

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 30, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, November 30, 2022 at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, and as amended by Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, and a Special Act extending remote participation meetings until March 31, 2023.

Present: Traffic and Parking: Commission Chair Tanya Shallop, Commissioner Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commission Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Mobility Coordinator Russell Findley. **Absent:** Commission Vice Chair Eric Papetti

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm by Chair Shallop. Ms. Shallop explains how members of the public may participate during the remote meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Director's Update

Mr. Kucharsky explains that the striping on North Street was completed last month, and that the city electrician is working to upgrade the signals on the road. They are also scheduling to have the new crosswalk installed at Cressey and Garden Terrace, which has been stalled due to weather. Mr. Kucharsky indicates staff are also revisiting the possibility of installing a crosswalk at the intersection near Dearborn now that things have been laid out. Staff and Toole Design will take another look to see if the additional crosswalk is feasible. Additional sidewalk improvements and sign work will also be ongoing, and Mr. Kucharsky states speed and volume data will be monitored in the following months. He also notes that Tom Devine will be scheduling time with the Bike Committee to conduct utilization counts of the bike lanes and track usage of the new blue bike station installed at the Liberty Hill Avenue intersection. Mr. Kucharsky states they will be reopening the public input site for comments and feedback, as well as put out a FAQ on the Department website and twitter to address questions received so far.

Mr. Kucharsky explains that staff are working on evaluating other traffic calming programs and working with Lt. Tucker to obtain additional speed and volume data. Mr. Kucharsky states Mr. Findley is working on updating the prioritization tool and hoping to share an updated evaluation of roads.

Mr. Kucharsky next indicates that staff would like feedback from Commissioners, the Bike Committee, and others regarding Complete Streets, as many of the plans and projects have been implemented. Regarding the South Harbor garage, Mr. Kucharsky states that all work is complete and that Destination Salem has been up and running since October. The Museum Place garage still requires some finishing touches like camera installation, and Mr. Kucharsky states the hope is to identify the next phase of work for the second and third levels.

Commissioner Swartz asks if there is a start time for the second and third floor of the Museum Place garage, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates staff hope to get documentation and bid specifications over the next several months, ideally putting the project out to bid and getting a start around April.

Riley Plaza Parking Passes

Mr. Findley presents an aerial map of the parking lot at Riley Plaza. Mr. Kucharsky indicates he received a request from Michael Caggiano to increase the number of parking permits for the lot. Mr. Kucharsky explains that there are a total of 118 spaces and 144 permits sold, with 39 of the permits going to Norman Street condo residents based on a prior agreement and 105 sold to anyone on a first come first serve basis. The lot is located in Zone 1, and includes 101 Zone 1 spaces, 11 metered spaces, four accessible spaces, and two zip car spaces. While more permits are issued than available spaces, Mr. Kucharsky states there are often times where the lot has ample spaces available. After speaking with the parking office, Mr. Kucharsky learned the passes sell quickly and are currently sold out through January for those 105 permits, and states he is unsure if it could be extended at present. He does note that the metered spaces are not heavily utilized, and that perhaps it would make sense to make the whole lot Zone 1 and add 11 spaces to the mix by removing the 11 meters. If the Commission thought it was appropriate and council adopts it, the number of permits could then be extended proportionally.

Commissioner Garmendia notes that the Covid testing truck is often parked there where the metered spaces are, and Mr. Kucharsky confirms that it occupies roughly three metered spaces, and will be leaving at the end of the year. Mr. Garmendia asks if there is any occupancy data, and notes many may be interested in utilizing the lot during snow. He wonders if based on month to month data permits could vary based on past occupancy. Mr. Kucharsky indicates most of the data currently is based on observation from enforcement. Mr. Kucharsky adds that there are also known issues with signage, and staff plan to update them.

Chair Shallop asks how the permits are sold and who is eligible. Mr. Kucharsky states they are sold first come first serve for \$35 dollars per month, and that any interested person can go to the parking office to obtain one. He adds that it is mainly intended for employees working downtown and for the 39 residents of Norman Street condominiums, but that anyone can request and purchase one if available. Sales are allowed three months in advance, and they are currently sold out through January and almost sold out for the month

of February. A permit makes one eligible for a space but a space is not guaranteed, similar to the garages.

Commissioner Swartz notes that he lived on High Street for six years and would walk across the lot at various hours. He notes that it is used heavily by the neighborhood in off times, and by downtown business employees during the day. Mr. Swartz indicates he would be curious to hear from businesses in the area, as some have parking lots and some do not.

Chair Shallop asks if there is data on meter utilization, and Mr. Kucharsky says not much, noting that three spaces have been out of use for a while. He also indicates the spaces were used for Verizon signal boosting on Saturday's in October and other various things. He states he can look into revenue pulled from the lot. Chair Shallop asks if the garage parking passes are more expenses, and Mr. Kucharsky confirms they are. He also notes that the Norman Street residents pay \$300 per year. Commissioner Swartz asks about the Norman Street residents specifically, and Mr. Kucharsky explains it is based on a zoning or planning decision years ago, and they were either granted the ability, or required to purchase them. He identifies the building on the map.

Chair Shallop asks if staff are looking to start a discussion or for a recommendation. Mr. Kucharsky states that if there is a desire to increase the permits, one way of doing so could be to convert the metered spaces to Zone 1, which he suggests could also help with enforcement.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Mike Caggiano introduces himself as the citizen who made the request. Mr. Caggiano states he procrastinated in getting his November pass/permit, and eventually it was too late and they were sold out. Despite being sold out, Mr. Caggiano contends the spaces farthest south are usually empty most days. He states there has never been a time where he could not find a spot, as outside of October there are always 10 to 20 open spaces. Mr. Caggiano suggests that some may not use it but get the pass for guests or back up rather than daily utilization. He also states the price is a good deal.

Chair Shallop states she believes Mr. Caggiano that there are empty spaces often, but that she does not know enough currently to recommend any changes. She indicates she would love to know more and is hesitant to make the passes less valuable for those who have purchased them or sell more and have a situation where people cannot find parking. Chair Shallop asks if the passes for the garage are based on a certain ratio per space.

Commissioner Swartz agrees that more information is needed and suggests looking at the metered spaces more. There is a brief discussion about how the passes are open to anyone who seeks to purchase one, not just Zone 1 residents. Mr. Kucharsky indicates he will look at data, meter info, and talk to enforcement to determine what options may be available.

Mr. Caggiano states he works on Front Street and lives in South Salem and has been here since 1996. He adds that the lot was intended as a long-term parking option for employees in the downtown area. Mr. Caggiano explains he is currently taking the Salem Skipper or parking in the garage. He discusses the history of the lot and parking downtown a bit and suggests surveying pass holders for info as well.

Congress Street Service Zone Request

Mr. Kucharsky explains that the Salem Pantry will be moving into the North Shore Community Development Coalition ("NSCDC") Lighthouse project at 47 Leavitt Street, and that they requested a loading zone for a small section of Congress Street. Robin Burns, executive director for the Salem Pantry reached out specifically and informed that the deliveries would be utilizing a 16 foot box truck. The requested service zone would be either 24 hours or a temporal loading zone operating from 6AM to 4PM Monday through Saturdays, per the request. Mr. Kucharsky presents a map of the area and propose service zone.

Chair Shallop says this is exciting and she has been volunteering for the Pantry. She states she is in favor of a temporal space, that way if it is not needed at night residents can use it. Chair Shallop asks the other Commissioners if they have comments or questions, but they do not. She next introduces Fred Norton from the Salem Pantry.

Mr. Norton states that they estimate they will restock things approximately once a day, and he discusses the building and project in detail. It will be an operational free store front open to everyone, and individuals are welcome to come in once a week to get 30 to 40 pounds of food including protein. This will replace many of the pop-up markets all over the City. Chair Shallop asks when the project will be ready, and Mr. Norton indicates the official opening will be late March.

Mr. Kucharsky and Commission Lt. Tucker speak to the parking needs of the location, noting that parking in the Point neighborhood in general can be a challenge. Mr. Kucharsky notes that the spaces on Leavitt Street that have been out of commission for construction for a while will be back online and available soon. The hours are discussed more, and it is suggested that 6AM may be a challenge for enforcement as it is early. Mr. Norton states that realistically 6AM is probably earlier than they would have any deliveries, and that 8AM would be reasonable.

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

Chair Shallop asks about crafting a vote. Mr. Kucharsky clarifies that based on discussion, the hours would be 8AM to 4PM. Mr. Norton states that would work, and Chair Shallop indicates it seems reasonable.

Motion and Vote. Commissioner Swartz motions to create the temporal service zone on Congress Street, operating Monday through Saturday 8AM to 4PM. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. **The vote is all in favor, the motion passes.**

Mr. Kucharsky indicate he will prepare an ordinance amendment and present it to council.

October Planning Recap

Mr. Findley brings up a presentation for the Commission with statistics for October, and a map showing the streets that are resident parking year-round and those that are resident parking just for the month of October. DPS placed approximately 1,300 signs on 86 streets, and there were 5,379 total October resident passes (3,804 by mail, 1,570 walk-in). There are 5,050 year-round passes, and 399 of them were processed in October. Approximately 300 hours of staff time was dedicated to passes in October, and the total number of resident passes year-round and for October was 10,429. Mr. Findley notes that Dearborn Street was added to the October resident permit parking this year, and 91 passes were mailed while 9 were distributed in person. Two visitor passes were requested for this street, and there were zero citations issued. Mr. Findley explains that temporal year-round resident parking was recommended for Chestnut Street from Cambridge Street to Summer Street, for Derby Street from Becket Avenue to Webb Street, for Essex Street from Monroe Street to Cambridge Street, and for Hawthorne Boulevard from Essex Street to Charter Street. This means resident permit parking only from 5PM to 7AM, Monday through Friday, and 12PM to 7AM Saturday through Sunday. These streets had temporary resident permit parking only for the month of October this year. Mr. Kucharsky notes that any order would supersede the prior order, and that he would like to discuss with the Ward 2 councilor further. The goal is to bring equity to these streets so everyone has year round parking or the green signs, according to Mr. Kucharsky.

Mr. Findley provides information regarding parking enforcement, noting there were 1,887 resident parking tickets, compared to 2,390 in 2021. There were 294 tows, compared to 201 in 2021. Of the total tickets, 1,276 were issued to Massachusetts plates and 611 were issued to out of state plates. Mr. Findley indicates the largest number of violations occurred on Peabody Street, where there were 92. The next biggest number of violations were on Derby Street, Essex Street, Washington Square East, Washington Square North, and Palmer Street. With respect to the temporary meter zones on canal street, there were no citations, but there were some outages which reduced the number of citations and transactions.

Mr. Kucharsky explains he talked to police and fire departments regarding the outages and says the issue was addressed in last weekend, but that he will follow up to make sure it does not occur again. There is a brief discussion regarding technical issues related to Verizon during the month of October, which resolved toward the end of the month.

Mr. Findley also discusses the temporary metered zones on Margin Street and North Street, which charged \$1 per hour and \$2 per hour, respectively.

Mr. Kucharsky discusses the new October overlay district, which allowed commercial properties to apply for a permit to sell parking during the month. There were 22 applications, resulting in 18 permitted and four non-permitted lots (two of the non-

permitted lots were outside the district, one did not meet the criteria, and one applied but never continued the process). Mr. Kucharsky indicates one citation was issued on Franklin Street related to having signage in a public right of way, despite receiving an initial warning. Mr. Kucharsky presents a map of the overlay district and explains that for properties outside of the district that sold parking, warnings were given, but no citations. Mr. Kucharsky explains he will meet with the City Solicitor, Building Commissioner, and some Councilors to discuss further, as well as the potential of expanding the district.

Mr. Kucharsky next discusses the October weekend shuttle and presents a map of the two routes, noting that an additional bus was added to Route B. The downtown stop was at Riley Plaza, and people could get the shuttle at Salem High School or the O'Keefe Center. Over all the weekends there were 28,000 total users, and the busiest weekend was October 8th and 9th. The goal is to continue the service but make it sustainable, as right now the shuttle and parking are free. Mr. Kucharsky indicates staff are exploring ways to charge for the shuttle and still make it work. As a tool to deter driving into downtown, he maintains that it helps quite a bit.

Commissioner Swartz states the shuttles were heavily utilized and asks if there is a way to look into surrounding towns to divert traffic as it still took a while at times to get to the shuttle lots. He also suggests signage pointing out alternate routes to the shuttle lots.

Mr. Kucharsky explains that the blue bike stations saw 2,735 rides in total during October, which is a 1,543 increase in trips from last year and an increase in 325 from September. There are 15 stations in operation now, and 207 free monthly passes were issued to Salem residents in October. He presents a map showing usage and additional ridership data. The most used station was at the bike path at Salem State on Loring Avenue. Regarding the Salem Skipper, there were a total of 8,482 rides, and Mr. Kucharsky states ridership is growing month to month to the point where they are struggling to meet demand. There are more trips during the week than on weekends, and Mr. Kucharsky presents a graph of ridership data. There are discussions of finding satellite lots, as they are currently parked in the garage and crowds can make it tough on weekends to get out. Mr. Kucharsky contends the service has been successful and helps people get around year-round, as well as in October. With respect to late night ride requests, of the 119 requests 53 turned into completed rides, and only 25 percent of the completed rides began in the core downtown area. Mr. Kucharsky explains the majority of the late-night use was going from downtown to the university.

Commissioner Swartz says he can ask next week at the recap meeting though the chamber of commerce if there has been any feedback from downtown businesses.

Mr. Kucharsky next presents commuter rail and ferry data, noting additional service was added on the weekends of October 22 and October 29, with seven extra inbound trains. More ridership data is still to be released, and that currently staff only have access to the special event ticket sales, which totaled 2,487. For the ferry, which runs May 26 through October 31 and holds 149 people, there were 76,669 rides for the whole season and 21,242 in October.

Chair Shallop thanks staff for the information and recap. She states she would love to hear opinions on what worked well and what did not.

Mr. Kucharsky suggests strengthening the partnership with the T is beneficial as it is the most efficient way to move people in and out of town. The ferries are helpful, and he would like to see the shuttle expanded if it can be done so sustainably. Parking enforcement numbers were lower, and Mr. Kucharsky suggests it may have been due to the larger fines this year. He notes the amount of time that everything for the month takes and makes an appeal to pause on the number of streets added to October parking, as it stretches staff by adding places to monitor and enforce on top of the work of pass distribution and signage, and regular downtown issues and phone calls. Mr. Kucharsky notes that Councilor Riccardi thought things went well on Dearborn and would like to add more streets, but he notes there is always a ripple effect. He suggests getting more information when requests come in. Mr. Kucharsky notes that staff are also looking at updating the resident permit program, and the potential for a license plate approach for the City.

Chair Shallop asks if there were any themes with complaints. Commissioner Lt. Tucker says nothing different or unusual this year, and notes that the violations were concentrated mainly in the downtown area. He echoes Mr. Kucharsky's hesitation of adding more streets to October permit parking now.

Mr. Kucharsky also indicates staff are discussing potential for year-round signage for October parking and street sweeping, to have permanent signage that looks nicer.

Commissioner Garmendia asks how the permittees felt during the inaugural year of the October overlay district. Commissioner Swartz said he would be curious to see a list of the businesses that got permits so that he can follow up with them and find out. Commissioner Garmendia asks if the presentation and data can be posted online, and Mr. Kucharsky confirms. The Commissioners thank staff for all their work.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Bob Arabian of 51 Lafayette Street introduces himself and states he lives in the downtown area in the Derby Lofts. Mr. Arabian explains he has lived here for five years, and that this was his worst experience as a downtown resident. Mr. Arabian expresses frustration that downtown residents could not get an October resident pass to park, and that residents in the downtown area put up with more than anyone else in town. He suggests he is supportive of October and Haunted Happenings but argues that accommodations are made for outlying residential areas while nothing of consequence is done for downtown residents. Mr. Arabian explains he has two passes to the South Harbor garage but does not dare to leave on weekends because otherwise he cannot get back in, and that this was made worse by nearby streets requiring permits. Mr. Arabian suggests downtown residents need some kind of accommodation that does not cost any extra money. He speaks in favor of handling resident permit parking by license plate.

OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

None.

UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The next meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2022 at 6:00PM.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

September 28, 2022

November 9, 2022

Motion and Vote: Swartz motions to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2022 and November 9, 2022 meetings as drafted. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. **The vote is all in favor, the motion passes.**

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Garmendia and seconded by Commissioner Swartz, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.