

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 3, 2017**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, August 3, 2017 at 6:30pm at 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Commission Chair, Tanya Stepasiuk, Vice Chair Nicholas Downing, and Commissioners Jamie Metsch, Eric Papetti and Lt. Robert Preczewski.

I. CALL OF MEETING

Traffic and Parking Commission Chair, Tanya Stepasiuk called the meeting to order at 6:31pm. All Commissioners were present.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Peras, 375 Lafayette Street, was present as a resident of Naples Road. He has a driveway on the road, but it's difficult to park his 4 cars on it. Currently parking is restricted on Naples Road between 8am and 8pm. He would like to see this changed to resident parking, as most homes has a single driveway.

Joyce Kenney, Lafayette Street, was present to bring to the Commission's attention that people are parking in the bus zone at 285 Lafayette Street near the SSU School of Social Work on both sides. It is typically the same car. She would like to see additional enforcement.

Chris of 20 Endicott Street, stated that Endicott Street has been much better since the one-way traffic trial was put into effect. It is much safer without cars zipping by. Traffic has been reduced and he supports the one-way pattern to be made permanent.

Deb Small, Hancock Street, spoke to ongoing parking problem on upper end of Hancock Street. Cars and trucks from the garage business on the corner are parking in the resident area. Ms. Small requested that the road be made resident only parking.

Bob Femino of Endicott Street, and member of the Greater Endicott Street Neighborhood Association (GESNA) requested that the City of Salem make the one-way trial permanent. Mr. Femino provided a petition with 154 signatures, including 7 businesses, recommending the same. Mr. Femino stated that many feel the quality of life has been improved as a result in the reduced traffic and speeds resulting from the train.

Stacy Norkun, 53 Summer Street, spoke in favor of making Endicott Street one-way permanently. It requires some circling for neighborhood residents when looking for parking, but safety is more important. Ms. Norkum was present to speak in favor of

designating Summer Street from Broad Street to Mt. Vernon as resident only parking. She provided a petition to the Traffic and Parking Commission that was signed by approximately 70 percent of residents residing along this stretch of Summer Street. Many commuters, downtown workers, and visitors park here all day/night. Most homes do not have driveways. Resident parking is needed.

Craig Barcelo, 8 Pope Street, recommends better signage across from memorial. People in the street are almost getting hit when taking pictures.

Brian Schaughnessy, 4 Broad Street, supports making Endicott Street one-way permanently. It is a worthwhile inconvenience. He also positively supports making Summer Street resident-only parking. He stated that former Councilor Sosnowski took away resident parking from the area years ago, and that it should be returned. Additionally, he spoke about bus parking on Holyoke Square, calling it a "stupid idea" and that it should be returned to parking.

Jessie, 24 Norman Street, would like to see the bus parking on Holyoke Square returned to parking for area residents.

Aaron, 7 Naples Road, would like to see resident parking replace the parking restriction from 6am to 8pm. With no street parking, there is nowhere for guests to park. Resident parking with guest passes would alleviate this problem.

Matt Kirkman, 9 Naples Road, and Vice President of the neighborhood association, seconded what Aaron stated. Currently, signs and timing are inconsistent – some 8am to 8pm, others 8am to 6pm. He supports resident parking. This would prevent event parking at Main Stage Theater and beach parking.

Dee Dee, 9 Wisteria Street, supports making Endicott Street one-way permanently. She would also like the Traffic and Parking commission to study ways to improve the intersection of Canal, Mill and Washington. It is dangerous. She also felt parking in front of the future RCG development was dangerous.

David Eppley, Councilor Ward 4, would like the Traffic and Parking Commission to make a recommendation about making Pope Street resident only. His suggestion was to do a trial period to get through October, and then reevaluate.

Arthur Sargent, Councilor-at-Large, spoke in favor of making Endicott Street one-way permanently calling it an "overwhelming success." He recommended adding an entrance into Riley Plaza parking lot off of Mill Street for convenience. He spoke in favor of making Hancock Street resident only to provide neighbors with parking relief from the business. He was in favor of removing bus parking from Holyoke Square and returning to parking. There has been minimal use by tour buses. While he supports resident parking on

Summer Street, he feels opening up Holyoke Square would help to solve this problem as well.

Justin Wittier, 10 River Street, stated that the bus parking hasn't panned out. He would like to see parking returned to the area. Additionally, he suggested that the 30-minute spots, or some of those on Gedney, be changed to 1 or 2-hour parking to support businesses.

Ed Faris, 21 Naples Road, said the Osgood Neighborhood Association does not want any changes to parking. A handicap parking space was approved, but its not necessary since the house has off-street parking.

Jeff Cohen, 12 Hancock Street, asked if larger trucks would be able to park on Canal Street when construction was completed. He also asked if there is an ordinance to stop trucks from parking in residential areas. Traffic and Parking Director, Matt Smith, stated that parking would be allowed on Canal, and that truck parking depends on size and type of truck.

III. TRAFFIC AND PARKING DIRECTOR UPDATE

Traffic and Parking Director, Matt Smith, provided an update on general projects and initiatives.

Salem-Zagster Bike Share

The Zagster-Salem Bike Share recently opened 3 new stations, one sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Salem Willows Station), one by Salem State University (SSU/Central Campus Station) and one by the City of Salem (Congress Street/Point Neighborhood Station). Since launching in mid-May, over 700 rides have been taken, with the average ride over 40 minutes. With 18 more bikes (36 in total), and students at Salem State expected back at the end of August, ridership is anticipated to increase.

Roadway/Crosswalk Restriping

Roadway and crosswalk striping will continue for several weeks. Commissioner Downing asked about current sidewalk design standards, to which Mr. Smith replied continental crosswalks (parallel white lines) are the City standard. Commissioner Papetti asked if a database of existing crosswalks exists. Mr. Smith said he would look into this, but was not aware of one. Mr. Papetti followed up stating his concern about lack of databases or complaints. Mr. Smith stated, SeeClickFix is one database, but there is a need to bring together all issues into one place.

Derby Street Striping

Mr. Smith updated Commission about Derby Street Bike Striping. Weather has delayed the bike lane striping several times, but that is should be completed within the week weather permitting.

Parking Enforcement Staffing

Mr. Smith informed the Commissioners that the Traffic and Parking Department is looking to hire two part-time parking enforcement officers. These officers will focus primarily on residential parking, including evenings when issues are greatest. The goal is to hire at least one prior to October depending on qualifications of candidates.

Bicycle Master Plan Update

Mr. Smith informed the Commissioners that Toole Design, Inc. was selected as the consultant to complete the City's Bicycle Master Plan Update. Toole is a nationally recognized firm known locally for the Cambridge, MA Bicycle Master Plan, and Portsmouth, NH Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The project should kick off in September.

IV. NEW / OLD BUSINESS

One Way Trial: Endicott and Prescott Streets – Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation

Mr. Smith provided an overview of the one-way trial which was recommended by the Traffic and Parking Commission and approved by City Council. The trial was recently extended another 60 days. Traffic count data before and after the trial began showed an initial spike of traffic on Summer Street, which in the following weeks diminished as cars sought other routes. Endicott Street stakeholders stated that it has been very successful and that the streets are safer, less congested and traffic is slower.

Commissioner Downing stated that the data was helpful, and that the initial spike in traffic on Summer Street made sense, as did the decrease that followed. Mr. Smith said this indicated that drivers were now using the arterial and connector streets as they should. Commissioner Stepasiuk was impressed by the process and the data. To be able to see the difference in traffic was impressive, and makes the decision process more clear.

Public Comment:

No public members at the meeting spoke against making the roadways one-way on a permanent basis.

Councilor Lovely requested to speak. He stated that he supports making the roadways one-way permanently and that he would bring this to the City Council for First Passage in September.

Recommendation:

Commissioner Papetti moved to recommend that Endicott Street and Prescott Street be made one way on a permanent basis. Commissioner Downing seconded the motion. 4 voted in favor. 1 absent (Commissioner Metsch).

[Commissioner Metsch joined the meeting at 7:23pm.]

Resident Parking: Hancock Street – Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation

Mr. Smith provided an overview. The request to make the first block of Hancock Street east of Canal Street resident parking only was in response to ongoing issues of the auto garage business on the corner parking vehicles and employees parking on Hancock, thus creating a burden for area residents.

Commissioner Stepasiuk stated that given the current ordinances and procedures, she is fine making recommendations on a piecemeal basis for the time being, but that the residential parking policies needed to be revamped to make them predictable and fair. The Commission should look at this issue more holistically. Commissioner Downing agreed, stating that the City shouldn't be looking at this on a street by street, block by block basis. The City needs to look at this whole issue.

Commissioner, Lt. Preczewski stated that the garage business is a legal business, and that parking is allowed, but that they should not be parking in the neighborhood. He believed that once the Canal Street reconstruction is completed, the issue will likely work itself out, but that completion is a year or more away.

Commissioner Papetti said he would support that the area in front of the business not be resident only parking. Commissioner Metsch echoed that some accommodation for the business and its customers was needed, but also agreed that doing resident parking on a piecemeal basis was and will continue to be difficult. He fears that it just moves the problem to another street or block. However, relief here seems justified.

Commission Chair Stepasiuk asked Mr. Smith to place resident parking policies and procedures on the September agenda.

Public Comment:

Councilor Sargent stated that the business has a large parking lot that they are not using efficiently, and that they made their driveway “larger” by painting the curb. Cars from the garage are moved to the street, which is concerning. Relief is needed.

Recommendation:

Commissioner Papetti moved to recommend to City Council that Hancock Street be made resident only parking between Canal Street and Cabot Street, with the exception of the area fronting the auto business. Commissioner Downing seconded. Approved 5- in favor, 0 opposed.

Resident Parking: Summer Street – Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation

Mr. Smith provided an overview. Residents of Summer Street have requested that a resident only designation be placed on the street between Broad and Mt. Vernon. Key issues included downtown employees, train commuters, and tourists parking here regularly, thus providing no parking in areas where many homes do not have driveways. The spaces are close to downtown and free of restrictions. A petition signed by over 70 percent of residents was provided to the Commission.

Mr. Papetti’s concern was that making areas resident parking removes the ability of on-street spaces near downtown to be used more than once by more than one type of user. This speaks to the need to study the current system more holistically. While inclined to recommend the request, it may be more appropriate to identify areas where only certain times of day are resident only, or other solutions. Mr. Papetti asked why are they requesting it now and why just here? Public comments included that homes along other portions mostly have driveways so not as much of a concern.

Mr. Metsch was concerned that designating one street with resident only may move the issue to the next or to the side streets. He also stated that residents should not necessarily expect to get the space in front of their home, that searching for a space is part of urban living. However, given that other streets connecting to Summer (including, Broad, High Street, etc.), already offer resident parking, this would provide more consistency, so would be open to the recommendation.

Lt. Preczewski feels resident parking is a balancing act. Some want it, some don’t. Mr. Metsch wondered about the voiceless – those on other nearby streets, or even employers, and where employees can park. Mr. Smith stated that Riley Plaza nearby offers monthly passes for \$25. Parking is available in the area.

Commissioner Stepasiuk suggested a friendly amendment, to start the Resident Parking at Endicott Street, which makes more sense given the parking is only on the east side of the street and this creates a natural break.

Recommendation:

Commissioner Downing moved to recommend resident only parking on Summer Street from Endicott Street to Broad Street/Gedney Street. Lt. Preczewski seconded. Approved 5-0.

Resident Parking: Naples Road – Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation

Mr. Smith provided overview. Currently, parking is restricted on Naples Road during certain hours, either 8am-6pm or 8am to 8pm, depending on the location. Recently, a handicap parking space was recommended by the Commission and approved by the City Council. As a result, a request by the Ward Councilor to consider or study resident parking only was made.

Commissioner Stepasiuk suggested the piecemeal nature of the resident only requests was headache inducing. There are many differences of opinion for each case, with no specific criteria. Ms. Stepasiuk stated that she was uncomfortable voting at this time given that no petition by residents was filed showing consensus, and that public comments earlier indicated differences of opinion.

Lt. Preczewski stated that the current ordinance is archaic. There are different times when parking is allowed in one area, and then different times in others. This is all to prevent parking by students at SSU.

Recommendation:

Lt. Preczewski made a motion to leave the parking restrictions as currently written in ordinances, but to make handicap space exempt. Commissioner Downing seconded, but requested a friendly amendment to ask Councilor Turiel to poll neighborhood about resident parking. Amendment accepted. Mr. Papetti seconded. Recommendation approved 5-0.

Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendations: Pope Street Resident Parking; and Pope Street: No Parking

Mr. Smith provided overview. Councilor Eppley requested that the Commission consider recommending resident parking along Pope Street to deter tourists from parking when visiting the new Proctor's Ledge Memorial. This could be permanent or a pilot. Mr. Smith described that public parking is provided at the nearby park, a few hundred yards from the site, but that no parking is located adjacent to it.

Ms. Stepasiuk indicated that she would support a pilot. Mr. Papetti asked which residents would be harmed given that it appears few residences appear to rely on on-street parking.

Councillor Eppley spoke, stating that the neighborhood does not want tourist parking in the neighborhood. The area has never been a tourist destination prior to the memorial. He stated that there is not a shortage of parking for residents currently, and that the number of tourist is unknown, but would like to proactively address, and at least do a pilot through this Halloween season.

Dominick Pangallo, Chief of Staff to Mayor Driscoll, highlighted that once completed the new Community Life Center across Boston Street will provide public parking a short distance away

Ms. Stepasiuk suggested that the discussion should include the next agenda item – No Parking in front of the Proctor’s Ledge Memorial – as they are both related. The Commission agreed. She suggested that regardless of the recommendation, wayfinding signage should be provided directing visitors where to park. Mr. Papetti suggested that handicap parking spots be provided near the memorial regardless of the outcome as well.

Commissioner Metsch felt that given the investment in the memorial, some parking should be provided. In the interest of the neighborhood, he felt adding a few spaces would be adequate and fair, with the remaining going to nearby public parking. He also didn’t see the need to prohibit parking in front of the memorial.

Commissioner Downing made a motion to provide one handicap parking space next to the Proctor’s Ledge Memorial, and one 15-minute space. Discussion followed with Commissioner Papetti stated it would be difficult to enforce; whereas Commissioner Metsch felt it would help to move people along. Lt. Preczewski stated that tourists are coming and was in favor of the handicap parking space, along with wayfinding to the public parking lot. Commissioner Stepasiuk said people will park here, and the ability to enforce is needed.

Providing parking on Pope adjacent to Walgreens was discussed to provide some spaces near the memorial in a way that did not directly impact the residences on the street or block the memorial itself from view. 30-minute parking was suggested by Commissioner Stepasiuk; however, Mr. Papetti felt this would be difficult to enforce and require significant resources. He felt it should be simple, allow parking or don’t. Commissioner Metsch was concerned that no time restriction here would allow employees at nearby businesses to park all day. The rest of the Commission felt that this was not an issue.

Recommendation:

Commissioner Downing revised his motion as follows: Motion to recommend making the eastern side of Pope Street resident parking only from Proctor Street to the Walgreens lot line with the exception of a handicap space adjacent to the memorial. Public parking should be provided along Pope Street abutting Walgreens with no time limit. Commissioner Papetti seconded. Recommendation approved 5-0.

Handicap Parking: 3 Laurel Street – Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation

Mr. Smith provided an overview. The resident at 3 Laurel Street, a 91-year old with a handicap parking pass, has requested for a handicap space to be provided.

Lt. Preczewski stated his support upon confirmation of the handicap pass, and sufficient room for the space.

Recommendation:

Commissioner Papetti moved to recommend a handicap parking space be provided at 3 Laurel Street. Commissioner Downing seconded the motion. Approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Stop Sign: North Street Ramp and North Street

Mr. Smith provided an overview. As part of the downtown bicycle lane striping that will occur in Spring 2017, the Traffic and Parking Commission is asked to consider replacing the yield sign at this location to a stop sign. Sight lines are poor at this location, and a stop sign would potentially increase safety.

Commissioner Stepasiuk was opposed, and felt that the yield sign was adequate. Commissioner Papetti agreed, stating the intersection already gets backed up, thus the yield sign serves as a stop sign when needed. Lt. Preczewski suggested improved striping as part of the plan may achieve the desired results to improve awareness of bicycles, etc. Finally, Commissioner Papetti was also concerned about signage that is at odds with roadway design - this intersection is designed as a yield.

Recommendation:

Commissioner Papetti moved to table the issue and send to the bike master plan consultant for later consideration. Commissioner Metsch seconded. Recommendation approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Ward 2 Polling Location: Church Street East Parking

The Traffic and Parking Commission was asked to make a recommendation to designate one row of parking in the Church Street East lot as voter only parking on September 12th and November 7th, 2017.

Commissioner Stepasiuk was inclined to reserve the entire lot. Mr. Downing concurred and suggested adding signage stating so.

Recommendation:

Commissioner Downing made a motion to designate the entire Church Street East lot as voter only parking during polling hours. Commissioner Metsch seconded. Recommendation approved 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Smart Signal Project / Concurrent Timing

Moved to September meeting.

Museum Place and South Harbor Garages Automated Technology, Utilization and Rates

Moved to September meeting.

Gedney Street / Holyoke Square / Margin Street Update

Mr. Smith provided an overview of the topic. There are many different parking zones in the area including multiple time restricted parking designations, bus only parking on Holyoke Square, open parking, monthly pass parking, etc. Parking counts – over two dozen – have been completed and parking is typically available in all zones since enforcement increased. This includes plentiful monthly parking in Riley Plaza for workers, metered spots in Riley Plaza, and in the unmetered timed zones. Unregulated parking areas were generally full at all times – often with the same cars. Additionally, findings showed an overabundance of short-term parking that only supports the Post Office and market, but not businesses that require longer stays (e.g. hair salon and other downtown businesses). Related to bus parking, the Traffic and Parking Commission had previously recommended in the spring that tour bus parking on Holyoke Square continue so that there was time to study the issue. Mr. Smith stated that although some buses have used the spaces, use was very low with fewer than 10 buses observed over several months.

Mr. Smith stated that any recommendation from this evening would result in the Traffic and Parking Department reaching out directly to the area businesses to confirm their support. Mr. Smith said there are two options recommended. One would keep all parking as it is, the other would bring greater consistency throughout the area.

Ms. Stepasiuk asked what meters would achieve? Mr. Smith said meters would make enforcement more predictable and effective. Unmetered spaces require considerable enforcement staff time, particularly shorter-term spaces (e.g. 30-minute, 15-minute spaces), as staff must remain in the area to check spots at least twice.

Mr. Metsch stated he felt that the Commission has enough information to make a decision. Mr. Downing agreed, as did Mr. Papetti.

Lt. Preczewski asked to be reminded how this issue came up months earlier. Mr. Smith highlighted that initially this came to the TPC from some business owners because cars were parking in 30-minute spaces all day. Then, as enforcement increased, and more parking became available, some businesses felt the 30-minute restriction only benefited some area businesses, but not those whose clients require more than half an hour. Mr. Smith stated that because the area is unmetered, enforcement is difficult and time consuming. Commissioner Metsch added that the parking study several years back recommended that the area be metered at longer time periods, but that it was quickly removed due to petitions and never given the chance. He felt that this abrupt change, despite the study, has likely led to many of the issues before the Commission. Lt. Preczewski stated that for timed areas, metered parking is easier to enforce.

Mr. Metsch made a motion to work off of Option B. This would maintain the first 7 30-minute spaces along the north side of Gedney Street adjacent to the Post Office. The remainder of Gedney would become two-hour metered parking, Monday – Friday, at \$.75 per hour to maintain consistency with nearby rates. The two resident only spaces would remain. Recommended 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Ms. Stepasiuk returned to bus parking. She stated that she never liked the parking, and would remove them. Commissioner Stepasiuk felt that the bus spaces should be removed based on the utilization information provided. Commissioner Downing said it would not be helpful to stop right before the busiest month. Commissioner Metsch stated that while he felt that the spaces would ultimately be removed or made seasonal only for October, he stated that it doesn't make sense to remove them now, only to bring them back again in October - it would be confusing to remove only to return them for a month. Additionally, keeping them through October would provide a full year of study and data for a final recommendation. Mr. Papetti stated that he does not think that the spots should remain bus parking year-round, rather seasonal is more appropriate. Lt. Preczewski stated that the Commission has been studying for 9 months and that we could remove the bus restriction but return it in just for October. Mr. Downing said that we should keep through October and then revisit immediately in November. Mr. Metsch said we also don't know about September. Ms. Stepasiuk added that keeping it through October would be fine since removing it through Council wouldn't occur until almost October anyway given that there is no Council meeting until mid-September.

Councillor Sargent spoke in favor of removing the bus only spaces. He stated that they are not used by buses and should return as parking for residents and business customers. He estimated that six thousand possible hours of parking have been removed from the neighborhood, and no buses have used them. He reminded the Commission that if nothing happened by June, they said they would change. Ms. Stepasiuk stated the Commission said it would revisit, and that she was sympathetic to the issue. Councillor Sargent said to consider the Norman Street residents who have limited parking options, and they are begging for relief.

Mr. Papetti stated that the counts provided by Mr. Smith show that there is not a parking crisis in the area, so maintaining it through October is fine. Mr. Smith added that the decision to place the bus parking here was part of a larger effort to distribute the bus parking to multiple areas in downtown, given all was formerly concentrated in one area near Congress and Derby Street.

Recommendation:

Mr. Metsch made a motion to continue the study through October, and then place as first topic on November agenda for final recommendation. Mr. Downing seconded. Recommended 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Ms. Stepasiuk recommended tabling the remaining agenda items until September. Mr. Papetti moved to table them. Recommended 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Stepasiuk motioned to adjourn. Mr. Downing seconded. Approved 5-0.