and the other being formalizing some type of parking to be allowed in the B trolley stop outside of the Trolley’s operating hours.

Director Kucharsky noted that from a public safety standpoint, relocating the Trolley stop around the corner isn’t ideal. The street is 2-way at that point and has relatively high truck volume, and adding the trolley stop would narrow the street too much. Chair Stepasiuk asked what the trolley hours are. Mr. Hurrell responded that the hours are generally 10am to 5pm, but it does vary if there are specific needs or events.

Mr. Sayce commented that his request was not appropriately addressed as he submitted it. The space for zone B is much larger than zone A and he believes could easily accommodate another full-term parking spot. Zone B, at a minimum should be open parking outside of the trolley operating hours.

Chair Stepasiuk asked staff and the Commission if we need to create more parking here. Commissioner Seidel noted she personally hasn’t had a problem parking in the area, and added if we can fit another spot we should, but if we can’t, then we should pursue allowing parking there outside of the trolley operating hours.

Staff is going to meet with Lt. Tucker, Mr, Hurrell, and Mr. Sayce on site to consider possibilities of how to use the space and will report back to the Commission.

* Traffic Ordinance Recommendations

***Resident Sticker Parking*:** Director Kucharsky continued the conversation from the last meeting re: the Department’s looking into changes to the City’s resident permit parking program. He began with the recommendations rather than going through all of the information discussed at the last meeting. The overall goals are to reduce neighborhood parking pressure, clarify and resent the program, have policies that support community goals, mitigate growing parking demand, ensure equity from neighborhood to neighborhood, and improve registration and enforcement. The first recommendation is to redraw the zones to follow easily understandable neighborhood and geographic boundaries wherever possible. In some locations, if we are able to implement a new enforcement and registration system, we would recommend requiring all streets be designated as resident permit parking streets, rather than the piecemeal approach we have now. In other locations, we would evaluate if current resident permit parking needs to be maintained or expanded, and if expanded, we would keep the street by street approach but with some criteria such as 50% of households on a street indicating support for the change.

There was a general discussion about whether or not to require streets in some zones to participate in a resident permit parking program that do not today, based on proximity to downtown, or to leave them as is and if they seek resident permit parking in the future, go through the process to get it. There were multiple comments about how the current system shifts parking issues from one street to another, so requiring more streets to participate could balance that out, but also that any zone system will have problems on the edges and we need to be aware of that if and when we change zones.

Commissioner Waller commented that whatever decisions are made, we should base it on as much data as possible and we should not automatically assume existing zones should be the starting point for new zones. Assistant Director Downing responded that in drawing these new zones, we tried to look at where existing permits were concentrated, and assume residents are used to parking in an area already, we wanted to try and keep those zones intact where we could rather than add confusion by splitting up some existing zones. There was further discussion about the zones and whether they should all be similarly sized in terms of the number of on-street spaces or registered vehicles in an area.

Chair Stepasiuk asked for a clarification of what staff is seeking from the Commission tonight and what next steps are. Director Kucharsky identified short and long terms steps to take. After the Commission meeting, we will meet with the Mayor, Councillors, and other City departments to move this forward. It is a massive undertaking, so it will take some time if we were to undertake all of this.

Director Kucharsky continued the presentation. The staff recommendation is a limit of one (1) permit per licensed driver, and not more than two (2) permits per household. Permits would be purchased annually. Pricing would remain for resident permits ($5/year). If a household wanted more than two (2) permits, a third would be $50/year and a fourth would be $100/year. Households with off-street parking would only be able to purchase one (1) permit at the $5 rate. Residents in multi-unit buildings with no off-street parking would only be able to purchase 2 permits and residents in multi-unit buildings with off-street parking would only be able to purchase 1 permit. The cost for visitor permits would be increased, but would only be implemented with a new enforcement system. The staff recommendation is daily permits would cost $20 and could not be purchased for more than 4 consecutive days. Weekly permits would be $100 and could not be purchased for more than 2 consecutive weeks. We know some residents have regular visitors such as home health aides which we would assess on a case by case basis to determine some other permit structure. Signage all needs to be updated with one sign template used City-wide with all the necessary information.

The short term measures are limiting the number of permits per household, instituting higher fees for additional permits, increasing the visitor permit pricing, increasing the parking fines as recommended by the Commission, and allowing mid-block households in existing zones to purchase permits, but this would need to be done in conjunction with the recommendation to limit the number of permits per household. Long-term measures are investing in an online registration system and LPR technology and the internal City structures to go along with it. The new enforcement technology is the lynchpin for the entire system – the best policies won’t matter if we can’t enforce it.

There was a general discussion about visitor pass pricing and changes to that system. The Commission felt the staff recommendation on pricing was too high and that limiting the number of visitor permits per household would be a better way to limit use than a high price point. The Commission agreed that a price of $1/day and up to two (2) permits at a time would be more reasonable. The Commission supports the pricing recommendation for the 3rd and 4th permits, and asked staff to continue to look at how to manage permits for residents in multi-unit buildings.

The Commission discussed the proposed redrawn zones, and asked to see multiple options for redrawn zones. There were comments about if the entire City needs to fall within a zone even if no streets within that zone have resident permit parking. There were also comments about how to determine support for new resident permit parking and how to measure that support.

There followed a general discussion about the next steps for this process, and overall views of the effort that has been undertaken thus far. The Commission acknowledged that it is a large undertaking with myriad aspects that all need to sync for the system to work properly, and also that ultimately any recommendations will be sent to the Council for action and approval.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Waller suggested the Commission get name plates for the Commissioners so the public can identify the members.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked that on future agendas, the Commission discuss when contracts for snow-plowing are issued and the CIP development process.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

There are no meeting minutes to approve.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

The next Traffic and Parking Commission meeting will take place July 25, 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 8:52PM.

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

* Resident Permit Parking Findings & Recommendations Presentation
* Potential Parklet Locations Map
* Pop-Up Bike Lanes Map