

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 18, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at 6:30pm, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Present: Traffic and Parking: Acting Commission Chair Jaime Garmendia, 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:** Commissioner Jeff Swartz

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm 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 there are not many updates as staff are currently preoccupied with October in Salem. The shuttles have provided rides thus far to over 9,200 individuals over the last three weekends, and that will continue. Mr. Kucharsky notes a shuttle service will run Monday October 30, as well as Tuesday October 31, out of the high school. Final details are being finalized. He also provides updates on city staffing.

Acknowledgement of Exiting Commission Chair Tanya Shallop

Acting Chair Garmendia thanks Ms. Shallop for her work on the Commission over the years as Chair. Mr. Kucharsky states it has been great working with Ms. Shallop over the years as well.

Ms. Shallop thanks the Commissioners and staff for all their hard work over the years. She hopes the safety and accessibility work will continue and looks forward to what the Commission will accomplish going forward.

Commissioner Casey and Commissioner Lt. Tucker thank Ms. Shallop for all her work and contributions to the City and Commission.

Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation

Acting Chair Garmendia notes this matter relates to the Resident Parking Program, and that staff will discuss recommendations related to removing certain streets from the program, redrawing resident zones, and proposed rate changes for resident and visitor permits.

Mr. Kucharsky discusses some background information, and he notes that the City and staff are investigating updating the system to a license plate based one. Mr. Kucharsky states that a street-by-street utilization analysis was conducted, and this is the first of two presentations. Mr. Kucharsky provides an overview of the resident permit parking program by zone, noting it was first adopted in the 1990's and was based on Ward boundaries. Mr. Kucharsky notes that since then, the Wards have been redistricted and boundaries have changed. Staff seek to redistrict zones to better reflect geographic areas and intuitive boundaries, as well as propose certain streets be removed from the program based on current participation and other factors.

Mr. Kucharsky presents a map of the current parking zones, noting there are a total of 5,017 passes, comprised of 2,334 stickers and 2,683 visitor passes. There are 148 eligible streets, and 3,669 eligible units, with 51 percent of units purchasing passes. Mr. Kucharsky presents additional details per zone and neighborhood, along with maps showing each zone. Zone B has the lowest pass utilization, with only 12 percent of units purchasing passes, and Zone F has the second lowest at 18 percent. The other zones have over 40 or 50 percent of units purchasing passes. Mr. Kucharsky next identifies recommended streets for removal, where 20 percent or fewer of the dwelling units purchase permits. Additional factors considered were the existence of off-street parking, the number of on-street spaces, citations issued over the last four years, and parking utilization. The streets identified for removal are: Ash Street, Buchanan Road, Cleveland Road, Cleveland Road Extension, Fairview Avenue, Fairview Road, Franklin Street, Friend Street, Hanson Street, Harrison Road, Hayes Road, Lafayette Street, Lincoln Road, McKinley Road, Moffatt Road, Monroe Road, Oak Street, Ord Street, Paradise Avenue, Pickman Road, Pierce Avenue, Pierce Road, Preston Road, Putnam Street, Riverway Road, Rosedale Avenue, Station Road, Story Road, Taft Road, Thorndike Street, Waite Street, and Wilfred Terrace. Mr. Kucharsky provides additional details regarding each street, showing low utilization, citation details, and parking availability.

Mr. Kucharsky next discusses recommended rezoning changes, which aim to redraw parking zones to reflect geographic areas and intuitive boundaries. He presents maps of the existing and proposed conditions, noting the goal is to focus on areas where clusters of currently designated streets exist and create opportunities to establish new areas based on feedback received from Councilors and the public over the last few years. Mr. Kucharsky explains that Zone A (mainly in Ward 1, currently split between the Derby neighborhood, the Willows, and the Point), is recommended to be changed so that Derby remains Zone A, the Willows becomes the new Zone B, and the Point becomes part of the new Zone F. The current Zone B is recommended to be removed, except for Raymond Road, which is proposed to move to Zone E. Zone E is currently split into two zones, and the recommendation is to have the Salem State area remain in Zone E and have the remainder

of the Zone be combined with the Point neighborhood to become the new Zone F. The current Zone F is proposed to be removed, except for Foster Street, which would move to Zone H. Zone H is recommended as a new zone that acts as a catch all zone and would include Foster Street, a portion of Cleveland Street across from St. Anne Parish, and a portion of Heritage Drive across from Salem Hospital. Zone C would be split into two zones, the recommendation is to leave the Federal Street area in the zone, and to have the Common neighborhood and Bridge Street Neck area become Zone G. Staff recommend Zone D be better defined based on the current designated residential streets with Essex Street as the northern/western boundary, Jackson Street as the southern boundary, and Margin Street/Jefferson Street as the eastern boundary. Mr. Kucharsky presents a map comparing current resident parking zones with the newly proposed zones.

Commissioner Casey asks about the criteria for removing streets, noting some had utilizations below 20 percent and some a bit above. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the utilization was considered in addition to the other factors identified, which is why some of the streets with over 20 percent were still recommended for removal. Mr. Kucharsky also notes this is a first phase, and it could be an iterative process in terms of finalizing the changes. The Commission discusses additional details regarding what factors should or could be considered in proposing changes, along with other potential utilization percentages. Commissioner Casey also asks why there are zones in the first place, noting that residents in one zone cannot park in another zone. Mr. Kucharsky explains the difficulties of having only one zone with varying density within the city and trying to make a program that allows residents to park within a reasonable distance from their homes.

The Commission and Mr. Kucharsky discussed having an earlier meeting next month to submit something to the City Council before the OLLA meeting on November 9th.

Commissioner Casey notes that there appears to be only one street in Zone F, and he asks if it would make more sense to include it in another zone like Zone D or E. Mr. Kucharsky states staff will look at that as an option.

Next Mr. Kucharsky discusses resident parking rates. The current pricing structure charges \$5 per vehicle for resident permits, \$10 and \$20 for the first and second visitor permits, respectively, and \$10 for university resident permits, with no visitor permits allowed. Active-duty military residents do not pay for a permit. Temporary October resident and single visitor permits are free of charge. There is no limit to the number of registered vehicles for which you can purchase permits. Mr. Kucharsky also outlines what the Passport fees under the current pricing structure would look like. He also notes that to move forward with license-based recognition, the city will need to purchase hardware and equipment upgrades along with licensing and warranties. Next Mr. Kucharsky presents the new proposed pricing structure. Full time residents with vehicles registered in Salem would be charged \$10 per permit, while part-time residents with vehicles registered elsewhere and non-resident property owners would be charged \$20 per permit and would not be eligible for visitor permits. For full-time residents, the first visitor permit would cost \$15, and the second would cost \$25. Temporary October resident permits would still be at no cost; however, staff propose that residents eligible for free resident permits could

request a visitor permit for \$75. Hospice workers, home health aides, etc. would be eligible to purchase permits for \$2, and there would also be permits for non-resident uses located on designated October streets for \$2. He also presents the new rates with the Passport fee structure.

Mr. Garmendia states he would like to hear more about how the October visitor cost was determined. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the intent of the temporary October permit parking is to provide some relief to residents who live in and around the downtown area. He indicates the initial intent was never to offer opportunities for visitor passes with the October permits, as there are other options for visitors to park in the downtown area, but that it was included by Council. The goal is to have people question whether they really need a visitor pass or not. Mr. Kucharsky emphasizes that if a resident needs a permit for a hospice or home health worker, including related caregivers, those would only be \$2. He explains the parking pressures during October, and states this is a way to mitigate it. Commissioner Casey asks if in the past residents have abused the visitor permit system in October to sell to tourists. Mr. Kucharsky states he is unaware of any, but that requests have increased over the years. The Commissioners discuss the issue of October and parking demands broadly and the volume of visitor requests.

Acting Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment.

Kevin McDonald, of 76 Essex Street, introduces himself. Regarding the October fee changes, Mr. McDonald suggests this should be evidence that residents on his side of Essex Street should be eligible for year-round permit parking, in the sense that people across the street can obtain a visitor pass for \$15 but residents on his side would need to pay \$75 to have a visitor.

Margaret Nickerson, of 74 Essex Street, introduces herself and echoes the comments of Mr. McDonald. She contends that \$75 for a visitor pass is outrageous. Ms. Nickerson also expresses concerns about the October permit parking being enforced for certain hours.

Mr. Garmendia also states he is unsure about going from \$0 to \$75 for the October visitor parking, noting it seems steep. He suggests looking at a more balanced pricing scheme that still accounts for program costs elsewhere. Mr. Kucharsky indicates staff will review and see how it could be made more equitable. The Commission also discusses the notion of limiting the number of visitor passes and other ways to adjust the program that might make sense. Commissioner Casey acknowledges the initial sticker shock, but also notes that a visitor to Salem in October paying to park would probably only get two days for \$75, but the permit would be for the whole month. He states he would also even support higher fees for the year-round parking, as the value of parking in the City seems to be high, and the fees are low compared to other cities.

Acting Chair Garmendia suggests continuing the discussion at the next meeting and reviewing a map of the October zones to see who is affected. The other Commissioners agree.

Electric Vehicle Charging Ordinance

Mr. Kucharsky next presents on zero-emission vehicle ordinance language. He explains that the City is close to adding an additional ten electric vehicle (“EV”) charging spaces in various lots in town. Working with colleagues in the Sustainability Department, Mr. Kucharsky and staff instituted a fee to charge of \$0.35 per kilowatt hour at the stations. He adds that they are looking to institute regulations so that only zero-emission vehicles may park in those designated spaces. Mr. Kucharsky presents the relevant enabling legislation, M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 22A, which states, “A city or town acting pursuant to this section with respect to ways within its control, or pursuant to the authority granted by chapter 40A with respect to zoning, may regulate the parking of vehicles by restricting certain areas or requiring that certain areas be restricted for the parking of a zero-emission vehicle. An ordinance, by-law, order, rule, or regulation pursuant to this paragraph may contain a penalty of not more than \$50 and, in a city or town that has accepted section 22D, may provide for the removal of a vehicle pursuant to said section 22D. For the purposes of this section, ‘zero emission vehicle’ shall mean a battery EV, a plug-in hybrid EV, or fuel cell vehicle.” Mr. Kucharsky also presents definitions of terms that would be included in the traffic ordinance. He next presents the proposed ordinance language, which states:

“In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40 S. 22A of the Massachusetts General Laws, zero emission vehicle charging stations shall be reserved for charging or parking by zero emission vehicles. All other parking regulations applicable to the location in which the zero-emission vehicle charging station is situated shall apply to zero-emission vehicles using the station. This shall include, but not be limited to, parking time limits, size restrictions, the payment of any other parking fees, meter fees, garage fees, or other similar fees. The owner of a zero-emission vehicle charging station or zero-emission vehicle charging station equipment may impose fees for the use of a zero-emission vehicle charging station. These fees shall be separate from any parking fees and shall not be considered payment toward those parking fees. Information must be posted identifying voltage and amperage levels and any type of use, fees, or safety information related to the zero-emission vehicle charging station. Zero emission vehicle charging stations must be posted with signage indicating that the space is reserved for electric vehicle charging and/or parking purposes only. Zero-emission vehicle charging stations may also be reserved for zero emission vehicle charging only, and not permit zero emission vehicles to park without charging. Such stations must be posted with signage that clearly states this restriction. Zero-emission vehicles may be parked in any space designated for public parking, subject to the restrictions that apply to any other vehicle.”

Mr. Kucharsky also discusses the penalties and authority to tow and presents a map noting the locations of the spaces.

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

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Casey motions to recommend to Council the proposed order language regarding zero-emission vehicle charging and parking, as amended if needed with consultation with the City Solicitor and City Council. Commissioner Lt. Tucker seconds the motion. **The vote is three (3) 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 1, 2023, at 6:00PM.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

September 13, 2023

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Casey motions to approve the minutes from the September 13, 2023, meeting as drafted. Commissioner Lt. Tucker seconds the motion. **The vote is all in favor, the motion passes.**

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Lt. Tucker and seconded by Commissioner Casey the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM.