**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, January 3, 2019**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, January 3, 2019 at 6:30pm at 98 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Commission Chair Tanya Stepasiuk, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Robin Seidel, and Commissioner Lt. David Tucker. Director David Kucharsky was also present.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm. In addition to Commission members and staff, three council members (Stephen Dibble, Christine Madore and Arthur Sargent) were in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no comments from the public.

**TRAFFIC AND PARKING DIRECTOR UPDATE**

* Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP)

Director Kucharsky gave his update which included an overview of the projects listed on the LTIP. City was recently notified that the grant to update the city’s ADA Transition plan had been provisionally approved. Vice-Chair Papetti asked that the Commission on Disabilities and Traffic & Parking Commission be consulted as the scope of work is developed.

Director Kucharsky noted that staff is in the process of identifying 8 infrastructure recommendations from the Bike Master Plan which will receive planning & design services from Toole Design. Canal Street reconstruction, which included Phase 1 of the bike path is almost near completion. Phase II is expected to begin construction this spring. Funds for the Szetela Lane multi-use path extensions are available and Engineering is proceeding with the development of full design plans. Vice-Chair Papetti asked for some additional information about the current concept.

Engineering has requested a meeting with MassDOT to discuss the status of several projects under their purview including the Downtown bike and pedestrian upgrades, Bridge St reconstruction from Flint to Washington, North St Bridge maintenance work and planned improvements on Route 107. Director Kucharsky hopes to have updates to provide to the Commission at the next meeting.

Director Kucharsky also indicated that contracts to repair the elevators at the Museum Place Garage went out last month and the Building Department is confirming a start date to perform the work. In addition, an RFQ is being developed in order to conduct a maintenance study for the South Harbor Garage. Vice-Chair Papetti requested an update on the maintenance plan for the Museum Place Garage suggesting staff review comments submitted by residents and past Commission meeting minutes to understand some of the history. Director Kucharsky noted he would look into this further and provide an update at a later date.

* General Departmental Updates

Commissioner Seidel asked how traffic and parking conditions been since the dispensary opened and if ATG will continue to require customers to make reservations. Commissioner Tucker indicated that overall it has gone well. The company is looking to increase their capacity but not certain if they will continue with the reservation system which has been working very well. Vice-Chair Papetti noted that as part of the opening the City allowed parking on the east bound side of Harmony Grove where a buffered bike lane exists. He requested that moving forward there should be more discussion about allowing parking in bike lanes as it is prohibited under State law.

**NEW / OLD BUSINESS**

* Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendations

Director Kucharsky noted he had not received any requests but did note that recently as part of a host community agreement with CDX Analytics (marijuana testing company), approximately 7 on street parking spaces along the west side of Holyoke Square from Norman Street to Gedney Street will be returned to the City for public use. Chair Stepasiuk requested staff bring a recommendation for discussion to the next meeting.

Commissioner Tucker indicated he had received a request to have a concave mirror placed at the intersection of Parlee and Valley to improve sight lines. There was uncertainty as to whether this type of request had ever been submitted before and what type of authorization/approvals were required. Staff would investigate further before bringing a recommendation to the Commission.

* Traffic and Parking Commission Proposed Regulations

Chair Stepasiuk provided some background behind the development of the proposed regulations which are intended to streamline the City’s ability to respond to resident requests as they relate to traffic and parking issues. The goal is for the Commission to have the authority to administer specific parking and traffic regulations that do not require further approval by the city council. To date the proposed regulations have been submitted twice to the Council but has not moved beyond the Ordinances, Licenses and Legal Affairs (OLLA) Committee. The intent of tonight’s discussion is to determine if the proposed regulations should be submitted again, as is, or edit the proposal before resubmitting. Commissioner Tucker wants to ensure that whatever is proposed can be legally enforced by the Police.

Councilmember Sargent stated he believes the intent was to have the Commission recommend specific changes that could be made to the ordinance that would also include some regulations. The regulations would help establish the rules for how decisions are made. Does not believe the Commission should take over specific sections of the ordinance.

Councilmember Madore suggested that perhaps the way the proposed ordinance changes and regulations was being proposed was giving councilmembers misgivings about moving forward. She asked if it would be possible to identify a few specific ordinances (e.g. Handicap Parking) where regulations could be proposed that would give the Commission the authority to evaluate and administer decisions, with staff support, in order to streamline the city’s ability to respond to certain requests.

Councilmember Dibble noted that there was no desire from the council to move this forward as is. He shared is belief that deleting ordinances could open the City up for liability and supported making minor adjustments to the ordinance as long as it was deemed legal by the City Solicitor.

Vice-Chair Papetti suggested further research be done to identify how other municipalities have approached this in order to ensure we are on solid legal ground. Commissioner Seidel offered to reach out to communities to see how it works in other municipalities.

Chair Stepasiuk wants to ensure there is a way forward which delegates how certain ordinances are administered. The knowledge and expertise the commission members bring with them should be utilized in order to achieve the best outcomes as possible for the residents. Chair Stepasiuk encouraged councilmembers who were present to attend future meetings in order to work with the commission on developing recommendations and asked if it would be possible to have the City Solicitor present for a future working session. Director Kucharsky will check with the Solicitor about her availability as well as provide copies of the last submission and other related materials to the Commission.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was discussed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Vice-Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Seidel, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:02pm.