

**City of Salem  
Traffic and Parking Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 13, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

**Present: Traffic and Parking:** Commission Chair Tanya Shallop, Commission Vice Chair Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commissioner Brendan Casey, Commissioner Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Assistant Transportation Director Christina Hodge. **Absent:** None

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm 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 provides updates on North Street, noting that two crosswalks were recently installed, along with some sidewalk extensions and concrete work. Mr. Kucharsky also indicates contractors will be completing striping in the following days. At the end of October, City Electrician John Giardi will begin upgrading all the signals on the North Street Corridor so the signal timing will be better coordinated. There will be more vehicle detection cameras installed and the signals will communicate with each other through the new technology, according to Mr. Kucharsky. Chair Shallop asks that if any signals will change to concurrent pedestrian crossing (as opposed to exclusive pedestrian crossings) that the Commission be made aware. Speed, volume, cyclist, and parking data are still being collected for the corridor.

Mr. Kucharsky also explains the City is adding electric vehicle charging stations to parking lots, and that some paving work may have to be delayed until next season. Mr. Kucharsky states that Councilor Morsillo requested through a council order that Traffic and Parking staff evaluate the City's current policy on "Right Turn on Red" at intersections, and as a result, staff inventoried the City's traffic signals, looked at ordinances, and researched crash histories at the intersections. Councilor Morsillo would like to have a follow up joint discussion with OLLA and the Commission.

Mr. Kucharsky indicates the Fort Avenue project is out to bid and waiting on contractors and coordinating with National Grid. The Salem Skipper is in the last year of its contract, and it is also out to bid. Mr. Kucharsky states that the City is looking to expand the services into Danvers and Beverly as part of a Federal Earmark.

October preparation is well underway. October resident parking permits have been mailed, and the October Shuttle is under contract. Mr. Kucharsky also notes efforts to continue working to revamp the Resident Permit Parking program.

Commissioner Swartz asks if shuttle buses will be running on Halloween, and Mr. Kucharsky states they will not, only on weekends.

Commissioner Casey asks if there has been progress on filling open department positions, and Mr. Kucharsky states the City Engineer and the DPS Director have been appointed, City is still looking for a roadway project manager, business manager and an Assistant City Engineer to get backfilled.

Commissioner Garmendia asks what the proposed schedule is for Fort Avenue. Mr. Kucharsky states it will depend on the bids that come in and contractors, but he says that National Grid will want to do gas main work in the middle of the roadway. Mr. Kucharsky states there will be additional drainage work along with the raising of crosswalks and curb resetting, but that the exact timeframe is not known. The hope is to get things complete by Memorial Day. Mr. Kucharsky notes the City was awarded a MassDOT Complete Streets grant for \$500,000 for the project.

### **Chestnut Street**

Chair Shallop explains that at the July meeting, additional parking data was requested to further discuss residents' request to eliminate the current allowance of two-hour non-resident parking on Chestnut Street from Cambridge Street to Summer Street, and to make it year-round resident only parking. Chair Shallop also notes that Councilor Caroline-Watson Felt took the matter to City Council as an ordinance without waiting for the Commission's recommendation. She notes that the matter was supposed to be discussed at last month's meeting but that due to a posting issue, the meeting was cancelled. In the meantime, the City Council made a first passage, and Ms. Shallop suggests they must have felt the matter warranted urgency. Chair Shallop states she is not pleased with how this proceeded as no one has yet reviewed the data or waited for Commission input. She states she reached out to City Councilors to let them know where the Commission was, and indicates she feels insulted when none of them responded. Chair Shallop suggests the Commission still go forward and analyze the data and put forth a recommendation or lack thereof.

Mr. Kucharsky presents the data staff collected. Staff evaluated that there is a total of seven properties abutting this section of Chestnut Street, including nine dwellings. There are six driveways with an estimated eight to twelve off-street spaces and 13 estimated on-street parking spaces. Currently, there are nine resident parking passes and 15 visitor passes

purchased. Enforcement staff kept a record of weekday and weekend parking usage for about two weeks in July, following the July meeting. Parking counts showed a weekly average of 6.2 resident vehicles and 1.8 non-resident vehicles, with 61.5% utilization of the 13 on-street spaces. Mr. Kucharsky adds that there were resident emails discussing non-resident parking but notes the challenges with enforcing two-hour parking. The conclusion is that the majority of those parking there were residents, although there were also no events at Hamilton Hall during the data collection period. Chair Shallop states she does not find that data particularly compelling, and that since discussing, she has passed through the area and has not noticed heavy utilization. Commissioner Swartz agrees with Chair Shallop and provides his own anecdotal example of noticing plenty of parking during a day that there was a wedding at Hamilton Hall on a beautiful day. Commissioner Swartz also notes that the data only looks at a small stretch, and that residents should not have an expectation of always having a spot right in front of their residence if it is public street parking. He suggests streets be treated fairly and equitably, particularly when density is an issue. Commissioner Garmendia adds that this is an area with historic institutions such as Hamilton Hall that have been there longer than the residents. He adds that he moved into a home next to a railroad, and that he was aware of that and the noise and would not now complain about hearing the trains. He agrees this was not an urgent matter worthy of emergency action by City Council. He states the proper approach should have been to review the data and get input from this Commission rather than to act rashly. Chair Shallop also notes this is Chestnut Street, one of the wealthier streets in the City, and that this strikes to the heart of some of the issues of equity the City has been claiming to try to address. She expresses disappointment that residents of mean can simply bypass normal processes and bring things straight to City Council for special consideration without any data or Commission input.

Mr. Kucharsky states that the parking is 2-hour for 24 hours, but in other areas in the City, the 2-hour parking it is limited to certain times. He suggests one recommendation could be to limit the 2-hour parking to a time window. Commissioner Garmendia suggests making such a recommendation and presenting to Council and let them do whatever they feel is appropriate, since the data was collected and looked at. Mr. Kucharsky suggests the Commission could recommend similar hours to what is on Hawthorne Street, which is Monday through Saturday, 8AM to 6PM. Mr. Kucharsky also notes the rest of the street has plentiful parking and driveways. Chair Shallop suggests that if there are plenty of spaces a block or two that also speaks to the lack of urgency of the matter.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Bill Golden of 46 Forrester Street introduces himself and states he is a City Solicitor in Quincy, and he suggests the Commission ask Council to postpone the second passage until a recommendation can be made, and says he hopes Salem City Council would honor that and be respectful of the Commission.

Commissioner Swartz states he would be fine with a modified recommendation mimicking the parameters of Hawthorne Street.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend that the ordinance change to make parking on Chestnut Street from Cambridge Street to Summer Street be 2-hour parking Monday through Saturday 8AM through 6PM. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. **The vote is four (4) in favor, and one (1) opposed, the motion passes.**

### **Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation**

Mr. Kucharsky explains that there was a recent request to make the south-west side of Broadway from Lily Street to Tulip Street resident permit parking, as two residents making the request currently do not have resident permit parking and the rest of the street does. The stretch affected by the proposal is in front of three residents, two of which have off-street parking but one that does not. He presents an aerial map of the area and discusses neighboring parking parameters and conditions. Mr. Kucharsky suggests the proposal would ensure that the three residents have the same parking as the rest of the street, as they are currently not permitted to obtain resident permit passes. Chair Shallop clarifies that it seems like there are two requests, one to allow the three residences to obtain parking passes, and the second is whether to make the small stretch resident permit only or to keep it as unregulated parking. Mr. Kucharsky confirms.

Commissioner Garmendia asks about considerations for timed resident parking like on the southwesterly side of lower Broadway. Mr. Kucharsky states he would just make it 24 hours because it is only three spaces, and there is ample parking on the rest of Broadway. This would provide consistency. The Commission and Mr. Kucharsky discuss parking in the area a bit more and whether there are any enforcement or parking issues, along with roadway striping and potential new signage. Commissioner Casey suggests making separate proposals, as he is not convinced making the spaces resident permit only is appropriate.

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

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Garmendia motions to recommend that the three residences at 86, 88, and 90 Broadway between Lily Street and Tulip Street be permitted to purchase resident permit stickers. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor, and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Lt. Tucker motions to recommend that the south-west side of Broadway from Lily Street to Tulip Street be designated resident permit parking. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. **The vote is four (4) in favor, and one (1) opposed, the motion passes.**

### **Tour Bus Parking**

Mr. Kucharsky explains that the MBTA is conducting bus redesign, and they had put forward removing the stem of the Route 455 bus that goes down Levitt Street, up Congress Street, and then back towards Derby Street to improve overall frequency and reliability. A letter was submitted to Mayor Driscoll at the time asking for ridership information, and the

City stated that if this were to proceed, they would ask that the bus stops on Lafayette Street be improved. They examined other opportunities related to losing these stops, and Mr. Kucharsky states that it made sense to propose two tour bus parking locations. There are ongoing discussions about whether the MBTA changes will be permanent or not, according to Mr. Kucharsky, and therefore, the permanency of these two proposed bus parking locations is in question, but there are also three other locations proposed.

Mr. Kucharsky discusses tour bus parking generally, noting most buses are 39.3 feet to 45 feet long and 8.5 feet wide. Current parking stalls are 40 feet by 10 feet. The proposal consists of four to five year-round spaces and 15 October weekend only spaces. Mr. Kucharsky indicates two of the year-round spaces would be intended for drop off only, and two to three would have a two-hour limit. There would be no time limit on the October weekend spaces, with all spaces in operation 9AM to 6PM on days they are active. Mr. Kucharsky presents aerial photos and information regarding the proposed parking locations. The locations are as follows: Congress Street at Derby Street for year-round drop-off only; Congress Street at Shetland Park for year-round two-hour parking; Forest Avenue at Canal Street for October weekend parking; Jefferson Avenue at Margin Street for October weekend parking; and Canal Street at Hancock Street for October weekend parking.

Commissioner Garmendia suggests the parking on Jefferson Avenue is heavily underutilized and that the spot seems perfect. Comparatively, the Canal Street parking seems to be well utilized according to Mr. Garmendia. Chair Shallop asks about the need, and Commissioner Swartz speaks to the loss of parking on Fort Avenue for buses with the introduction of the multiuse path and the need for more options that are designated downtown. Commissioner Swartz asks if an equivalent number of spaces are being created that were lost. Mr. Kucharsky states he does not have the numbers on hand, but also speaks to the need. The Commission and staff continue to discuss the proposal.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Bill Golden of 46 Forrester Street introduces himself and states he is the owner and co-founder of the Real Pirates Museum in Salem at 285 Derby Street. He states this is an underserved part of the City, and because of the lack of activity, there is other less desirable activity. Mr. Golden states his business depends on bus activity, particularly student buses. Mr. Golden states there were bus parking spaces along Derby Street opposite the Speedway that were removed at some time. He states he would like two year-round spaces against the stone wall across from the Speedway, claiming the nearby businesses are far enough apart that they would not be affected by the buses. Mr. Golden states it would help with businesses in the area, including his own.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend that Council pass the proposed order regarding tour bus parking locations and parameters as presented. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor, and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

## **OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Swartz notes a recent driver fatality. Lt. Tucker states it is still under investigation, but it appears to have been a bad freak accident.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2023, at 6:00PM.

## **MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

**July 12, 2023**

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Garmendia motions to approve the minutes from the July 12, 2023, meeting as amended. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. **The vote is all in favor, the motion passes.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*On a motion duly made by Commissioner Casey and seconded by Commissioner Lt. Tucker the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.*