**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, December 19, 2019**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 6:30pm at 98 Washington Street, Salem. **Present:** Commission Chair Tanya Shallop, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Todd Waller, Commissioner Robin Seidel, Commission Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Assistant Director Nick Downing. **Absent:** None.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm by Chair Shallop.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

**TRAFFIC AND PARKING DIRECTOR UPDATE**

**Effort to Install New, Consistent, Legible Signage in all City Parking Lots**

Mr. Kucharsky explains this project is an effort to make it clear and concise to visitors how/when they should be paying when entering parking lots, as well as other information. He lists the Church Street lots, Crombie lot (Jerry’s lot), Old Salem lot, and anywhere with parking kiosks as targeted locations. Mr. Kucharsky notes there will be similar messaging at the kiosks and on the Passport application.

Mr. Kucharsky adds that the messaging will reflect the council ordinance change from last year that implemented visitor parking on Sundays from noon to 6:00 PM at any lot with kiosks. The signage is being sent to pertinent departments to ensure messaging is accurate, and Mr. Kucharsky states he is working with DPS to determine strategic locations. The hope is to fabricate the signs once the language is finalized and put them out in January or February.

Vice Chair Papetti asks for an example of what the signs might look like, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates they will have red lettering, white background, and a red border. Mr. Kucharsky states the font will be similar to existing signage.

Mr. Downing explains that one current problem in the lots is that the main signage with pertinent information is intended to be read as a pedestrian on foot, but are placed at the lot entrances 12 feet up. Mr. Downing asserts additional signs have been added over the years, creating a mish-mash currently. The plan is to condense all the relevant information and make language clear, as some individuals do not know you must pay upon arrival, as there used to be a booth in some lots where you paid when you exited.

Commissioner Waller asks if there will be signage at the kiosks, and both Mr. Kucharsky and Mr. Downing confirm there will. Mr. Kucharsky also notes they have been considering relocating the signs that contain maps to be more visible. Mr. Waller also mentions there is no “one way” sign at the exit of the Church Street East lot, which would be helpful.

**Enforcement of Sidewalk Parking and Other Violations**

Mr. Kucharsky indicates he and Mr. Downing met with Lt. Tucker as well as Alan Sullaway, who oversees enforcement staff, to discuss what enforcement should be looking for when they are out. Mr. Kucharsky states he would like to develop a list of when infractions are occurring, where the repeat offenders are, and to start providing warnings prior to ticketing on cards that explain important parking information with cites to city ordinances. After that, the plan is to begin issuing citations.

Chair Shallop asserts, and Commissioner Seidel confirms, that when discussed previously, one idea was to focus enforcement in North Salem first. She asks if this is still considered the best path forward, perhaps as a pilot. The Chair concedes she does not reside in the area so is not aware of the “hot spots”, but is willing to gather information. Mr. Kucharsky states this is a reasonable approach, and indicates he also would like to understand why people are committing violations, as well as provide education so that the issue can be addressed rather than just issuing several citations repeatedly. Commissioner Seidel asks if there will be an evaluation when the warning or citation is given, or if there will be an email on the warning/citation allowing violators to respond with information. Mr. Kucharsky indicates they are focusing more on the education aspect through enforcement staff, but it is something to consider.

Vice Chair Papetti asks for a discussion on ways to coordinate between dispatchers and traffic, as well as how enforcement will occur. Mr. Kucharsky explains that staff are notified of violation areas and send out enforcement, but that it can sometimes be situation dependent. Sometimes police are notified, sometimes enforcement staff, depending on the circumstances and jurisdiction. Mr. Kucharsky specifies that notifications can come in via phone call, email, or through the See/Click/Fix application. Mr. Papetti notes that the area at Buffum Street has improved.

Mr. Kucharsky reminds the commission that it would be helpful if they compiled a list of troublesome locations and times of days they witness infractions.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

**Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation:**

**Hawthorne Boulevard**

Mr. Kucharskynotes this is the third time discussing this topic. He indicates he completed a diagnostic of all the parking ordinances that have been introduced over the last few decades in the area, including ones that were not properly rescinded. Mr. Kucharsky reviews the proposal from the previous Traffic and Parking Commission meetings with a map, noting areas designated as resident permit parking with an allowance for two-hour visitor parking during the Monday through Saturday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Mr. Kucharsky explains there will also be four-hour metered parking on the segment of “Little Hawthorne” Boulevard near Derby Street. Mr. Kucharsky also mentions introducing three resident permit parking spots on Charter St. Finally, Mr. Kucharsky notes there will be a service zone from 8:00AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Saturday located behind the resident parking in front of the dry cleaners. Notices were sent to abutters regarding the proposal but none have commented.

Mr. Kucharsky indicates the proposal would need a Commission recommendation to then go to City Council for discussion. He believes the proposal will help with enforcement and also maximize the available real estate with respect to parking.

Chair Shallop asks about the current status of two and four hour enforcement, and Mr. Kucharsky states timing and enforcement has occurred in targeted areas, and that while somewhat effective temporarily, the issue usually returns. Mr. Kucharsky concedes there is not much enforcement in the Hawthorne Boulevard area currently, but hopes the proposal will provide clarity for residents and enforcement staff.

Mr. Downing adds that the proposed service zone will be helpful for businesses on Hawthorne and the section of Essex Street between Hawthorne and New Liberty Street. He states the timing captures the needs of businesses, and that the space would be de-facto visitor parking outside those hours.

Commissioner Waller asks about length and Mr. Downing indicates it is 30 feet, noting that most service zones in city ordinances are designated as such. Mr. Downing adds there is a big of “wiggle” room, as there is also a “No Parking Here to Corner” section/sign, and that the 30 feet begins after that section. Mr. Waller asks how it will be enforced. Mr. Downing explains that city ordinances contain a definition for service zones, including requirements such as actively engaging in loading/unloading, time limits, etc. He adds it would be specifically for commercial vehicles.

Vice Chair Papetti asks if 30 feet is long enough for business that will utilize the space, noting that 30 feet does not seem adequate for a tractor trailer. Mr. Downing states the area businesses did not comment on the proposal, but that 30 feet was chosen as it was a common designation for service zones in existing ordinances. He also reiterates there will be some extra space from the “No Parking Here to Corner” sign.

There is a brief discussion about various lengths of delivery trucks. Mr. Kucharsky offers to do more measuring to see what makes sense and what the implications might be of going beyond 30 feet, perhaps to 40 feet.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Councilor McCarthy asks if Father Murphy spoke to anyone about changing the driveway entrance with respect to meters, and Mr. Kucharsky says he did not. Mr. McCarthy explains that the school is going to be redeveloped, and states it is important to get the signage in prior to that. He also notes that they are seeking a change in their curb cut.

Councilor McCarthy next asks if the service zone will extend in front of the dry cleaners and the antique shop, and Mr. Downing confirms it will extend in front of both to the first driveway.

**Motion and Vote:** *Vice Chair Papetti moves to accept the proposed recommendations with an amendment to investigate making the service zone larger if a need is present to support larger vehicles. Commissioner Seidel seconds the motion.* ***The vote is unanimous with all in favor. The motion passes.***

**Fort Ave. Resident Parking**

Councilor McCarthy explains that some residents approached him and Mr. Kucharsky regarding a proposal to make a stretch of spots on Fort Avenue resident sticker parking, as the installation of bike lanes eliminated some parking spots.

Mr. Kucharsky confirms that some parking was eliminated with the installation of the bi-directional bike lane on Fort Avenue, and that some residents requested resident parking for the spaces in front of their homes to prevent large vehicles, especially busses, from parking in those spots. He specifically notes that in October this can be a bit of an issue. Mr. Kucharsky adds that he is working with DPS to designate areas where bus parking begins on Fort Avenue farther north.

Chair Shallop notes the request seems odd given that the residences appear to have large driveways, and Commissioner Seidel agrees.

Mr. Kucharsky reminds everyone that it would be resident permit parking only, and would not allow for visitor passes. Chair Shallop suggests the spots may not be utilized much if the residents have large driveways. Vice Chair Papetti states he has no issue with the proposal in general, and questions who, other than residents, would even need to park in these spots. Ms. Seidel and Ms. Shallop ask who will be parking in these spots of the residents have driveways and there will be no visitor passes allowed. Mr. Kucharsky indicates the moratorium on visitor passes is system wide in order to get a better handle on the process, but explains that this proposal is primarily about ensuring only regular vehicles park in the spots rather than busses.

Commissioner Seidel proposes signage that indicates no commercial vehicle parking is allowed, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates that type of signage is not currently available.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Councilor McCarthy speaks to the parking issues in this area with tour busses, particularly during October and special events. He acknowledges the work Mr. Kucharsky performed counting cars, doing research on the patterns in the area, and speaking with abutters.

Chair Shallop indicates she is sympathetic to people with no driveways or parking options, explaining her hesitance with the instant proposal is due to the abutters all having driveways large enough for two or three cars.

Mr. McCarthy acknowledges the existence of the driveways but restates that many parking spaces were eliminated with the creation of the double bike lane, and that those spots were all previously used. Mr. McCarthy also notes it is only approximately ten spaces in front of five houses.

*Joe Connolly at 33 Fort Avenue* introduces himself as one of the homeowners seeking the proposal. Mr. Connolly contends the homes utilize the street parking as most are families with older kids that have cars. He indicates that while October is problematic, the Willows and Salem in general have events all the time and that issues can arise year round. Mr. Connolly maintains he also has an elderly family member who requires nursing staff daily who need a place to park. He adds that there was not an issue with parking prior to the spots being eliminated with the bike lanes being introduced.

Chair Shallop clarifies that caregivers and staff could not park in the resident permit parking spots, and Mr. Downing suggests the residents can park in the permitted spots and the caregiver could park in the driveway. Mr. Connolly exclaims that would be problematic, as he was under the impression that the homes would get one or two guest passes.

Chair Shallop asks for more discussion about the direction of city-wide resident parking. Mr. Kucharsky explains this area would allow other Derby Street residents to park in the spots legally because they occupy the same zone. Chair Shallop and Mr. Downing confirm this would be an extension of the Derby zone, which also includes the Willows. Mr. Kucharsky indicates there are future plans to designate the Willows and Derby zones as separate.

Mr. Downing suggests another long term consideration for the area is that we do not know what the other Footprint development will be. He indicates this is a large unknown, and that there will be some level of neighborhood impact. Commissioner Seidel asks if there is any information for the development or time frame, and Mr. Downing says it is years out.

Chair Shallop asks about the visitor pass moratorium. Mr. Kucharsky explains that widespread abuses were seen with the visitor pasess, and that it was nearly impossible to enforce in its current state. Vice Chair Papetti adds that visitor passes are not being issued because the current system is so broken that it would not make sense to even designate resident permit parking. Chair Shallop suggests the issue be looked into soon.

Mr. Kucharsky and Mr. Papetti discuss enforcement and the need for residents to purchase passes if spots are to be designated resident permit only.

Vice Chair Papetti asks how many of the five houses the affected have reached out, and Councilor McCarthy says all five. Mr. Kucharsky confirms.

Mr. Connolly states the lack of guest or visitor passes is an issue for him as he cannot have guests or caregivers receiving tickets. Chair Shallop asks what would prevent guests or caregivers from parking in the driveway if the residents parked in the permitted spots. Mr. Connolly states that caregivers could not park in the driveway if he or other family members were parked in the driveway. He goes on to state that he does not understand the guest pass issue, and recalls that they used to be available. Mr. Connolly acknowledges there may be enforcement issues, but states that is not his caregiver’s problem.

Chair Shallop discusses the issue of parking spot “creep” where cars get pushed to park in other areas and the issue gets moved somewhere else. She asks how holistic this approach is and what the impacts may be in nearby areas. Mr. Kucharsky does not think there will be much impact as there is more parking available north on Fort Avenue and near the school and fire house. He notes there is a good amount of unregulated parking that is not heavily utilized, and that this proposal was an attempt to work with the neighbors that had their conditions changed in order to provide them with assurances that they would have parking in front of their homes.

Chair Shallop states that the residents need to understand that if this is designated as resident parking people from the Derby Street zone will be able to park there. Councilor McCarthy notes they can do that now.

Councilor McCarthy states he understands there has been moratorium on guest passes, but asks when it will be re-evaluated. He acknowledges that there have been more passes provided than spaces exist. Mr. McCarthy notes that Somerville has a guest pass system utilizing a big laminated piece of paper that indicates which address the guest parking is associated with, and suggests this as a way to deal with the issue of cars parking in any zone and abusing the pass system. Mr. McCarthy discusses additional grievances and examples and asks about threshold requirements for making changes.

Chair Shallop suggests that Councilor McCarthy, as well as anyone else in the room, encourage the new City Council to pass the rules and regulations the Commission submitted so that the Commission can make these types of decisions based on all the work and research conducted by staff. She indicates a scheme has been developed that will hopefully work better than previously, but notes they have no authority currently as it must go through City Council. Chair Shallop asserts that if the rules and regulations are passed, the work can be done by the Commission. She adds that staff has done a lot of work on the issue of parking and guest passes, researching available technologies and working out pricing schemes. Regarding the question of threshold, Chair Shallop notes the language used previously is “substantial support” which allows for some discretion.

Councilor McCarthy claims this is the first stretch of resident parking he has proposed by in 12 years. He continues to defend the proposal in question.

Commissioner Seidel asks about limiting resident passes per household and whether that has been considered for registered cars. Mr. Kucharsky states a limit of two passes per household has been included in the short term recommendations to the Council.

Commissioner Seidel asks about the proposal to only give out one pass for homes with a driveway. Mr. Downing indicates that was not part of the short term recommendations.

Vice Chair Papetti specifies he does not mind going along with this proposal, because although the preference is to come up with a systematic plan with real criteria, until council acts on the rules and regulations proposed we must rely on this piecemeal approach. Mr. Papetti notes, however, he is not in favor of issuing any guest or visitor passes until the current system is fixed. Vice Chair Papetti summarizes that he would support the designation of these spaces on Fort Avenue and a continuance of the moratorium on guest passes.

Commissioner Lt. Tucker acknowledges this area can be an issue during Halloween and during the various events in the area. Lt. Tucker clarifies that the visitor passes will come back eventually, just not in the current form as the system is so antiquated it is difficult to track and prone to abuse.

*Sharon Connelly at 33 Fort Avenue* introduces herself and expresses her concerns about her mother’s caregiver. Ms. Connelly asks if the caregiver could place a sign in the car window identifying her as a caregiver at 33 Fort Avenue, or if enforcement would ticket the caregiver for not having a parking permit. She indicates that while parking is not currently problematic in the area due to it being winter, as soon as the weather gets nicer she foresees it being an issue.

Chair Shallop asks if Ms. Connelly could park in the permitted spot, allowing the caregiver to park in the driveway. Ms. Connelly expresses she likes to park in her driveway and that the caregiver comes in the morning while she is still home. Ms. Connelly suggests that Chair Shallop must not have a driveway, and characterizes her as “anti-driveway”.

Vice Chair Papetti suggests putting the proposal on hold pending further outreach from neighbors. Mr. Papetti expresses concern that if this is approved without guest passes, residents may reconsider. Commissioner Waller agrees, indicating that without the option of visitor/guess passes residents are not likely to get what they want. Chair Shallop states she is fine with tabling the matter. Mr. Papetti reassures the issue will be reviewed at the next meeting following a few weeks of outreach and that the proposal is not being denied. Commissioner Waller questions whether the other neighbors fully understand the scenario, including the visitor pass moratorium. Mr. Kucharsky indicates his discussions with affected residents were regarding resident parking, and notes there was no direct mention of visitor passes.

Chair Shallop asks Councilor McCarthy if he has a sense of whether the five households would support the proposal in its current form in the absence of visitor/guest passes. Mr. McCarthy says he cannot speak for the residents, but opines that the area needs to be restricted somehow, either now with the potential for visitor passes later or in the future. Councilor McCarthy discusses various events that occur in the area that cause issues with parking.

Chair Shallop asks if it is appropriate to table the matter to find more information, and Mr. McCarthy agrees, noting this issue is not urgent at this time. Commissioner Seidel worries about passing the resident permit designation only to have the residents and their guests be negatively impacted. The Chair notes it will be an item on the next meeting’s agenda.

**2020 Transportation Projects**

Mr. Kucharsky indicates he wants to give the Commission a general sense of projects in the upcoming year. He notes some is related to the traffic calming measures that could not be executed in 2019, (e.g. the Pickering and Chestnut intersection), tactical work at the Bridge and Winter intersection, as well as further work with planning and engineering to look into protected bike lanes for North Street and Lafayette Street.

Mr. Kucharsky suggests there will be efforts to move forward with the parking benefit district, as well as to look into resident permit parking.

Mr. Kucharsky notes the department has started compiling all the traffic calming requests that have come in through the program itself, but also through email, phone calls, and the See/Click/Fix application. He adds that the requests have been identified by ward on large maps. Mr. Kucharsky says the goal is to work with engineering to see how the projects fit in with their pavement management program to see how the work can be incorporated. He also notes they will continue to look to see if any physical curbs need to be moved, or if work will be tactical.

Mr. Kucharsky indicates this is an opportunity for the Commission to comment and see if there are other areas on which to focus.

Chair Shallop states she would like to work on some Commission policy goals at the next meeting. She notes she is in favor of traffic calming measures and resident permit parking, but states she is lukewarm regarding the parking benefit district, remarking that there is only one other town in the state currently that has implemented one. Chair Shallop expresses a preference for a five-year capital improvement plan before considering the parking benefit district. She next asks if a five-year capital improvement plan currently exists, specifically if the budget director asks for a spreadsheet with a five-year CIP. Mr. Kucharsky affirms that is the case, and states he will share it with the Commission. Commissioners Seidel and Waller agree that seeing the five-year plan would be helpful. Chair Shallop states it would be a good first step to move toward a parking benefit district by determining capital spending needs and then justifying segregating funds.

Commissioner Seidel expresses an interest in using the money from the garage to pay for the garage, and says it would be helpful to know the revenue the lots and garages are generating compared to the work planned for them to see if it can fund its own maintenance and repairs.

Mr. Downing provides some details of the parking benefits district, focusing on the robust data collection and analysis associated with it. He also notes some of the challenges, but notes ultimately we will know what funds are raised in the garages, streets, and lots, respectively.

Mr. Kucharsky clarifies that the Mayor has requested to move forward with the parking benefit district, specifically to start the analysis to look at utilization, as well as the change in revenues from when rates went up. Mr. Kucharsky states he may seek a facilitator to put together a stakeholder group.

Chair Shallop believes it is premature but understands it is the right idea. Mr. Kucharsky states the Council has yet to adopt the sections from the Municipal Modernization Act, so there is still much work to be done. He notes the importance of getting stakeholders and councilors to understand what the parking benefit district is, and if successful, determine how funds are allocated.

Commissioner Seidel asks if a parking benefit district can be designated for a set period of time, such as five years. Ms. Seidel notes the large price tag associated with the garage repairs, and expresses a desire for the system to be equitable.

Vice Chair Papetti asks about the parking benefit district, and if predictable revenue streams above what is needed to pay for structures can be used to increase bonding capacity, or to have a dedicated amount of bonding capacity just for transportation projects. Mr. Downing explains that because it all goes into the general fund it has an impact on the city’s bonding capacity, but is not specific to transportation.

Vice Chair Papetti expresses skepticism regarding dedicated revenue streams, primarily noting the propensity of City Council to reduce discretionary funding once a segregated revenue stream exists, forcing departments to “live within their means”. Commissioner Seidel agrees, and again suggests the potential for a time limit. Vice Chair Papetti uses the MBTA as an example, citing the 1 cent tax used to provide funds which may not be adequate.

Mr. Downing states he believes a parking benefit district should be used for less capital intensive maintenance, such as snow removal, lighting, etc. Mr. Downing asserts the amount that could be segregated into a parking benefit district would not cover the expensive garage work. He adds that big capital expenditure projects that benefit the entire city should come from the general fund.

Chair Shallop questions why we would pursue a parking benefit district if it is merely for snow removal and street lighting, as those sound like general city expenses. Mr. Downing identifies one benefit of having a dedicated team of people focusing on those tasks.

Commissioner Seidel asks which other town has a parking benefit district. Mr. Kucharsky notes it may be Lexington. There is a brief additional discussion of the parking benefit district.

Vice Chair Papetti and Mr. Kucharsky discuss the ADA transition plan and the importance of a to-do list as the work wraps up. Mr. Papetti notes much of the work seemed relatively inexpensive, and Mr. Kucharsky confirms much of the work was signage related. Mr. Kucharsky also indicates the possibility addressing some of the items through grant opportunities from the Massachusetts Offices of Disability (“MOD”). Chair Shallop states this should be part of the budget or CIP and that we should not wait for grants to get the work done.

Chair Shallop states she will be calling a joint meeting towards end of February with the TPC, Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the Commission on Disability to discuss snow removal and accessibility in the city. Chair Shallop hopes the meeting will be constructive and wishes to discuss policies and best practices based on what has and has not worked in the past. She encourages people to take pictures, use See/Click/Fix, and talk to neighbors to get useful information that could be helpful. Eventually, Chair Shallop hopes to put forward some policy recommendations at the end of the process, and notes that all the chairs are interested.

Vice Chair Papetti wonders if a three committee meeting could be too large to be productive. Chair Shallop says this is something she would like the city to pay attention to, and that having many people who care about the issue, including councilors, can help bring focus to snow removal and accessibility.

Commissioner Seidel asks if the Commission needs to accept public comment, and Chair Shallop says they do not. There is a discussion about an appropriate date for the meeting, potentially having it replace the normal February TPC meeting, and Mr. Downing notes the February meeting would take place on the 20th.

Vice Chair Papetti notes the highest priority project beyond infrastructure is developing the scope of work for the ADA transition plan for public rights of way. He explains it is a citywide obligation, and maintains this department is in the best position to lead the process until DPS demonstrates their own initiative or interest. Mr. Kucharsky says engineering reached out to BETA to get a scope of what that would entail, and that there will be a meeting to discuss mirroring the work that was done for roadways. He adds there will be a system wide evaluation of the sidewalk network.

Vice Chair Papetti thanks Mr. Kucharsky for the update, but emphasizes the importance of the public process in the transition plan, whereby city and elected officials can understand the scope of issues. He agrees the engineering study is the first step, but hopes the process can stay on track.

Vice Chair Papetti states he loved the proposal that Toole put forward for a bike lane transition on Mill Street. He notes it appeared to be high impact but relatively inexpensive.

Mr. Kucharsky and Mr. Downing agree. Mr. Downing discusses the project a bit more, as well as plans for the Washington Street corridor and how to get bikes from the bike path to the new bike lanes.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

Mr. Downing indicates the third Thursday in January would be the 16th.

Chair Shallop and Commissioner Seidel confirm the date works for them. Vice Chair Papetti notes he will be out of town.

There is a brief discussion about what items will go on the agenda, including parking on Washington Street that abuts Lafayette Park, the Fort Avenue parking request, and 2020 policy priorities.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

All commissioners review the minutes for the November 7th and November 21st TPC meetings. There are no proposed edits or corrections.

*On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Waller, the Traffic and Parking Commission votes to approve the November 7th and November 21st meeting minutes.* ***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 8:06PM.*

The following documents were used at the meeting and can be viewed by making a request to the Traffic & Parking Department:

* Fort Ave Resident Sticker Parking (map)
* Hawthorne Boulevard and Charter Street Proposal (map)
* Proposed Ordinance Change – Fort Ave
* Proposed Ordinance Change – Hawthorne Boulevard