**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, September 19, 2019**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, September 19th, 2019 at 6:30pm at 98 Washington Street, Salem. **Present:** Commission Chair Tanya Stepasiuk, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Robin Seidel, Commissioner Todd Waller, Assistant Director Nick Downing, and Mobility Coordinator Russell Findley.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*No members of the public provided comment at the beginning of the meeting.*

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS.**

* Pope Street and Proctor Street Reversal Feasibility

VHB presented their feasibility study of reversing the direction of traffic on Pope and Proctor streets. In 2017 the city asked VHB to look at Boston Streets for complete streets work. The study looked at traffic signals and traffic patterns from Essex Street to the Peabody line. This is the first step in the public process.

Vice-Chair Eric Papetti asked about the MassWorks project on Bridge Street and if there was any thought on where the funding source would come from for the intersection of Bridge and Boston Streets. DPS Director, David Knowlton, stated that the geometric and signal improvements at the intersection of Bridge and Boston would be included as part of the overall Boston Street project with the exception of updating the existing intersection signals to incorporate pedestrian phases.

VHB analyzed the crash data and found two main crash cluster locations at Boston/Bridge and Boston/Essex. There was not a consistent pattern of crashes through the intersections. However, a significant amount of crashes have also occurred at the intersection of Pope and Boston Streets. This led to looking at potentially reversing the direction on Pope and Proctor Streets.

VHB started by doing a signal analysis with the initial suggestion of a light at Pope Street. This would improve LOS of both the intersections of Essex/Boston and Pope/Boston. However, adding the signal would increase the que times at both intersections.

VHB then looked at reversing the direction of Pope and Proctor. This would not require a signal at Pope, which helps reduce the short term and long term costs. VHB also believes that it would make the intersection safer.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked if switching direction could result in more amenities being added along Boston Street? Assistant Director Downing mentioned that there have been complaints of speeding on both Pope and Proctor. He believes that because of the topography and width of the streets, reversing the direction would help reduce speeding on both streets.

Commissioner Seidel worries that more people will use the cut through of Pope to Highland because you eliminate a difficult left turn from Pope to Boston. Assistant Director Downing stated that there could be a potential pilot to test it out. However, it would be very difficult because of the signal at Essex and Bridge could not be reversed.

Commission Chair Stepasiuk asked if there was any outreach to residents or councillors. Assistant Director Downing said that the neighborhood outreach has not started. The presentation from VHB was the first public demonstration of the project. The area in question is the end point of three wards, wards 2,4, and 6. The councillors were given the agenda.

Commission Chair Stepasiuk also asked about the timeline of the project. Since the project would require an ordinance change, there needs to be an understanding of the time it would take to get an ordinance approved so it would not hold up construction.

* Enforcement Policy & Education Campaign

Assistant Director Downing indicated that staff are gathering data, developing what an educational campaign looks like, and identifying areas to target. From January to August 2019, 21,965 parking violations were issued. The vast majority are for expired meter parking. Areas outside of downtown are largely focused on resident permit parking. Areas like North Salem have little enforcement because there are no meters and very little resident parking.

A general discussion occurred on how best to implement the enforcement of cars parking on sidewalks and other violations outside of metered and resident parking. The idea was to start off with a sign campaign to educate all drivers, and then move to warnings, eventually to actual tickets. The education materials would say that it is unsafe for pedestrians; it costs the city more because the sidewalks were not designed to hold cars, and it’s illegal.

Commission Chair Stepasiuk questioned if there was an expected drop in revenue by sending enforcement officers outside of metered areas. Assistant Director Downing stated that we would need help from the police department. Initially it makes sense to start in North Salem. When the enforcement officers are out they would focus on all violations, not just cars on sidewalks.

* October Orders Update

City Council passed the following orders:

* Using the Universal Steel Lot for charity parking
* Church Street West lot will be available for residents on weekends in October for no charge.
* October Resident Parking was passed in part, but also sent to OLLA for potentially adding streets

At the time of the Traffic & Parking Commission meeting, Director Kucharsky was meeting with OLLA to discuss resident parking as well as some other October related issues.

* Resident Sticker Parking Changes

Assistant Director Downing introduced a proposal from Ward 2 Councillor Madore to use Jerry’s Lot (Crombie St) for overnight residential parking. There are several issues with this proposal. Downtown residents do not fit into a residential zone. The paid lot ends at 6pm. It is probably used by business and residents at night, but the lot has not been analyzed. Commission Chair Stepasiuk does not like putting in new restraints without staff to enforce it. Commissioner Waller stated that customers from the businesses near the lot use it after 6pm. Assistant Director Downing said that Traffic & Parking Department staff do not recommend adding resident parking to the Crombie Street lot at this time.

**OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

* Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Striping

The striping project has finally begun downtown. City has heard some feedback from residents who do not like the green paint that is being used to designate the bike lanes. The paint is intended to clearly delineate the lanes to improve the safety of the cyclists. There were also other concerns about who was funding the work. The striping and signage is being funded through a federal program intended to address safety issues.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked that some work is done to patch the area between Federal and Essex Street prior to the final painting.

* Other Business

Commission Chair Stepasiuk stated that one of the questions in the Rainbow Times interviews with the at-large councillors was about the parking regulations that are currently sitting in OLLA. A number of the councillors did not know anything about the regulations. The committee needs to do some education and outreach to various councillors.

**MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

The next meeting is scheduled for the 17th of October.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

No drafts available to approve.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Commission Chair Stepasiuk and seconded by Vice Chair Papetti, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:36PM.

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

* VHB Presentation – Reversing Pope and Proctor Traffic Flows