

PARKING BOARD
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 9, 2015

A meeting of the Salem Parking Board was held on Monday, November 9, 2015 at 4:30 pm. at 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Michael Caggiano, Elysia Alleman, J. P. Story and Rinus Oosthoek. Also present was Assistant Parking Director Alan Sullaway.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Oosthoek made a motion to approve the minutes of September 14, 2015. Ms. Alleman seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion so carried.

2. DISCUSSION AND VOTE: RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF PASSPORT PARKING MOBILE APP IN ALL OFF-STREET CITY SURFACE PARKING LOTS (WHETHER METERS OR KIOSKS) AND GARAGES

Mr. Oosthoek stated that he received a presentation on the merchant opportunities that come with the new system. Merchants can provide credits to customers. An organization, such as PEM, could provide free parking by providing a link.

Mr. Sullaway stated that over 100 people had signed up after the first 3 days and that the service has been easy for the meter reader people.

Mr. Caggiano stated that currently the app is available only for on-street parking.

Mr. Sullaway stated the discussion is to bring the app to the lots and then eventually garages.

Ms. Alleman asked how it will work in the garages and if people will get cell phone coverage.

Mr. Sullaway stated that garages would be the last phase and it is still being worked out. The new equipment will work with the app.

Mr. Oosthoek made a motion to approve the implementation of the Passport mobile app in all off-street city surface parking lots (whether meters or kiosks) and garages. Mr. Story seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion so carried.

Mr. Oosthoek stated that the Chamber and Main Streets will do a promotion in next couple weeks to make people aware of the mobile app.

3. REPORT ON REVENUES

Mr. Sullaway distributed the report on revenues through October, FY16.

Mr. Sullaway stated that he believed the decrease in the South Harbor garage revenue is due to a combination of filling up too early and the 10 spaces lost due to the new reserved space program, as well as the general lower fee. He felt that the decrease in the parking lots and meter revenue is due in part to Federal Street being blocked off for construction, but noted that the workers purchase permits which would be reflected elsewhere.

4. DISCUSSION REGARDING PROPOSED PARKING AND TRAFFIC BOARD

Mr. Caggiano stated that the Board received a copy a letter that the Mayor provided to the City Council dated 10/22/15. The City Council sub-committee is meeting tonight at 6:30 regarding the proposed new Traffic & Parking Commission. The current ordinance describes the Parking Board roll. The new proposal is to have a combined Traffic and Parking Commission, which would eliminate this Parking Board.

Mr. Oosthoek stated that the Parking Board ordinance specifies a representative of the Salem Chamber as a board member and questioned why the new commission is a business owner, rather than the Chamber representative.

Mayor Driscoll joined the meeting at this time.

Mayor Driscoll stated that she is thrilled with the work that Mr. Sullaway is doing in managing the facilities. She stated that she felt the ingredient missing is someone looking at traffic and transportation aspects. She noted that traffic is such a large part of the conversation with new developments. She added that the city should have a major traffic calming initiative. The city does not have the expertise internally. She wants to utilize the work that the Parking Board does, but enhance it. She stated that currently everything regarding traffic goes to the City Council, which can politicize it. Often they rely only on the input of the police traffic division. She stated that more than just parking issues need to be taken care of. The City council will still have veto authority. She noted that a constituent request for a handicap placard can take weeks to get addressed through the current system, when it should probably be administered. She stated that she felt this is an opportunity to professionalize operations.

Mr. Caggiano asked how the Parking Director role will change.

Mayor Driscoll stated that Mr. Sullaway will need to continue to do what he is doing. The position is staying here and the desire is to bring in someone with a transportation background that can focus on traffic side. The Parking Plan is example that the recommended work needs to sit somewhere. She would like to tackle some of these issues internally.

Mr. Caggiano stated that he felt this board lacked authority to do studies and that the role was limited by what was provided in the city ordinance. He stated that some plan recommendations were implemented and he felt things are working better than they did.

Mr. Oosthoek stated that he would like to have person on board to prove the plan is working and also to make tweaks. He added that walking and biking are all part of it.

Mayor Driscoll stated that it needs to involve police, engineering and public services. She noted that the city has a Complete Streets Policy. They need to professionalize the aspect of internal review. She noted that the City Council subcommittee is taking up the issue tonight. She stated that there was some opposition a few years ago with regard to giving up their role of streets and sidewalks. She felt a better way is to bring in an impartial board. She added that a two-thirds vote of the City Council could overturn any commission action.

Mr. Caggiano stated that the role of the Parking Board was for the lots and garages, where the new commission will integrate all aspects. He stated that he saw the Parking Board role as a public forum. He noted that the new Commission would give more opportunity for the public to talk about traffic and issues.

Mr. Oosthoek stated that he will attend the City Council meeting and asked if he should speak.

Mr. Caggiano suggested he report that the Parking Board is in favor. He stated that it was unfortunate that the Parking Board did not have more important issues to discuss and does not have the tools and expertise. He agreed the board's role should be integrated into one that has more responsibility.

Mr. Oosthoek made a motion that the Parking Board recommends the proposal favorably and that he speaks to that regard at the City Council meeting tonight. Mr. Story seconded the motion.

Ms. Alleman stated that she felt it is a great thing and that it will help a lot.

Mr. Story agreed it is a great, common sense, idea. He noted that it will minimize the number of resident seats.

Mayor Driscoll stated that with seven total Commission members, they are trying not to be so large that it is unwieldy and they will have trouble in getting a quorum. She noted that they are adding internal professional review, including Police, Public Services, Fire and Engineering, as well as there will be two non-internal seats. She noted that the Traffic and Parking Director would not be a voting member; they would staff the board. She stated that she is open to a larger board, if it is manageable.

Ms. Allemann stated that she thought it was a good idea. She stated that part of the reason she joined the Parking Board was due to traffic mayhem in the downtown area this past winter. She stated that Salem Common area residents were concerned with traffic issues. She stated that she is glad the new board will have 2 residents.

Mayor Driscoll stated that it will also have a business representative.

The motion was voted upon; all were in favor and the motion so carried.

5. NEW/OLD BUSINESS

There was no new or old business.

6. NEXT MEETING

Mr. Caggiano stated that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 7, 2015.

Mr. Oosthoek noted that he will be out of country on that date.

There being no further business, Mr. Story made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Alleman seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion so carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane A. Guy