

**City of Salem  
Traffic and Parking Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, July 12, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

**Present: Traffic and Parking:** Commission Chair Tanya Shallop, Commission Vice Chair Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commissioner Brendan Casey, Commissioner Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Assistant Transportation Director Christina Hodge. **Absent:** None

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm by Chair Shallop. Ms. Shallop explains how members of the public may participate during the remote meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

**Director's Update**

Mr. Kucharsky provides updates on the North Street project, noting there was recent work completed to remove ghost lines (double yellow lines that were milled out during restriping of the roadway), along with other improvements. The City is moving forward with contractors to install two new crosswalks in the corridor at Dearborn Street and at Cressey Avenue. Mr. Kucharsky also indicates the City is contracting work for signal timing and will be upgrading all signals to smart signals, including pedestrian signals.

With respect to the Traffic Calming Program, Mr. Kucharsky explains that the installation on Raymond Road will begin soon, and work is being scheduled for Federal Street and Mall Street. There will be an upcoming meeting with Councilor McClain and the Mayor to discuss Valley Street.

Mr. Kucharsky also indicates there is work being done at the Crombie lot, as well as the Salem Green and Church Street parking lots, to introduce electric charging stations, resulting in an additional 10 charging stations downtown. The parking lots will also have repaving work and infrastructure improvements.

## **Chestnut Street**

Mr. Kucharsky explains that he received an email from a resident on Chestnut Street, Mr. Raye, as well as Councilor Watson-Felt requesting that the Commission consider eliminating the current allowance of two-hour non-resident parking on Chestnut Street from Cambridge Street to Summer Street and to make it year-round resident only parking. Mr. Raye submitted a petition signed by other residents on Chestnut Street in support of the proposal.

Chair Shallop asks how this street compares to other streets in the vicinity and asks Commissioner Lt. Tucker for context and if he has seen issues in the area.

Mr. Kucharsky explains that the entirety of Chestnut Street is regulated this way currently, with resident permit parking, but allowing for two-hour non-resident parking. He indicates part of the reason for this type of parking is the existence of Hamilton Hall nearby, as well as the proximity of the Library and other institutions that are open to those who may not have resident permits for the street. Mr. Kucharsky also notes there have been some complaints and concerns raised by some residents on this stretch of Chestnut Street, particularly during October, as there are challenges to enforcing the two-hour non-resident parking restriction. This street has been asked to have only resident permit parking in October and will fall under the same enforcement as other streets.

Commissioner Lt. Tucker states that since 2007, the Salem Police have only logged 15 resident sticker complaints for Chestnut Street, and since 2018, there have only been 14 other general parking complaints. Lt. Tucker confirms that parking on Chestnut Street is regulated the way it is to allow for public to park for Hamilton Hall events and to visit the library. Commissioner Lt. Tucker notes there is a good amount of off-street parking on Chestnut Street as well, and that while not all residences have off-street parking, a good amount do have off-street parking available.

Chair Shallop states there is always a tradeoff, noting that if the street becomes only resident permit parking, people's guests, home healthcare workers, and others will not be able to park on the street without a guest pass, in addition to those visiting the library and Hamilton Hall. Chair Shallop states she would like to hear more from the residents about the issue, but that she would also need to know more and see more data before moving forward with any changes.

Vice Chair Garmendia echoes the Chair Shallop's comments and states that Hamilton Hall is a venue that requires public access as it does not have a parking area.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Ward 2 Councilor Watson-Felt, of 2 Beacon Street, introduces herself and expresses adamant support for the request. Councilor Watson-Felt notes that Lt. Tucker's assessment indicates that residents must call when they witness violations so that they get logged. She notes that since becoming a Councilor, she has received 14 calls that involved parking

complaints on Chestnut Street. Councilor Watson-Felt states this stretch, which is just a short distance from Cambridge Street to Summer Street, mirrors the same pressures we see on the similar stretch of Federal Street, with people going downtown and parking for longer than two hours. She states that she supports and loves Hamilton Hall and agrees that they need access, but also indicates that most events held there last longer than two hours, and their guests end up parking longer than the allowed two hours, if they park on the street. Councilor Watson-Felt discusses the difficulties some residents have had trying to find parking coming home from work, and states she had a discussion with the neighborhood about a year ago and they decided to give it a year to see how enforcement worked, but that the issues have continued. She reiterates her support for the request.

Andy Lippman, of 28 Chestnut Street, introduces himself as the president of the Chestnut Street Neighborhood Association and a member of the Hamilton Hall board, but he clarifies that he is speaking on his own behalf. Mr. Lippman states he sympathizes with the problem that exists for residents at 2 Chestnut Street, where there are two units and no off-street parking or other obvious alternatives if spaces are not available. Mr. Lippman claims he appreciates the efforts and changes made for October, and he makes a suggestion that two accessible parking spaces be put in front of Hamilton Hall. He also notes another institution in the area that benefits from the two-hour parking is the Phillips Museum.

William Raye, of 2 Chestnut Street, introduces himself and states he has struggled with parking since he moved here from Boston, where he suggests it was easier to park. Mr. Raye indicates he has been working with Councilor Watson-Felt trying to change the two-hour parking out front and that he has been documenting and taking pictures, including some photos of cars blocking the driveway at 8 Chestnut Street. Mr. Raye also notes there are other homes on the block that do not have parking, not just his building, and he claims that two parking spaces on the street were lost due to the installation of the adjacent roundabout. Mr. Raye explains the challenges he has experienced with Hamilton Hall guests staying longer than two hours, and he contends that he has called the police, but no one ever comes out to deal with the issue. Mr. Raye also states that a parking enforcement staff person told him that they receive phone calls in advance of Hamilton Hall events, and they are asked to stay away from the area. Mr. Raye indicates that all his neighbors have signed a petition in support.

James Sullivan, of 374 Essex Street, introduces himself as the Treasurer of Hamilton Hall and states he is speaking on their behalf. Mr. Sullivan expresses sympathy with the residents on the block from Summer Street to Cambridge Street, stating that they also experience the October surge and understand the impact their events have. Mr. Sullivan states he is unaware of anyone asking enforcement to stay away, but contends they advise all wedding guests of the parking situation and the rules of the neighborhood. He indicates understands the issue and would like to work with residents on a solution. Mr. Sullivan explains that one concern he has with the proposal is that there are staff that work at Hamilton Hall who are not local residents and would not be able to park, and he asks if they would be treated as a resident and have guest passes for staff. He also indicates he welcomes the accessible parking recommendation.

Julianne McClain, of 6 Chestnut Street, introduces herself and states the suggestions for accessible parking and treating Hamilton Hall as a resident with guest passes seems reasonable. Ms. McClain states the issue with the two-hour parking is the lack of enforcement, acknowledging that the City is understaffed and may not have the time or people to properly enforce. She notes that in October with the resident permit parking only there are fewer issues.

Janice Lebel, of 1 Chestnut Street, introduces herself and echoes the comments made by Councilor Watson-Felt and other residents. Ms. Lebel indicates the issue about data is relevant, and notes the responsibility is on residents to call in violations, acknowledging that she has not called in the past in the interest of being a good neighbor. She suggests the data shared is under-representative, as the parking issue can be horrific.

William Raye reiterates that everyone signed a petition, and states that his upstairs neighbor is in her 80's and sometimes cannot find a spot to park. He states he is sick of wedding guests and tourists and hopes a change is made.

Chair Shallop states she would like to set expectations and notes that the matter is on the agenda for discussion but that a decision will not be made tonight, as this is the type of thing where more data would be collected and further discussion before any changes. She states she would like to hear from other Commissioners.

Commissioner Garmendia clarifies that with the accessible spaces, anyone can park there, and the spaces are not tied to a particular resident or business. He also asks if a commercial spot or loading zone would be relevant in the area, as Hamilton Hall has catered events. Mr. Garmendia states he hears that two-hour parking is not working and acknowledges that enforcement can be challenging with staffing difficulties.

Commissioner Lt. Tucker discusses enforcement response times and notes that sometimes other matters take priority unless things are slow. Regarding resident sticker parking issues, he states the priority can sometimes be medium to low depending on other factors. A completely blocked driveway would have a higher priority, according to Lt. Tucker. He explains the City is not currently equipped to proactively go through the streets and fine all resident sticker violations or proactively come and check all two-hour zones, and that they rely on residents and complaints. Lt. Tucker states he is frustrated to hear there have been instances where a call was made and no one showed up at all, and states they need to know about those kinds of issues sooner to deal with them. He states that Salem Police may not come right away, but that someone should come out in response to a call eventually, barring occasional instances where they forget. Commissioner Lt. Tucker states that Hamilton Hall is a special venue that has been here for a while, and this is not something the neighborhood has had to adapt to but has always been here. Lt. Tucker acknowledges that Hamilton Hall sometimes does call and asks for light enforcement because of a wedding or other event. He adds that while individuals may not always find parking right in front of their house, which is not guaranteed by the resident permit sticker program, as it is mostly about keeping parking pressures down. He states sometimes residents may

have to park a few doors down. Lt. Tucker notes he is in support of the accessible parking suggestion.

Chair Shallop reminds everyone that the petition is just for a segment of Chestnut Street, the block from Cambridge to Summer closest to downtown near the roundabout. Commissioner Garmendia clarifies this would be for both sides, and that the street is one way. He states he would love additional data points, including how many residents have off-street parking.

Commissioner Casey states he has concerns that other streets would make similar requests worries about the precedent this could set, as the neighborhood has other attractions aside from Hamilton Hall that the public benefit from accessing. Commissioner Casey suggests that the issue appears to be the difficulty and lack of enforcement. He states he is unconvinced someone who would disobey a two-hour parking restriction would obey a resident perming parking restriction if they do not believe there will be enforcement. Regarding the accessible spots, Mr. Casey states he believes they may need to be ADA compliant, rather than just a matter of putting down striping and a sign, but that should be examined.

Mr. Kucharsky clarifies that for on-street accessible spaces there are no current standards for the City, and that under existing ordinance there are two types that can be created: a more permanent space, and petitions for temporary accessible on-street spaces. He also notes that there is a service zone for Hamilton Hall on Cambridge Street.

Chair Shallop asks if meters would ever be considered for the area that doubles as resident permit parking, in the interest of a solution while acknowledging the enforcement issues.

Commissioner Swartz indicates he has seen a surge in the area during weddings more than daytime events, and he suggests one solution may be requiring police details for events, making enforcement something the event holder is responsible for. He acknowledges the issue is one of enforcement. Commissioner Swartz states that while he likes the idea of accessible spaces, the second floor of Hamilton Hall is not accessible. He states he is hesitant on the proposal, and curious about alternative options.

Chair Shallop states she would also like to see what other streets in a two-block radius look like and what their parking options look like. Mr. Kucharsky presents a map and discusses.

Commissioner Swartz states he is curious if Hamilton Hall has comments on his suggestion. Lt. Tucker states that acquiring a police detail for an event can sometimes be a condition of the licensing board, but that some things have gotten more relaxed with alcohol service. The venue could decide if they want to require it or not. Chair Shallop also suggests that Hamilton Hall should stop calling to ask for easing up on enforcement. Commissioner Lt. Tucker notes sometimes they get calls like that from private residents for funerals as well. He reiterates the lack of complaints he has received about the area.

Mr. Raye restates that two spaces were lost with the introduction of the roundabout, and that the parking situation was already tight before that. He states the issue is both a lack of parking and a lack of enforcement. While October is worse, he states the issues are not limited to October. He indicates he has sent many photos to Councilor Watson-Felt if the Commission needs data. Mr. Raye states he has lived here since 2014 and is at his wits end.

Andy Lippman suggests that requiring details at events would be burdensome, and he states the essence of the complaint is more quotidian than related to events. Mr. Lippman contends the essence of the issue is the congestion at the bottom of the street and interlopers that park and stay all day.

Councilor Watson-Felt agrees with Mr. Lippman that this is not just about Hamilton Hall events but the increase in year-round tourism as well. Councilor Watson-Felt states the pressures are felt year-round now. While she states the idea of a police detail is interesting, she agrees with Mr. Lippman that it may be a hard sell for Hamilton Hall to their guests. She suggests enforcement may be easier if the parking situation is more black and white, either allowed for non-residents or not at all. Councilor Watson-Felt makes a plea to the Commission to act, noting this will require two votes at Council and the next Council meeting is in September.

Chair Shallop states that based on the conversations and Lt. Tucker's comments about always seeing available parking on Chestnut Street overall, she would like to have staff conduct spot checks and investigate availability as we are clearly in tourist season now. She states she cannot support a recommendation without further information, but the other Commissioners may make a motion if they so desire.

### **Reserved Garage Parking**

Mr. Kucharsky explains the Mayor's Office has asked Staff to consider increasing the number of reserved parking spaces in the Museum Place and South Harbor Garages in addition to evaluating the current pricing. He notes that last year was the first time in a long time the City had to have a lottery for both garages. The Museum Place Garage currently has 30 reserved spaces, and the South Harbor Garage has 20 reserved spaces. The proposal is for the Museum Place Garage to increase the number of reserved spaces to 40 and for the South Harbor Garage to increase to 25 reserved spaces. Dedicated numbered spaces can be purchased for \$1,500 a year. Mr. Kucharsky states there have been requests to have more spaces, and after evaluating the pricing, it has been recommended the price be increased to \$2,000 a year, which equates to about \$5.50 a day. The Commissioners discuss the various passes and pricing, including non-designated monthly space/pass cards which are \$80 for non-residents, \$70 for residents, \$30 for senior non-residents, and \$25 for senior residents. An annual pass card is \$700 for a non-designated space, and \$200 for senior residents and \$250 for senior non-residents.

Chair Shallop asks about the spaces required by some condominiums in the area. Mr. Kucharsky says those passes are \$500 (\$200 for seniors) and based on planning or zoning board decisions relating to six properties. Commissioner Garmendia asks how many passes

are associated with those 6 properties, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates about 200 at Museum Place and 100 at South Harbor.

Commissioner Casey asks about the number of current and proposed spaces and asks if it is financially beneficial for the City to have the reserved spots. Mr. Kucharsky states he is uncertain, but that the passes currently bring in about \$75,000. Mr. Casey suggests the need for a lottery is a signal that the price is too low, and that he might be inclined to increase the price but maybe not the number of spaces, as perhaps the price change would reduce the demand a bit and not require more spaces. The Commissioners discuss the number of spaces and acknowledge the existing demand and need for some change.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Thomas Kusterer, of 51 Lafayette Street, states he is in support of the proposal because he could not come home several times last year, once in the middle of October. He states that he had to go to the North Shore Mall to pass some time until evening when he could find a parking space.

Commissioner Casey asks about the total capacity of each garage. Mr. Kucharsky states that Museum Place has 910 spaces, and South Harbor has 210 spaces.

The Commission discusses what happens if all reserved spots are not purchased, what happens to them after expressing concerns about getting the number and pricing right to balance the demand and allow for all who want a space to be able to purchase one. Mr. Kucharsky clarifies that any unreserved spaces would still be allocated and revert to non-reserved available parking space.

Commissioner Swartz asks when the last increase in price occurred, and Mr. Kucharsky explains that the order was passed in May 2016 which created the reserved spaces, and that the price has remained unchanged since.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend that the number of spaces be increased in the Museum Place Garage to 40 spaces and the South Harbor Garage to 25 spaces, as well as increasing the annual price to \$2,000 per vehicle. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor, and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

### **Service Zones**

Staff will present proposed ordinance changes for service zones in the City.

Mr. Kucharsky presents proposed ordinance changes related to service zones in the City. He explains that last year staff presented a number of recommended changes including rescinding old ordinances regarding service zones and creating new ones in the downtown area. Assessments of signage and ordinances, along with surveying of businesses resulted in identified areas where service zones were needed. Mr. Kucharsky states that several were implemented and that some are still being finalized with signage and striping. Mr.

Kucharsky explains that a handful of the service zones need corrections, and one needs to be removed. At New Derby Street at Artists' Row, there was a typographical error in the distance that needs to be corrected. At Derby Street at Palfrey, the sidewalks are being redone and there is currently no parking in the ordinance. Mr. Kucharsky indicates a 40-foot service zone is being recommended west of the new bump out in the sidewalk. For Derby Street at Bentley Street, another service zone is recommended with the sidewalk reset. At High Street and Margin Street, the service zone is used but not in the ordinance, and the recommendation is to formalize the service zone and maintain its use. For 108 Broadway Street, the service zone in the ordinance is recommended to be removed and rescinded, reverting the spaces to overnight resident parking.

Commission Lt. Tucker states he is in favor. Chair Shallop suggests the proposal and recommendations seem straight forward. The other Commissioners agree.

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

**Motion and Vote:** Commission Lt. Tucker motions to recommend the proposed ordinance changes related to service zones. Commissioner Swartz 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 August 2, 2023, at 6:00PM.

#### **MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

**June 14, 2023**

Commissioner Garmendia notes one typographical error in the first paragraph.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Garmendia motions to approve the minutes from the June 14, 2023, meeting as amended. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. **The vote is all in favor, the motion passes.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

*On a motion duly made by Commissioner Swartz and seconded by Commissioner Garmendia the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.*