

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 1, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Present: Traffic and Parking: Acting Commission Chair Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commissioner Brendan Casey, Commissioner Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, Assistant Transportation Director Christina Hodge, and Transportation Data Analyst Russell Findley. **Absent:** None

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm by Acting Chair Garmendia, who explains that Ms. Shallop has chosen not to renew her term on the Commission. Mr. Garmendia explains how members of the public may participate during the remote meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Acting Commission Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment, but there is none.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Director's Update

Mr. Kucharsky states staff is wrapping up from October and the focus will be on providing a recap of the month, hopefully during the month of December. Mr. Kucharsky indicates he will also have an update on the traffic calming program in January, most likely. The contract is now in place for the Federal Safe Streets for All grant according to Mr. Kucharsky, and the next step will be to put out an RFP to have a consultant help develop the plan for the City. Mr. Kucharsky also indicates staff are looking to update the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.

Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation

Acting Chair Garmendia notes this is a continued discussion from the previous meeting in October where the commissioners requested that staff present an updated evaluation of the resident parking program based on their comments and discuss recommendations related to removing certain streets from the program, redrawing resident zones, and proposed rate changes for permits.

Mr. Kucharsky presents a recap of the permit parking program overview from the last meeting. He also reviews current permit program data and maps showing the current zones, along with specific data about each zone presented last time. Mr. Kucharsky notes

that pursuant to last meeting, Councilor Varela recommended that council remove 20 streets, mostly in Zone B, from the resident permit parking program (Buchanan Road, Cleveland Road, Cleveland Road Extension, Fairview Avenue, Grant Road, Harrison Road, Hayes Road, Lincoln Road, McKinley Road, Moffatt Road, Monroe Road, Paradise Avenue, Pickman Road, Pierce Road, Preston Road, Riverway Road, Rosedale Avenue, Station Road, Sumner Road, and Taft Road). Most of the streets had little to no participation in the program. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the 20 streets have gone through the first passage in Council. With those streets removed, he presents a list of streets with 33 percent or less participation in the permit program, compared to the 20 percent threshold previously used (Ash Street, Belleau Road, Bristol Street, Broadway, Charles Street, Eden Street, Fairview Road, Franklin Street, Friend Street, Glendale Street, Hanson Street, Jackson Street, Lafayette Street, Lussier Street, Margin Street, Oak Street, Ord Street, Pierce Avenue, Saltonstall Parkway, Story Road, Thorndike Street, Waite Street, Warren Court, West Circle, and Wilfred Terrace). Many of the additional streets are in Zone E, near the University, and staff do not recommend they be included for removal. Mr. Kucharsky presents the 14 streets recommended for removal, based on the 20 percent permit purchase threshold (Ash Street, Franklin Street, Friend Street, Hanson Street, Jackson Street, Oak Street, Ord Street, Pierce Avenue, Putnam Street, Story Road, Thorndike Street, Waite Street, Warren Court, and Wilfred Terrace). He indicates staff also looked at the existence of off-street and on-street parking nearby, citations issued, and parking utilization data. Mr. Kucharsky states staff are looking at some alternatives specifically for Wilfred Terrace, and Councilor Varela has suggested the street remain as is.

Acting Chair Garmendia asks for more information regarding Jackson Street since it is new to the list since the last meeting. Mr. Kucharsky indicates most of the residences have off-street parking, and that only two units purchased permits in the last year. Chair Garmendia states he has heard some of the neighbors complain about parking from visitors to the nearby cider brewery. Mr. Garmendia next asks about the Wilfred Terrace alternatives. Mr. Kucharsky explains that there are five units, and none of the units have purchased parking permits. He adds that the parking abuts conservation area for the Town of Marblehead water department, and staff are looking into other forms of signage and the potential of future fencing to keep intruders out.

Councilor Varela suggests leaving the Wilfred Terrace parking as is, noting there is currently a dispute with the Marblehead water department (who owns the land on the other side of the Linden Avenue and Wilfred Terrace) and the conservation commission as to where exactly the boundary line is. Mr. Varela contends the resident permit parking on Wilfred Terrace should remain until the boundary and fence location can be determined. Currently, it acts as a deterrent from people littering and trespassing onto the water department property. Acting Chair Garmendia asks if there is a record of citations for parking or any other violations in the location, or if this is to mitigate potential problems, and Commissioner Lt. Tucker states he is not aware of any. Mr. Garmendia asks when the boundary issue is expected to be resolved. Councilor Varela states there is no timeline currently, but that the request came from the Marblehead water department who have said they have had an issue with people littering.

Mr. Kucharsky next discusses the recommended rezoning changes. Zone A (mainly based on Ward 1) is currently split between the Derby neighborhood, the Willows, and the Point. Derby will remain Zone A, the Willows will become the new Zone B, and the Point will become part of a new Zone F. The current Zone B is removed, except Raymond Road, Lafayette Street, a portion of Loring Avenue, and Fairview Road would now become part of Zone E. The current Zone E is split into two zones. The Salem State area will remain in Zone E, but the remainder will be combined with the Point neighborhood to become the new Zone F. The current Zone F is proposed to be removed, with Foster Street moving into Zone H, a new zone that acts as a catch all zone. Zone H includes Foster Street, a portion of Cleveland Street across from St. Anne Parish, and a portion of Heritage Drive across from the hospital. Zone C is currently split into two zones, and the proposal would keep Federal Street area as Zone C while changing the Common neighborhood and Bridge Street Neck to Zone G. Zone D is proposed to be better defined based on the current designated residential streets with Essex Street as the northern/western boundary (with Essex Street remaining part of Zone C), Jackson Street as the southern boundary, and Margin Street/Jefferson Avenue as the eastern boundary. Mr. Kucharsky presents maps showing the existing and proposed zones along with the map showing the changes that occur for the month of October.

Commissioner Casey asks if with the future license plate recognition system if the October parking would be by zone as well. Mr. Kucharsky states he can investigate the matter, and he believes it is possible. Commissioner Swartz suggests allowing businesses to register for only the October resident parking as a pilot. Mr. Kucharsky states the issue with creating zones is the required signage, but that the Passport technology will allow for streets to be designated and delineated by zone. The issue is communicating the messaging clearly to the public.

Commissioner Casey states he believes the 33 percent threshold could be appropriate, and therefore, would be in favor of the recommended 20 percent, but he asks if any other Commissioners agree that it could be higher. Commissioner Swartz suggests one out of three is still decent utilization, particularly considering the experience of those renting and perhaps living with roommates. Commissioner Lt. Tucker provides additional information, noting that violations and citations are more based on calls, and that in some instances it might be the case that residents are parking on a street without having permits, but no one is calling to report these instances. With the newer system there may be an increase in usage along with the increase in enforcement, according to Lt. Tucker. Commissioner Swartz agrees that the new system will illuminate whether issues exist and more accurate usage information. Mr. Kucharsky notes that there are also proposed rate changes, which may change utilization rates and behavior as well. Commissioner Swartz asks if the automation capabilities of the future system could allow for lower or no increase in rates. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the complexities of the system will not necessarily reduce costs.

Acting Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment.

Ward 5 Councilor Jeff Cohen introduces himself and suggests that the additional streets included under the higher threshold of 33 percent are mainly around Salem State, and removing the resident permit parking could have unintended consequences, even if enforcement is low currently. Councilor Cohen asks for clarification on Zone E and asks that attention be paid to Ocean Avenue, as there have been issues with people parking on the side streets.

Chair Garmendia asks if the Commission would like to propose a motion and vote on the rezoning change recommendations before discussing the rate change proposals. Mr. Kucharsky asks that there be a motion first for the streets that are recommended for removal, and another for the rezoning changes. Chair Garmendia asks if the Commission is amenable to Councilor Varela's request to remove Wilfred Terrace from the list of recommended removals, and the commissioners confirm, bringing the list of streets recommended for removal to 13.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend to City Council that the thirteen (13) identified streets be removed from the resident permit parking program. Commissioner Casey seconds the motion. **The vote is four (4) in favor, and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend to City Council to adopt the proposed zoning changes for the resident permit parking program, adding Wilfred Terrace to Zone H. Commissioner Casey seconds the motion. **The vote is four (4) in favor, and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

Mr. Kucharsky next presents the revised proposed parking rates, compared to the current pricing structure and initially proposed changes. Mr. Kucharsky indicates staff looked at other communities for comparison, and found that Cambridge, MA, charges \$25 per resident permit (not zone based), with one visitor pass maximum per household, and visitor permits for zero-vehicle households at a cost of \$25. Landlord permits are \$200, and long-term home health care permits are \$50. Mr. Kucharsky explains that in Lynn, MA, both resident permits and visitor permits are free, but only residents on resident parking designated streets can obtain passes. In Chelsea, MA resident permits are \$10 and not zone-based, with all residents eligible. Visitor permits are \$10, limited to two per household and based on a five-block proximity, with a 52 visit per year maximum. Landlord permits are \$50 for six months, and caregiver permits are free in Chelsea. Mr. Kucharsky explains that in Boston resident permits are free and neighborhood based, and that there are no visitor permits (just limited visitor parking spaces). In Somerville, MA, resident permits are \$40 and zone based. All visitor parking is proximity based (adjacent streets), with two-day visitor permits costing \$20 per 12-month permit and three-day visitor permits costing \$40 per 12-month permit. Visitor permits are limited to two per household in Somerville, and only one may be a three-day pass. Landlord permits are \$60 or \$100 depending on the property type, and medical caretaker permits cost \$60 per permit. Mr. Kucharsky indicates staff also looked at Everett, MA, where resident permits are free if requested in January or February but \$10 thereafter and limited to four per household. It is

not zone based, and the cost of a visitor permit depends on the number of days, with one-day, seven-day, 14-day, 21-day, and 30-day options ranging from \$5 to \$25.

The revised proposed pricing structure would charge \$20 for permits to full-time residents with vehicles registered in Salem (two visitor permits permitted) and \$30 for permits to part-time residents with vehicles registered elsewhere (no visitor permits). Non-resident property owners (landlords) would pay \$50 for a permit and now be allowed visitor permits. Visitor permits, valid for seven days, would cost \$30 and \$50 for the first and second permit, respectively. Temporary October resident permits would still be free, but temporary October visitor permits would cost \$2 for non-resident uses such as a doctor's office located on a designated October street, as well as for hospice workers and home health aides. Residents eligible for free resident October permits can request a visitor permit for \$30. Mr. Kucharsky also presents the proposed changes in relation to the passport fees. The Commissioners discuss the revised proposed pricing structure generally and the capabilities of the passport system, and how the seven consecutive day visitor permit pass would work. Mr. Kucharsky indicates he will examine if there is any lock-out period after the seventh day. They also discuss the history of permit pricing in Salem.

Commissioner Casey notes the change in the October visitor permit from \$75 to \$30 and indicates he did not think the initially proposed higher price was outlandish given the circumstances and demand in October. He states, however, that if the other Commissioners prefer \$30, he would be amenable, but would like to hear if any of them think it should be higher. Commissioner Garmendia suggests the October visitor permit be limited to seven consecutive days, except for the \$2 permits for hospice and home health workers/caregivers. Commissioner Swartz notes that it is still unclear whether a seven-day permit can be renewed with the same plate or if there is some kind of lockout period, and therefore would be fine being broader now regarding whether the seven days can be renewed, and crafting limitations once the system capabilities are clear. He also suggests a seven-day hard limit may make more sense for October rather than the year-round visitor permit. Acting Chair Garmendia agrees regarding the seven-day limit. Mr. Kucharsky states he will confirm the limitations and capabilities and discuss what makes sense with the City Solicitor in terms of changes to the ordinance language and other concerns. Mr. Garmendia suggests it could be reasonable to have the ordinance state the prices are to be set by the Department, and Mr. Kucharsky states he can investigate the matter. Acting Chair Garmendia states that he agrees the October fee could be higher, and that it might make sense to increase it in the future, but that \$30 seems like a reasonable rate for the first year. Commissioner Swartz agrees. They note that the final details will likely be hashed out in OLLA.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend to City Council to adopt the proposed rate changes and pricing structure for Resident Permit Parking, with an allowance for the Department to set a future time limit on visitor permits. Commissioner Lt. Tucker seconds the motion. **The vote is four (4) in favor, and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

None.

UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The next meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2023, at 6:00PM.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

October 18, 2023

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Casey motions to approve the minutes from the October 18, 2023, meeting as drafted. 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 Casey, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM.