

**City of Salem
Traffic and Parking Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 13, 2024**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Present: Traffic and Parking: Chair Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commissioner Brendan Casey, Commissioner Lt. David Tucker, Commissioner Erin Turowski, and Traffic and Parking Staff Russell Findley. **Absent:** None

CALL OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Garmendia, and he explains how members of the public may participate during the remote meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Garmendia opens the floor to public comment.

Stacey Curran, of 363 Lafayette Street, introduces herself and asks for an update on the traffic calming project from West Avenue to Marblehead.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Director's Update

Mr. Findley states that he does not have any director's updates currently to report on.

Right Turn on Red Ordinance Recommendations

Chair Garmendia explains that the Traffic and Parking Commission has been meeting jointly with OLLA to discuss the intersections in the City and right turns on red and describes the process.

Mr. Findley begins a presentation with individual ordinance recommendations, beginning in South Salem. He notes some traffic signals are not in the ordinance but signed, some are in the ordinance but not signed, and some are neither in the ordinance nor signed. The presentation also identifies which roads are under State jurisdiction. At the intersection of West Avenue, Lafayette Street, and Loring Street, the recommendation is to add the southbound direction to the ordinance (signage exists), to add signage to the West Avenue side, and adding signage heading north on Loring Avenue. From Lafayette Street heading north, the recommendation is to add signage and ordinance language. For the intersection at Jefferson Avenue and Canal Street, the recommendation is to add both directions to the

ordinance, as it is signed in both directions. Chair Garmendia asks if Commissioners or the public have any comments or questions on these intersections, but there is none.

Mr. Findley next discusses the intersections at Pickman Road and Loring Avenue, and Harrison Road and Loring Avenue, where the intersections are not signed and not in the ordinance. The recommendation is to keep everything as is. Next, Mr. Findley discusses the intersections near Vinnin Square, and the recommendation is to keep all intersection approaches as is, which are unsigned and not in the ordinance. Commissioner Casey notes there are dedicated pedestrian crossing phases, and wonders if signage and ordinance changes would make sense at the intersection with Route 1A and Vinnin. Lt. Tucker notes the guidance would be a high number of conflicts, and due to the limited crash history and DOT control, any changes would not be appropriate at this time. Commissioner Swartz suggests this is not a heavy pedestrian area, generally. Chair Garmendia asks if there are other public comments for these intersections.

Mr. Findley next discusses the intersections along Highland Avenue, beginning with Willson Street. The recommendations are to add to the ordinance for traffic coming from Willson Street and Cherry Hill Avenue, and to add both signage and ordinance changes for the northbound approach on Highland Avenue for turns onto Willson Street. Mr. Findley also discusses the intersections at Osborne Hill Drive and Marlborough Road and the Highland Avenue entrance to Market Basket, where there are no recommended changes to either. There are also no recommended changes to the intersection at Trader's Way with Highland Avenue, as well as the intersection at Trader's Way with 1st Street and Whaler's Lane. For the intersection of Highland Avenue and Swampscott Road, the recommendation is to add ordinance changes for both approaches to match signage. The next intersection discussed is that at Highland Avenue, Ravenna Avenue, and Barnes Road. There is no signage and nothing in the ordinance, and the recommendation is to keep as is. For the intersection with Olde Village Drive, the recommendation is to add signage and an ordinance change. For the intersection at Highland Avenue and the Walmart driveway, the recommendation is to keep as is. There are no public comments on these intersections.

Next Mr. Findley discusses intersections in northwest Salem, beginning with the intersection of School, Orne, and North Streets. The recommendations are to keep the signage/ordinance for North Street heading south and add ordinance changes for the northbound direction, add signage to School Street, and to add signage and ordinance changes for Orne Street. There will be no turn on red at all four approaches. For the intersection at Mason Street and North Street, the recommendation is to keep the Mason Street approach as is (signed and in ordinance), and to add ordinance changes and signage for the southbound approach on North Street. Mr. Findley next discusses the intersection at Flint Street and Bridge Street, where the recommendation is to keep as is the east approach from Flint Street and south approach from Bridge Street, while adding ordinance changes for the north approach on Bridge Street and adding both signage and ordinance changes for the west approach from Flint Street. The next intersection discussed is Flint Street and Essex Street, where signage and ordinance changes are recommended for the northbound approach on Essex Street and the east approach from Flint Street, and keeping as is the west approach from Flint Street to Essex Street. Chair Garmendia states he is familiar with

this intersection and that the recommendation for not taking a right from Essex Street onto Flint Street makes sense because it is a tough right-hand turn. He questions the proposed right turn on red restriction from Flint Street onto Essex Street, stating he has taken it before, and finds the sightline is pretty good and traffic volumes are low. Mr. Findley and Lt. Tucker indicate they thought about leaving the allowance, and that they went back and forth on the matter. Chair Garmendia asks other Commissioners if they have thoughts. Commissioner Swartz agrees with Lt. Tucker's assessment, and that reducing traffic pressure here without any reduction in safety is a good thing. He suggests it could go either way. Commissioner Turowski suggests it seems like an unproblematic intersection, and that there likely are not many pedestrians here. Councillor Stott suggests the line of sight is appropriate for being able to turn right on red here, and that the crossing is tight and short. Councillor Stott also asks about the North Street and Orne Street intersection and questions the proposed addition of signage and ordinance changes to limit a right on red from Orne Street/Appleton Street to turn onto North Street, noting the change was not discussed at the joint meeting. She states it is a tight turn where only one car can turn right on red at a time, and that the line of sight is open. Chair Garmendia explains that since that meeting, Commissioners and staff met and discussed many of the recommendations, so there may be some differences. Mr. Findley states this was another one that staff were on the fence about, and Lt. Tucker suggests the narrowing of the turn was a reason for the proposal, along with limited number of people turning right there. He suggests that if a right turn on red is allowed, it may make sense to look at the intersection angles and if flex posts and adjustments would be appropriate. Councillor Stott suggests eliminating the right on red will frustrate those living in the neighborhood, and that any benefit seems minimal. The next intersection discussed is at Boston Street, Nichols Street, and Grove Street. The recommendation is for the Nichols Street and Grove Street approaches to be added to the ordinance to match signage. For the intersection of Boston Street and Bridge Street, the intersections are signed and in the ordinance, and the recommendation is to keep it as is. Mr. Findley next discusses the intersection at Boston Street and Essex Street, noting that there is a right turn on red signed on the Boston Street approach and a green arrow to turn right. The other two approaches are signed and in the ordinance, and the recommendation is to keep it as is. The next intersection discussed is at Jackson Street and Essex Street, where the recommendation is the keep conditions as is (currently signed and in the ordinance). Mr. Findley also discusses the entrance to the hospital, where both right turns should have signage added to match the ordinance. The final intersection discussed is at Jefferson Avenue, Dove Street, and Colonial Road. Mr. Findley states the recommendation is to add signage to match the ordinance for the Colonial Road approach and to keep the other approaches as is.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to adopt the ordinance and signage change recommendations as presented except for the recommendations for the Flint Street approach to Essex Street and the Appleton Street/Orne Street approach onto North Street. Commissioner Turowski seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Casey motions to adopt the ordinance and signage change recommendation regarding the Flint Street approach onto Essex Street.

Commissioner Turowski seconds the motion. **The vote is two (2) in favor and there (3) opposed, the motion fails.**

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Casey motions to adopt the ordinance and signage change recommendation regarding the Appleton/Orne Street approach onto North Street. **No one seconds the motion.**

Mr. Findley next begins presenting on the intersections considered to be part of the downtown Salem area. The first intersection discussed is Route 107 and Route 1A, where the recommendation is to make ordinance changes to match the existing no turn on red signage for the approach onto Route 107 north heading into Beverly. Next the intersection at Webb Street and Bridge Street is discussed, where ordinance changes are proposed to match the signage for the Bridge to Webb right turn, and ordinance changes and signage are recommended for the Webb Street to Bridge Street approach. For the Webb Street, Szetela Lane, and Essex Street intersection, ordinance changes and signage are recommended for all approaches. Commissioner Lt. Tucker states that while this recommendation might be unpopular, the sight lines are poor, and it is considered a school route. Councillor Jerzylo states the whole intersection will be redone in 2026 because of the Crowley Wind terminal. She also states she sees no issue with taking a right on red from Szetela Lane onto Webb Street, or from Webb Street onto Szetela Lane. Lt. Tucker suggests this intersection be discussed further with Council. Councillor Jerzylo suggests repainting the crosswalks at the intersection. After further discussion, the Commissioners determine they are in favor of the ordinance change and signage for the Webb Street to Essex Street approach.

The next intersection discussed is at Bridge Street, Route 107, and the entrance/exit to Sofi apartments. The only recommendation is to add ordinance changes and signage for the Sofi entrance/exit. Mr. Findley discusses the intersection of Bridge Street and Washington Street, noting the existence of a right turn on red after stop signed for the Bridge Street to Washington Street approach. The recommendation for the right turn from Washington Street onto Bridge Street is to add ordinance language to match existing signage. Commissioner Turowski notes that the signage is actually currently missing, and the commissioners conclude it may have been due to recent high winds. Commissioner Turowski suggests more robust placement for the signage and better visibility. For the intersection with Bridge Street and the entrance to the MBTA station, the recommendation is to add signage and ordinance changes for no right turn on red from the MBTA entrance onto Bridge Street. Chair Garmendia states he observes a large backup of cars leaving the MBTA entrance but acknowledges this is only during rush hour. Commissioner Turowski also suggests there may be a signal or trip-wire issue as there are times where you cannot get the signal to change for large stretches. Lt. Tucker acknowledges it malfunctions sometimes.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to accept the recommendations for ordinance changes and signage for Bridge Street and Webb Street, with the exception of the Webb Street to Szetela Lane, Szetela Lane to Webb Street, and MBTA entrance to Bridge

Street approaches. Commissioner Casey seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

The next intersection discussed is at Washington Square West toward Essex Street, where ordinance change and signage is recommended, with signage recommended to match the ordinance for the Essex Street approach and Hawthorne Boulevard approach. Mr. Findley also presents the intersection of Hawthorne Boulevard, Derby Street, and Congress Street, where the recommendation is to change the ordinance for the Hawthorne Boulevard approach match existing signage, to add signage and ordinance changes for both Derby Street approaches, and to keep as is the Congress Street approach. Lt. Tucker provides additional information supporting the recommendations. Commissioner Turowski supports keeping an open conversation regarding the Congress Street approach to see if it warrants an ordinance change and signage in the future, as crossing can be challenging. Councillor Jerzylo supports keeping right turn on red on the Congress Street approach. She also suggests that jay walking is a big problem with many pedestrians not waiting to cross and trying to run across when they can or not at crosswalks. Councillor Jerzylo suggests better lighting and signage, along with fresh paint for crosswalks. Councillor Cohen states he uses Congress Street as a cut through and notices that people who are going straight to Hawthorne Boulevard will use the right turn lane to go around cars stuck taking a left. He states that makes it very difficult for pedestrians there and suggests it may make sense to have a left turn lane. Commissioner Casey suggests a no right turn on red for the Congress Street approach and notes that the intersection should also consider the nearby Little Hawthorne Boulevard which people use as a cut through. He also supports the consideration of a left turn lane. Commissioner Turowski speaks to the safety concerns of the intersection. The commissioners discuss the intersection more, and mostly agree that preventing a right turn on red for the Congress Street approach to match the other three would be safer. Councillor Jerzylo speaks in favor of the left turn lane but suggests taking away the right on red will cause traffic issues. Commissioner Turowski explains that the full restriction on right on red here does follow the guidelines of the Federal Highway Administration since there is a pedestrian exclusive phase.

Mr. Findley next discusses the intersection of Lafayette Street and Derby Street, where the recommendation is for both the northbound and the southbound approach on Lafayette Street to have ordinance changes and signage added along with the westbound approach on Derby toward Lafayette. For the eastbound approach on Derby Street the recommendation is to keep as is, where a signalized right turn exists currently. Commissioner Swartz questions the right turn restriction on the northbound approach on Lafayette Street. The commissioners discuss the intersection in more detail. Commissioner Casey asks why a right turn restriction was not recommended for all approaches, and Lt. Tucker cites traffic backup concerns for the eastbound Derby Street approach along with decent sightline. They discuss a potential compromise with a “right turn on red after stop” sign to remind drivers they must stop before attempting a turn on red along with programmed illuminated signs that do not allow for right turns when there are pedestrians crossing. Councillor Jerzylo provides feedback and Councillor Cohen agrees with the recommendation of allowing right turn on red for the eastbound Derby Street approach.

Chair Garmendia notes the discussion has been approaching two hours and asks what commissioners would like to do regarding the portion of downtown discussed from the Common to Lafayette and Derby Street. Commissioner Swartz suggests discussing one more intersection nearby at New Derby Street and Washington Street before concluding for the evening and the other commissioners agree. Mr. Findley states the recommendation for this intersection is to add ordinance changes and signage for the southbound approach on Washington Street and the westbound approach on New Derby Street onto Washington Street, to add signage to match the ordinance for the northbound approach on Washington Street, and to keep the right turn on red after stop sign for the Norman Street approach. Commissioners discuss the intersection in more detail and suggest refreshing the paint in the box and crosswalks so that cars do not block it. Councillor Morsillo asks why there is no light near the crosswalk by the post office. She also suggests that drivers constantly block the box and that it is never enforced, so she does not think paint will solve that issue. Councillor Morsillo states she is in favor of no right turn on red at all approaches here, acknowledging that there is a lot of traffic, but contends she often sees cars making the right on red even when there is nowhere to go and block all crosswalks. Commissioner Turowski also notes that there is a bike lane and hashmark where cars drive over to make that right turn on red. Councillor Cohen suggests cars play chicken in two areas on this intersection, one being the northbound Washington Street approach as it slims down to one lane, and when cars turn right onto Norman Street to turn left onto Margin Street, as cars often do not stop to allow cars to turn. He agrees that better striping and signage could help with some of the confusion in the intersection.

Chair Garmendia asks for a motion.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Swartz motions to approve the director's recommendations for ordinance changes and signage for downtown Salem on Hawthorne Boulevard, Derby Street, and New Derby Street, with the exception of Congress Street northbound, where adding an ordinance change and signage for no right turn on red is also recommended, along with a right turn on red after stop sign from New Derby Street southbound onto Lafayette Street. Commissioner Turowski seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed, the motion passes.**

Chair Garmendia asks if there is a motion to move the rest of the agenda to the next meeting.

Motion and Vote: Commissioner Turowski motions to defer the rest of the agenda to the next meeting. 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 March 27, 2024, at 6:00PM.

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

Deferred to next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Swartz and seconded by Commissioner Turowski the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:19 PM.