

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 15, 2021**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 6:00pm, pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place.

Present: Commission Chair Tanya Shallop, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Robin Seidel, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commission Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, Assistant Director Nick Downing, and Traffic and Parking Staff Russell Findley **Absent:** None

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm by Chair Shallop. Chair Shallop explains how members of the public may participate during the remote meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Christine Derby of 73 Tremont Street introduces herself. Ms. Derby references the stop sign in town that has been streamed on Twitch with more than 250 followers. Ms. Derby expresses concern regarding the lack of compliance with the stop sign, as well as the stalking behavior going on in the chat of the stream. She indicates people are commenting on the time neighbors walk their dogs, what time people leave and return home. Ms. Derby states she has lived in the neighborhood for 40 years, and suggests a triangle shaped island in front of School and Tremont to encourage better compliance. She contends the stop sign needs to be moved so people can see it better, and that the lines on the road need to be repainted, as when they were freshly painted people stopped more.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Salem Willows Proposed Parking Regulations

Mr. Findley presents a map of the area and Mr. Kucharsky explains that in January the Commission was presented with information regarding utilization counts of parking at the Willows from Summer 2019. He notes that staff also examined existing ordinances and signage. Following the meeting, Commissioner Seidel volunteered to work with Bob Callahan from the Parks and Recreation Commission and Tricia O'Brien from the Recreation Department to discuss the parking regulation changes, new rates, and identify what is considered park land and what is considered City rights of way (which would need City Council approval for changes). Mr. Kucharsky identifies the areas on the map considered park land, including the new lot adjacent to the tennis courts, and those considered City rights of way. Parks and Recreation will review and adopt the proposals

that affect the areas that are park land, and the Traffic and Parking Commissioner will propose changes regarding the other areas to City Council. Once all proposals are finalized and approved signage will be developed and installed.

Vice Chair Papetti expresses frustration regarding the split between park land and City rights of way and the corresponding split in approval and jurisdiction. Mr. Papetti asks if the City solicitor has provided further clarification, noting that the ordinance that created the Traffic and Parking Commission instructs they approve all public parking and off street parking. Mr. Kucharsky indicates that the metered spaces at the Willows were historically approved by Parks and Recreation, but that he can look into the matter further. Chair Shallop acknowledges Vice Chair Papetti's concern and asks Mr. Kucharsky to check with the City solicitor.

Commissioner Seidel notes that Parks and Recreation does not need to make recommendations to City Council to make these times of changes, while the changes under Traffic and Parking Commission jurisdiction require recommendations to City Council. She adds that while this does not answer Mr. Papetti's questions, one implication is that the process and length of time for changes is shorter for those under Parks and Recreation jurisdiction. Mr. Kucharsky affirms Ms. Seidel's comments and states he will talk to the City Solicitor to obtain further clarification on the matter. Vice Chair Papetti expresses concern that the Commission does not have much regulatory power, and would not want to give away what authority it has and set precedent with respect to this issue. Mr. Papetti opines that the ordinance seems clear that the Traffic and Parking Commission would have jurisdiction and Parks and Recreation no longer would pursuant to the ordinance. Mr. Kucharsky again states he will look into the matter further and check in with the City Solicitor.

Mr. Kucharsky returns to the proposal, noting the price for the existing parking lot will be \$1 per hour from 8AM to 8PM seven days a week with a two-hour time limit. Mr. Kucharsky identifies some 15 minute parking as well. With respect to Fort Avenue, the main change is making the resident side of the street resident permit parking, and having the park side of the street be unregulated free parking. In the case of Memorial Drive, the park side would be unregulated free parking and the aside adjacent to Fort Lee would be no parking anytime. Mr. Kucharsky states that no parking zones will be formalized with proper signage. Mr. Kucharsky indicates Restaurant Row will also cost \$1 an hour to park, with a two-hour parking limit. He also identifies drop off and loading areas nearby, as well as motorcycle parking. The new lot and the perpendicular spaces along Restaurant Row will cost \$0.50 an hour, and have a four-hour limit. Mr. Kucharsky adds that Parks and Recreation has proposed increasing the sticker fee and allowing purchasers to have access to Winter Island, Forest River, the marina, and the golf course. The lot adjacent to Fort Lee will be long term free parking on weekends. Mr. Kucharsky explains there will be new striping along Restaurant Row to better delineate spaces.

Commissioner Swartz asks about the reasoning behind the \$0.50 per hour parking in the new lot, while parking in other areas is twice the price. Mr. Kucharsky explains it was based on utilization counts, which found that the stretch along Restaurant Row had the

highest utilization, similar to the existing metered lot. He adds that the \$1 per hour spaces offer closer access to the beach and businesses.

Vice Chair Papetti asks if there is any downside to allowing longer than four-hour parking in the \$0.50 per hour lot. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the time limit was examined and debated, but that ultimately the four hours was settled upon, with the intent to observe and change if necessary. As that lot is under the Parks and Recreation jurisdiction, such a change could occur quickly. Commissioner Seidel further explains that the four-hour limit was intended to encourage turnover, and that there will be signage directing drivers to longer term parking if necessary.

Mr. Kucharsky presents the drafted ordinance language. Much of the language repeals items dating back to the 1950's, with some additional cleanup. The order language indicates enforcement will be from April 1 to October 31.

Chair Shallop asks if parking kiosks will be utilized, and Mr. Kucharsky states that for now they will use parking apps and resident permit stickers, in addition to the existing meters.

Commissioner Swartz asks if the metered parking on Restaurant Row would be paid via an app or actual meters. Mr. Kucharsky explains those spaces will have meters with the option to pay via the app as well. Mr. Swartz asks if the motorcycle spaces would have meters, and Mr. Kucharsky confirms they will.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Chris Meen of 50 Osgood Street introduces himself. Mr. Meen asks if there will be anything stopping cars from parking in the designated motorcycle parking spaces. Mr. Kucharsky states those spaces will be striped differently, and that the details are still being worked out. Mr. Meen states that many people park in that area to offload for picnics and then just leave their car there. Mr. Kucharsky notes there will be four spaces added specifically for drop-offs and pick-ups. The hope is the new spaces and additional enforcement will result in better compliance going forward.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Seidel motions to recommend the proposed ordinance and order language as drafted. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed. **The motion passes.**

Traffic Calming at Tremont, Grove, and School Streets

Vice Chair Papetti explains that this intersection has been the subject of considerable media attention, even nationally, as the intersection and habitual non-compliance of drivers has been streamed on Twitch. Mr. Papetti suggests cameras could be set up at many City intersections and it would capture similar behavior and non-compliance for stop signs, and that this intersection specifically is long overdue for some attention. Vice Chair Papetti

specifically references the area at Grove and Tremont, but notes that the whole stretch along Tremont is problematic. As there has been limited compliance, Mr. Papetti requests that the area be put in the queue for Neighborhood Traffic Calming redesign, with the intent of making the series of intersections safe and welcoming. Mr. Papetti notes the issue is not just the stop sign itself, but notes the whole area needs to be studied. He adds that some stop signs may not even be needed, and suggests more crosswalks or pedestrian infrastructure could be beneficial.

Commissioner Swartz states that nothing can be done about the streaming issue, other than making it undesirable to stream via better compliance. Commissioner Swartz notes that the stream is focused on School currently, but previously it was focused on Grove. Mr. Swartz asks if anyone knows when the location of the stream was changed. Commission Lt. Tucker states it was changed about two weeks ago, perhaps out of respect for the neighbors that were previously in view.

Chair Shallop asks if Mr. Kucharsky or Lt. Tucker have any additional background information to provide.

Mr. Kucharsky explains that pursuant to the request staff began collecting data, putting out devices on the street to capture volumes. Average daily volumes in both directions on Tremont Street are over 7,000 vehicles, while on Grove Street the average is just over 2,700 vehicles. Mr. Kucharsky suggests that those kinds of volumes might be a reason for some of the non-compliance at the stop sign. Mr. Kucharsky also notes that he has been in discussions with Councilor Riccardi regarding potential truck restrictions to help with traffic calming. Staff may bring on a consultant to conduct a traffic study and examine the various intersections. Mr. Kucharsky adds that he is unaware what kind of justification was used at the time the stop sign in question was installed.

Commission Lt. Tucker discusses additional enforcement efforts in light of the attention the intersection has received, and notes he is also unaware of any analysis conducted prior to the stop sign being installed. Lt. Tucker expresses concern regarding the dangers of the intersection.

Vice Chair Papetti suggests this is a chance to educate people on the need for robust budgets for traffic calming and these types of projects. Mr. Papetti encourages staff to think big with future budget requests, and states the City can afford to spend \$1 million or more on traffic calming.

Commissioner Swartz asks if anyone knows when a study was last performed at this intersection. Mr. Kucharsky states he is not aware of any study conducted for this intersection, but that he can look into it and see if Planning is aware of anything. Vice Chair Papetti states he looked at the ordinance and that this stop sign was installed in 1960, so there were likely no studies performed.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Christine Derby of 73 Tremont Street asks if in the interim there is a possibility of placing an orange bucket with a stop sign in the center of School Street at the top of Tremont, instead of having the stop sign on the right. Mr. Kucharsky indicates he will look into it and work with Lt. Tucker to see if such placement is feasible.

Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation

Essex Street 30 Minute Parking

Mr. Kucharsky explains that this is a repeal of an existing 30-minute parking space at 60 Essex Street. Mr. Findley presents a map of the area. Mr. Kucharsky indicates that when Engineering was redoing the sidewalks in the area last year, there was some confusion regarding why this time-limited space existed. The building in front of the space used to be a business, but is now a residence. Councilor Madore requested that staff look into it. Mr. Findley presents a street view of the area as well as the proposed ordinance language. Mr. Kucharsky explains that if approved by the Commission, the recommendation can go to City Council, and once Council approves the sign can be removed. Chair Shallop agrees that there appears to be no reason for the time restriction to remain.

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

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend the proposed ordinance language regarding the removal of a 30-minute parking spot on Essex Street as drafted. Commissioner Papetti 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

None.

UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The next meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2021 at 6:00PM.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

March 18, 2021

Motion and Vote: Commission Seidel motions to approve the March 18, 2021 meeting minutes of the Traffic and Parking Commission. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. The vote is all in favor. **The motion passes.**

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Seidel the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:47 PM.