

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 13, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, July 13, 2022 at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, and as amended by Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, and a Special Act extending remote participation meetings until March 31, 2023.

Present: Commission Chair Tonya Shallop, Commission Vice Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commission Lt. David Tucker, Director David Kucharsky, Assistant Director Christina Hodge, and Transportation Planner Brendan Linard **Absent:** None

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm 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.

Gunner McDonald of 76 Essex Street introduces himself and expresses concern regarding the lack of parking on his street. He notes it has been previously discussed, and that when he moved here, he thought he would be able to reasonably find parking, but that it has become a huge problem on a daily basis. Mr. McDonald states it is impacting his quality of life, and that he speaks on behalf of others on this section of Essex Street who are similarly frustrated and seeking guidance or help. He also notes he has some issues and comments regarding traffic calming that he has noticed walking around.

Chair Shallop notes the agenda for tonight does not include Essex Street parking, but that it can be considered for a future agenda. She also suggests talking to Mr. Kucharsky to discuss parking on Essex Street further, as well as to raise any comments regarding traffic calming.

Rich Hamel (no address given) introduces himself and thanks traffic and parking for implementing traffic calming measures in the Washington Square North area, noting it has been very effective. He states he was skeptical at first, but that the measures have far exceeded his expectations.

Alan Hanscom of 82 Washington Square introduces himself and states he still sees people speeding through the crosswalk near the playground, particularly cars coming out of Boardman Street. Mr. Hanscom suggests moveable speed humps like those implemented

on Chestnut Street, acknowledging that the Witch's Cup Bicycle Race will need the area to be flat.

Felipe Zamborlini of 62 Perkins Street introduces himself and provides positive feedback regarding the work on Leavitt Street. He states the re-striping of the street and parking stalls is great, and that cars have no longer been parking on the sidewalk. Mr. Zamborlini states he feels safer walking. Mr. Zamborlini also asks that the Commission look at traffic calming measure for the Point neighborhood overall, noting there are issues with speeding as well as illegal dirt bikes. He suggests the neighborhood be examined as a whole for calming, rather than just one or two individual streets.

Chair Shallop thanks the members of the public for their comments, and thanks Department staff and partner departments for their work on projects and efforts that received positive feedback.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Director's Update

Mr. Kucharsky explains he has been involved in the October overlay parking zone, and asks that Commissioners attend Thursday's meeting if possible, with OLLA. Mr. Kucharsky also notes there will be a meeting regarding Vision Zero and discussing next steps. He next explains that the Blue Bike expansion is proceeding, and that additional stations are in place with help from DPW. Garage work is continuing, and more of the parking should be open at the Museum Place garage by end of the month. Mr. Kucharsky indicates security cameras will be installed as well. Regarding the South Harbor garage, work on the bathrooms is proceeding and the hope is to have it completed by end of month as well. Destination Salem will open a visitor's center adjacent to the bathrooms and demo work has begun. The Congress Street stairwell at the South Harbor garage is almost complete. He explains there will be some painting and new lighting installed.

Mr. Kucharsky notes there are improvements occurring in the Church Street lots, addressing some ADA issues with sidewalks. This work is also tied to one of the agenda items, the introduction of service zones, and attempts to prevent trucks from parking on sidewalks.

Commissioner Swartz asks specifics about the opening of the Museum Place garage, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates the third floor will be opened by end of month, and shortly after that the fourth floor should be open a few weeks later. Commissioner Swartz asks about the project overall, and Mr. Kucharsky explains that additional funds were requested for issues that were identified when areas were opened up. He adds that once completed, the garage will be improved beyond what the initial plans were. Regarding the 2nd and 3rd levels, Mr. Kucharsky states that an engineering consultant will be engaged in the near future to develop repair plans for those two remaining levels of the facility.

Vice Chair Papetti asks about the status of the North Street Project. Mr. Kucharsky indicates Council completed the first passage of ordinance recommendations, and that staff are looking to start the intersection pilot at Liberty Hill Avenue. The goal is to get the striping in place along with other elements around the end of August.

Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendations

Service Zones (Loading Zones)

Mr. Kucharsky explains the goal was to review the evaluation process for service zones, and that after getting a better understanding of the process and needs of the area, staff have proposed ordinance changes to rescind unneeded zones, amend existing zones, and create new service zones. Mr. Kucharsky indicates there were various issues and concerns raised which led to this project, including trucks double parking, trucks parking on sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks, and issues with access for emergency vehicles. Mr. Kucharsky explains that staff collected data, reviewed existing ordinance and signage, conducted spatial analysis of signed service zones, spoke with parking enforcement and surveyed businesses in the city to assess their operations and needs (36 respondents, 16 questions regarding deliveries and vehicle sizes). Mr. Kucharsky presents the survey results and maps of the area.

Mr. Kucharsky explains that the proposed ordinance changes create two different types of zones, one that is 24 hours, seven days a week, and another that is temporal, operating as a service zone from 8AM to 4PM and open to parking thereafter. The recommendations increase and augment the number of zones in the downtown area, and they have been spaced to improve coverage. Service zones outside of the downtown area will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Kucharsky further explains the ordinance cleanup, noting there are 65 locations that are to be rescinded as they are no longer signed, antiquated, and no longer consistent with current regulations and needs. Regarding new and amended zones, two will have extended lengths, one will have updated location information, two new zones will be 65 feet or longer, and one new zone will serve Artist's Row. A service zone on Lynde Street at Washington Street is proposed to be re-established. Mr. Kucharsky presents photographs of the service zone locations and provides further details.

Commission Lt. Tucker asks if the temporal spaces could be moved an hour earlier to 7AM to accommodate early deliveries. Mr. Kucharsky says he does not see that being an issue. Mr. Papetti agrees with the suggestion.

Commissioner Garmendia asks if the Lynde Street service zone will be 24 hour or temporal, and Mr. Kucharsky confirms it will be 24 hours. Commissioner Swartz asks about the rationale, noting some residents in the area of raised concerns about limited parking. Mr. Kucharsky states the existing ordinance had that location as a 24-hour service zone and so it was not changed, but that it can be tried out as a temporal space and see how it goes.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Councilor Andy Varela of 23 Cedar Crest Avenue introduces himself and raises concerns regarding the temporal spaces, noting that many of the restaurant deliveries can be delayed once the school season begins, and that there are also trucker shortages that can have an impact on planning and timing. He also notes that in October there may be later deliveries. He expresses further concerns regarding drop off needs and traffic flow that could potentially stem from temporal service zones.

Councilor Patti Morsillo introduces herself and asks how the changes will be communicated to businesses, to then inform their delivery drivers about the updates for compliance. She also stresses enforcement going forward with respect to these spaces.

Commissioner Swartz states he would be to happy include information in the Chamber of Commerce business letter, and that traffic and parking staff will be involved with communicating changes as well. Mr. Kucharsky confirms, and also discusses enforcement efforts. Chair Shallop suggests providing a map of service zones with any warnings or initial infractions. Regarding temporal versus 24 hours zones, Chair Shallop states she is happy to try either and adjust as necessary based on feedback. Commissioner Garmendia states he is in favor of time limiting certain zones where it makes sense, particularly in areas where residential parking is needed.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to approve and recommend to Council the proposed amendments to the Traffic Ordinance seeking to add additional service zone locations, amend certain zones, and rescind locations no longer in use. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. The vote is five (5) in favor none (0) opposed. **The motion passes.**

15-Minute Parking

Mr. Kucharsky presents a map of the downtown area and explains during the pandemic they designated 28 spaces for 15-minute parking to help facilitate take out services for restaurants. This involved bagging the meters and putting out signs explaining the 15-minute parking. Based on business preferences and feedback, staff recommendations are to revert 18 spaces back to regular meters, turn six spaces into 15-minute limited meters, turn four spaces into free 15-minute parking (two of which serve as parklets for 6 months of the year), and two entirely new free 15-minute parking spaces (one of which is an agenda item and requested based on new businesses). The map demonstrates the location of each space.

Commissioner Swartz commends the two new spaces, but notes that on the far end of Essex Street there is a restaurant still operating as delivery and takeout only, and so that space perhaps could remain 15 minutes.

Chair Shallop asks how the distinction between the free and paid 15-minute parking spaces were made. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the spaces on Washington Street were decided to be free 15-minute parking because for half of the year they are occupied by a parklet, which are not specific to any one business. He adds that the decision was also based on feedback

from the businesses. The Commissioners discuss having both paid and free 15-minute parking and ensuring consistency and clarity for those parking.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Councilor Patti Morsillo introduces herself and provides input, suggesting whatever works now for the free 15-minute spaces should continue for those spaces that will be free.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to approve the recommendations regarding changes to 15-minute parking, with the free spaces changed to metered 15-minute parking and leaving the free 15-minute parking on Essex Street in front of Bon Chon. Commissioner Garmendia seconds the motion. The vote is five (5) in favor none (0) opposed. **The motion passes.**

Request to Rescind 15-Minute Parking

Mr. Kucharsky presents a map of Jefferson Avenue and Bertuccio Avenue, and indicates a resident requested the 15-minute parking space on Bertuccio Avenue be rescinded. The space was instituted originally to service a nursery school, but the business is no longer there and it is now a single family home. Staff recommends removing it from the ordinance and having the signs taken down.

Chair Shallop notes the request is straight forward and states she is in favor.

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

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Garmendia motions to approve the recommendation to rescind the 15-minute parking space on Bertuccio Avenue. Commissioner Swartz seconds the motion. The vote is five (5) in favor none (0) opposed. **The motion passes.**

New Derby/Lafayette Parking Ordinance Changes

Mr. Kucharsky presents an overhead view of the intersection and explains the existing conditions, noting Councilor Watson Felt had previously requested staff and the Commission look at converting the accessible space on New Derby Street to a 15-minute space to better serve the businesses in the area. At the time the Commission had concerns about removing the space without replacing it. Based on an analysis of current conditions and daylighting needs, staff recommends converting the existing accessible space to 15-minute parking, creating a new accessible space on the west side of Lafayette Street north of New Derby, and a new metered space on the west side of Lafayette south of New Derby Street. The recommendations also took into consideration feedback from area businesses.

Chair Shallop asks about other accessible space locations in the area, and questions whether it might make sense to swap the proposed accessible and metered space. Commissioner Swartz notes there are accessible spaces in the Klop Alley and Front Street

parking lots around the corner. Commissioner Garmendia asks if the 15-minute parking space will be metered or free. Mr. Kucharsky clarifies that it will be free 15-minute parking.

Vice Chair Papetti asks for clarification on the history of the request, and states he has a differing opinion. As a customer of Flip the Bird, he states he regularly sees cars illegally parking in the accessible space currently, and that he does not believe that kind of disrespect for the disabled should be rewarded by removing the space. Mr. Papetti suggests instead, converting one of the spaces in front of it to a 15-minute space and revisit if necessary. Chair Shallop and Vice Chair Papetti discuss having the other two spaces simply be metered spaces. Commissioner Swartz agrees with Mr. Papetti's concerns, but also notes the lack of accessible spaces south of the intersection and suggests having the metered space on the west side of Lafayette Street south of New Derby be accessible as well. Vice Chair Papetti states he is flexible, but voices frustration about the origin of some of the requests and how they can be perceived. Chair Shallop states she is in favor of whichever configuration makes the most sense for accessibility, and that then the matter of enforcement will need to be focused on.

Mr. Kucharsky states he can look at the data on accessible spaces and would be fine with Commissioner Swartz's proposal to swap the proposed new accessible and metered spaces. Chair Shallop suggests revisiting the matter at the next meeting. Lt. Tucker confirms there are not many accessible spaces on Lafayette Street. He also acknowledges Vice Chair Papetti's comments about rewarding bad behavior but notes the nearby accessible spaces in Klop Alley. He expresses some concern about the accessible space being on the corner of the busy intersection, but states that area could still benefit from one.

After some discussion, Chair Shallop summarizes that the Commission would like to see these spots, but perhaps in a slightly different configuration, which will be determined by staff pursuant to further review of existing accessible parking locations. Mr. Kucharsky confirms that on New Derby the accessible space will remain, and a 15-minute parking space will be added, and that the other two new spaces will be based on staff research.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to approve the recommendation to add a 15-minute parking space on New Derby Street while leaving the existing accessible space and creating two new spaces on Lafayette Street that will either be metered or accessible. Vice Chair Papetti seconds the motion. The vote is five (5) in favor none (0) opposed. **The motion passes.**

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Request Procedure

Chair Shallop explains the Commission requested a review of the traffic calming program and how the prioritization tool is utilized to identify roadways where traffic calming measures should be applied. She states the program has been successful in many ways and that she is proud of it. Chair Shallop notes, however, that while the application process has worked for many streets, it was always the intention that some of the projects would come

from staff and Commission recommendations in order to utilize their expertise and to advocate for areas that may not have the loudest voices. Vice Chair Papetti confirms, stating that he had always envisioned the public application process being one part of a multifaceted approach for the program. Chair Shallop suggests initiating more, if not most, of the projects in-house to help address issues of equity and safety.

Vice Chair Papetti agrees with Chair Shallop and suggests that the application process perhaps only deals with the origin of certain traffic issues and does not necessarily address the other component of where people are going. He suggests looking at data regarding schools, certain intersections, looking at data reflecting most dangerous areas and using various lenses to assess where work is needed. Vice Chair Papetti commends staff on their data collection efforts, and states that now we should use the data to expedite future projects and improvements.

Commissioner Garmendia agrees with the comments made by the Chair and Vice Chair, and also notes that the projects he has seen while on the Commission have seemed to be narrower in scope. Commissioner Garmendia suggest taking a broader view and approach to neighborhoods into consideration when approaching traffic calming.

Commissioner Swartz agrees with the comments made by the other Commission members and speaks in favor of streamlining processes where possible based on existing data and results from prior projects. He also suggests asking for more funding as necessary once broader scope projects and needs are identified.

Mr. Kucharsky notes that staff work with partners in engineering and other departments to pursue grants, and that the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program is one method by which traffic calming is approached and implemented. He discusses successful grant requests to date as well as other projects that are in the pipeline to improve areas such as Congress Street and looking at the Point overall. He also discusses current implementation times and processes for traffic calming, noting the time from application to implementation is usually about a year. Mr. Kucharsky states staff can look at data and implement more calming measures where needed, but also notes that while staff can rely on data, there are still members of the public who oppose certain measures. He also speaks to resource constraints and some of the complexities around obtaining more funding and implementing more projects. Mr. Kucharsky asks for more direction from the Commission as to how they would like the applications to be reviewed.

Ms. Hodge agrees with Mr. Kucharsky and notes the application process has the benefit of sometimes identifying areas that staff would not have realized is problematic. Ms. Hodge suggests better messaging regarding the program for the public, noting that some people have complained saying they submitted an application and are curious why there are no speed humps yet. She also speaks to staff and resource constraints for evaluating the requests that come in on top of other duties.

Vice Chair Papetti agrees that messaging and communication to applicants is important, and that it would be helpful if the city website had a simplified version of the spreadsheet

showing project statuses, so that people know what is going on in the City and the whole context. He also suggests simplifying the application process to identify issues rather than allowing for so many suggested solutions. Mr. Papetti discusses managing public expectations further and giving the proper context and information.

Lt. Tucker states the applications have their place and benefit and agrees that some members of the public have misguided expectations of the program based on seeing what has happened in some streets. Commission Lt. Tucker notes that he receives several comments and traffic complaints per week, and that some of them are valid and some of them are not. He also suggests many of the complaints stem from volume, as streets that used to not have many cars now do.

Chair Shallop suggests there may be room for refinement with the existing priority scores, and perhaps coming up with priorities for every street if realistic. If not, she suggests staff with expertise to identify areas that they think are high priority and compile a list of projects for the year depending on capacity and resources. Ms. Shallop states that if we still want to collect neighborhood applications, she would want to tell the applicants that the priority level needs to be such that it qualifies for inclusion in the list of other projects and priorities.

Mr. Kucharsky explains that Mr. Findley has applied scores using demographics and other data to every street in the City, but that speed and volume data does not exist for all streets. He notes that the data and information are all publicly posted and available. Staff have started to combine some of the scoring criteria to identify a list of top areas, while also identifying areas that need more speed and volume data.

Councilor Morsillo states she finds the process very frustrating, stating she does not understand what happens after applications are submitted and signatures are obtained. She states she has also received mixed messages regarding the number of signatures required and priorities. Regarding the equity issue, Councilor Morsillo states it is not just a neighborhood issue, but a pedestrian and biking issue as well. She states equity is involved in protecting children on their way to school on the paths they take. Ms. Morsillo suggests the staff and Commission may be a victim of their own success, as she has never heard so much talk of speed cushions in her life prior to this. She states that people love them and want them on their streets, and that she is in favor of them because they are working. Councilor Morsillo also states she recently received a call from a resident on Champlain Road who is angry because cars park on the sidewalk on his narrow street due to volumes on the cut-throughs street and that he does not feel safe. She suggests that traffic patterns will not be changing anytime soon, and that to put speed humps on these streets should not require consultants. Councilor Morsillo states that Council would likely approve more funding for these measures because they hear from their constituents that they are working. She raises concerns regarding speeding in the city and states how distressed residents are.

Commissioner Swartz agrees with setting expectations through more information, and agrees with Councilor Morsillo that where simple measures are proven to be effective, they should be implemented.

Ward 6 Councilor Meghan Riccardi introduces herself and states that what has been done so far is working and that residents are grateful for the traffic calming that has been implemented in the city. She states the program has been very successful, but it can be frustrating when the process feels like analysis paralysis. Councilor Riccardi speaks to confusion with the current process, and further suggests that traffic calming be looked at more broadly.

Chair Shallop speaks more to her equity concerns and suggests one way of addressing equity is by taking the decisions out of the neighborhoods themselves while still getting input, but relying on data and expertise to figure out where the highest needs are. Commissioner Swartz states he does not want to cut off the community input and application process as he thinks it is an important component, but that it should be a blend.

Mr. Kucharsky explains how he has presented the application process to both councilors and commissioners, with typed up explanations that received no feedback. He further explains that the presentations and analyses are part of the public process to educate and inform members of the public. He also speaks to public liability issues and the challenges with just placing speed humps and interventions on streets without consultation or public review or consideration for utility work and other issues in the City.

Chair Shallop suggests more communication on the front end with applicants and letting those whose requests would not meet the priority score that their application will not likely qualify for intervention. She emphasizes managing expectations and determining how to cut off low priority requests. Ms. Shallop states the Commission wants to see proposals that have been identified as needs or things that are more on the fence. Commissioner Swartz agrees.

OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

None.

UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE

The next meeting is scheduled for August 10th, 2022 at 6:00PM.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

June 8, 2022

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to approve the minutes for the June 8, 2022 meeting of the Traffic and Parking Commission as drafted. Commissioner Garmendia

seconds the motion. The vote is four (4) in favor and none (0) opposed. **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 8:22 PM.