**City of Salem**

**Traffic and Parking Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, September 20, 2018**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held on Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 6:30pm at 98 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Commission Chair Tanya Stepasiuk, Commission Vice-Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Jamie Metsch, Commissioner Robin Seidel, and Commissioner Officer Michael Levesque. Acting Director Nicholas Downing was also present.

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm. Acting Director Downing noted audio of the meeting was being recorded to assist with notes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joyce Kenney 282 Lafayette Street commented that she had to call Salem PD about a car being parked in the bus zone on Lafayette Street.

**TRAFFIC AND PARKING DIRECTOR UPDATE**

Acting Director Downing gave a brief update. The five October related orders the Commission discussed last week were all sent to the Council. Three of the orders passed, but 2 orders were sent to Committee for further discussion – the downtown resident parking relief order and the adding of streets to the temporary October resident zone. Acting Director Downing noted he thinks the order re: streets will pass and might be modified to change the fines, but he is not sure what will happen with the order regarding downtown resident October parking. Chair Stepasiuk expressed some frustration at the delay in the Council taking action on the October orders. Vice-Chair Papetti noted that he is frustrated, but also ultimately until the Council gives the Commission some authority, these final decisions will continue to fall to them.

On the downtown resident parking order, Acting Director Downing suggested that if the Council takes no action this year, the Commission should immediately begin working on a proposal for next year. And it could potentially be either a discount to residents who have to buy passes in October who would be willing to give up the pass and fend for themselves on parking, or an expansion of reserved spaces that would come with an additional cost.

Acting Director Downing noted that second round interviews for the enforcement positions have been conducted and we have identified some great candidates, and we’re hopeful they will join the department soon. Acting Director further noted that we are short staffed at the garage as well right now, and is working with Assistant Director Sullaway to make sure we have the people we need to get through October in terms of enforcement, operations, and maintenance. Chair Stepasiuk asked about the Director position, and Acting Director Downing answered that the City is still seeking someone to fill the full-time Director positon – the positon was reposted with some tweaks to highlight more of the planning aspects of the job. Finally, Acting Director Downing noted that he will be off on leave beginning in November, and is hopeful we will have some resolution to the full-time director positon before he leaves, and if not will make sure there is a plan in place if a candidate has not begun before he leaves.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked if there was a current project list to review. Acting Director Downing noted that there was an LTIP update at the last meeting, with a handful of minor updates, but nothing major. Vice-Chair Papetti further asked if there was any further street repaving or sidewalk work planned for this year. Acting Director Downing responded that he wasn’t sure, as he has not been given a definitive timeline of when the work would start or what it might include. Vice-Chair Papetti hoped we could see a list to more easily incorporate roadway and safety improvements if we know about them ahead of time.

Commissioner Seidel asked about the curb painting initiative. Acting Director Downing responded that due to the high volume, he is assessing which should be done in the first round this year, and then working to coordinate with DPS to block the spaces off to make painting available, but it will likely be early to mid-November.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked if there was any update form MassDOT re: the HSIP bike lane project. Acting Director Downing responded that MassDOT indicated they couldn’t get the work done before October, so we asked them to wait until October was over to begin any work.

**NEW / OLD BUSINESS**

* Parking Fines

Acting Director Downing began a discussion about parking fines in the City. He presented survey information from 18-20 municipalities about various parking fines. Salem’s fines are sometimes in line with the average/median, but in some cases does have rates substantially higher or lower than others. The recommendations before the Commission tonight are based on bringing Salem closer to the average rate where we are very below, and some of the adjustments are based on increasing fines to make sure from a policy perspective we have substantial fines in place for major violations that we want to curtail that behavior effectively. Acting Director Downing identified 12 proposed changes to the fine structure.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked which fine would pertain to parking in a resident zone without a permit, and if there is a different fine for that infraction in October. Acting Director Downing confirmed that yes, there is a different fine structure year round than there is for October weekends for that infraction - $15 year round, $40 on weekends in October.

Vice-Chair Papetti suggested a higher rate zone for violations near Salem State. Acting Director Downing noted that it would take some extra work to try and identify what area/zones would have a different rate, but it could potentially be done. Chair Stepasiuk expressed some concern about targeting students, but also understands that it is an issue in the neighborhood near the campus. Commissioner Metsch further suggested the possibility of increased fines for repeat offenders. Acting Director Downing noted that he isn’t sure if the technology we use could allow for that type of system, but he has begun looking into it already. Chair Stepasiuk suggested increased fines near SSU for a time period such as September and October to send the message, then lower fines the rest of the year. The Commission generally agreed that a wider window of higher fines city-wide might make sense.

Acting Director Downing noted that if implemented as proposed, the new fines could bring in an additional estimated $90,000 to $100,000 in fine revenue annually.

Vice Chair Papetti noted that a year and a half ago, parking in a bike lane was made illegal with a fine of $50 and asked if we should have a redundant ordinance locally as well. Officer Levesque noted anyone parking in a bike lane would be double parked so they would be subject to that fine, but that it might also be a good idea to have a local ordinance on the books as well.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Metsch and seconded by Commissioner Seidel, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend the proposed changes to parking fines in the City of Salem, with the addition of September to the time period for increased resident permit parking fine violations.

* Parking Near a Crosswalk

Acting Director Downing noted that there is not currently a City ordinance that prohibits anyone from parking within a certain distance of a crosswalk, just upon a crosswalk. Many crosswalks fall within 20 feet of an intersection where parking is prohibited, but we do have a number of midblock crosswalks and others that don’t fall within that zone. The goal of the change is to improve public safety, but also acknowledge that a large zone might make parking in some locations more difficult, so the proposed 10’ foot zone on the side from which traffic approaches is intended to make pedestrians visible without removing too much parking.

Vice-Chair Papetti asked what the best practice is for these types of buffer zones and if NACTO or AASHTO have any guidance. Acting Director Downing said he is not sure, but will do so and amend the proposal if the guidelines suggest a further distance. Vice-Chair Papetti added that we shouldn’t assume the guidelines are an exact fit and we should always try and adapt them to local conditions. Chair Stepasiuk suggested the Commission table the recommendation for now and allow Acting Director Downing to conduct some further research and amend the proposal if needed.

* Broadway Resident Permit Parking

Acting Director Downing noted that Ward 5 Councillor Turiel made this request. Many of the streets surrounding this section of Broadway already have resident permit parking, so residents on this section of the road want this parking protection. The mix of resident only and time limited parking is reflective of the fact that this section of the road has residents and businesses.

Chair Stepasiuk asked what the parking situation was on this section of the road. Officer Levesque noted it is often fully parked, and added that he is somewhat concerned about the hours for the businesses on the street. Vice-Chair Papetti asked if 6:00pm was the right timing, and Acting Director Downing noted he suggested 6:00pm at the request of the Councillor and based on the City’s enforcement hours.

Vice-Chair Papetti suggested a contingent vote based on confirming that the businesses on the street aren’t open past 6:00pm so the time restriction wouldn’t hurt them.

On a motion duly made by Vice-Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Metsch, the Commission voted 4-1 (Officer Levesque in opposition) to make the following ordinance change recommendation, contingent on verification that none of the businesses on this section of Broadway are open passed 6:00pm

***Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Salem, as follows:***

**Section 1.** Section 75 of Article V-A be amended by adding the following:

Broadway – Parking Prohibitions Towing Zone (Resident Sticker) – Zone E, Color Orange, northeasterly side starting at the intersection with Loring Avenue and ending at the intersection with Canal Street.

Broadway – Parking Prohibitions Towing Zone (Resident Sticker) – Zone E, Color Orange, southwesterly side starting at the intersection with Loring Avenue and ending at the intersection with Canal Street, 6:00PM to 8:00AM.

**Section 2.** Section 57A of Article V be amended by adding the following:

Broadway – Parking Time Limited: Unmetered Zones – southwesterly side starting at the intersection with Loring Avenue and ending at the intersection with Canal Street, two (2) hour parking 8:00AM to 6:00PM.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Metsch asked Acting Director Downing to give an update at the next meeting about the potential of e-scooters in Salem.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Seidel and seconded by Commissioner Metsch, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting on May 17, with Officer Levesque abstaining.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Seidel and seconded by Vice-Chair Papetti, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting on June 7, with Officer Levesque abstaining.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Metsch and seconded by Commissioner Seidel, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting on August 2, with Officer Levesque abstaining.

On a motion duly made by Vice-Chair Papetti and seconded by Commissioner Metsch, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting on August 16, with Officer Levesque and Commissioner Seidel abstaining.

On a motion duly made by Commissioner Seidel and seconded by Officer Levesque, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the meeting on September 6.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Officer Levesque and seconded by Commissioner Seidel, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:38pm.