

**City of Salem  
Traffic and Parking Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, April 26, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

**Present: Traffic and Parking:** Commission Chair Tanya Shallop, Commissioner Jaime Garmendia, Commissioner Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Mobility Coordinator Russell Findley. **Absent:** Commissioner Jeff Swartz

**CALL OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm 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 explains there are no updates currently aside from the agenda items.

**Safe Streets for All Grant**

Mr. Kucharsky explains that Salem was one of 15 communities in Massachusetts that was awarded the FHWA Safe Streets For all Grant, which is an action plan grant to create a Safe Streets plan for the entire City. He states that he and other staff attended a webinar on April 13th that went over requirements related to the grant agreement. Mr. Kucharsky indicates the City will need to put out a request for proposals ("RFP") and get a consultant on board as part of the process. The grant money is contingent upon signing the grant agreement.

Chair Shallop asks for additional details related to the grant. Mr. Kucharsky indicates the award was for \$200,000, and the City is required to provide a 20 percent match. The bulk would go toward a consultant to facilitate the process to look at how to expand the Neighborhood Traffic Calming program and complete streets priorities in place. The goal is to create an overall action plan for roadway improvements to increase safety and reduce fatalities and crashes. Chair Shallop adds that the action plan can potentially lead to additional federal funding and other grants to complete some of the more costly projects. Mr. Kucharsky confirms, noting that it would make Salem eligible for additional grants. Mr. Kucharsky states he is unsure about the timeframe, but that Salem will be seeking guidance from other grant recipients.

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

## **Recent Crash Updates**

Commissioner Lt. Tucker explains there was a recent pedestrian fatality on Jefferson Avenue that occurred on Easter, with an ongoing investigation. A person was crossing just south of Wilson Street at 8:20PM. Lt. Tucker states it appears a car was driving north on Jefferson Avenue and turning left onto Wilson Street, and as it started to turn a pedestrian crossed behind the vehicle and another car heading south on Jefferson struck the pedestrian traveling at what at this time is assumed to be regular speed. Some of the incident was captured on a Ring doorbell, but not all details. Commissioner Lt. Tucker notes the driver is 68 years of age. Chair Shallop asks if there have been other known crashes or incidents at that intersection. Lt. Tucker states that information has been requested by the Chief of Police and other officials and that he is compiling it. In the last five years, just north of Dove Avenue the stretch of roadway has had around 70 collisions of any type, four of which were pedestrian or bike incidents, and a total of nine injuries ranging from fatal to minor. Chair Shallop next asks where this stretch of street ranks on the Department's prioritization tool. As it is a major corridor, Mr. Kucharsky notes that they are working with engineering on this street and developing plans for the intersections in the area to improve pedestrian access.

Commissioner Garmendia states he lives in the neighborhood and that the intersection is likely in need of a fully regulated light. He states he has seen on occasion the pedestrian activated light used, but that even for cars the intersection is difficult as sight lines are not great, and cars travel at high speeds. Mr. Garmendia notes there is also a lot of foot traffic in the area as it is the street that goes to the high school. Lt. Tucker agrees with Mr. Garmendia's comments.

Commissioner Lt. Tucker continues, noting there have been 23 pedestrian incidents/crashes since December, most of which involved minor to no injuries. Chair Shallop asks how that compares to prior periods, and Lt. Tucker states he has not looked at that yet, but that at this time last year there had been a pedestrian fatality near the Walmart. Chair Shallop also notes the fatality associated with an accident last year in front of the Witch House. Lt. Tucker lists the incidents that have occurred thus far and their locations, most of which resulted in citations. Chair Shallop asks what type of citations the drivers receive, and Lt. Tucker explains it is a failure to yield to a pedestrian, number 8911, and results in a fine of \$205.

Chair Shallop asks if any of the Commissioners have any additional comments. Commissioner Garmendia states it is a lot to take in, and he suggests a quarterly written report to be able to digest the information. Lt. Tucker confirms. Mr. Garmendia suggests it is good at least that most of the crashes seem to have resulted in only minor injuries, suggesting high speeds were not likely a factor. He also notes some of the state-owned roads are outside of the Commission and Department's zone of influence, such as Highland Avenue.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Bob Arabian, of 51 Lafayette Street, introduces himself and states he supports improvements to Jefferson Avenue and the intersection with Wilson. Mr. Arabian also asks if there has been consideration to installing a crosswalk at the new section of the harbor walk that runs behind the beer garden at the Waterfront Hotel, crossing Congress Street.

### **Neighborhood Traffic Calming**

Mr. Kucharsky introduces Jessica Mortell from Neighborways and states she will review updated design plans for Federal Street from North Street to Boston Street based on the pilot and draft plans for Raymond Road from Loring Avenue to Lafayette Street. Mr. Kucharsky summarizes the 2023 Traffic Calming Projects, noting the various pilots, permanent solutions on Fairfield and Cedar Street, and the ongoing engagement on Mall Street and Valley Street.

Ms. Mortell presents an overhead map of the Federal Street corridor from North Street to Boston Street, along with photos from 2021 and 2022 after the pilot installing speed humps and daylighting. She discusses the public input survey results, noting that the majority of the responses were for Valley Street and Federal Street. Ms. Mortell notes that most people walk and drive on this street. Most respondents support traffic calming and feel that treatments were effective at slowing speeds. Ms. Mortell indicates that 57 percent of respondents felt that there were fewer drivers as well. A majority of respondents felt safer biking, walking, and driving on the street. Based on feedback, Ms. Mortell explains some of the design updates include tending the speed humps farther across the road and adjusting the speed humps closer to the stop signs. She presents an overview of the plans and points out existing striping. The humps will be extended an extra 3.5 feet.

Mr. Kucharsky notes that the presentation will be uploaded to the public input site and additional feedback can be submitted.

Commissioner Garmendia states he appreciates the work and that he has heard from many people that they wish the speed humps were wider. Lt. Tucker asks about the spacing of the speed humps and the proximity to the stop signs. Ms. Mortell notes a normal spacing range of 200 to 500 feet maximum, and offsets from driveways. The request to move them closer to the stop signs has come from residents.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Lori Hart, of 114 Federal Street, introduces herself and thanks the Commission and staff for listening to feedback. Regarding the speed hump placement closer to the stop signs, she states the reasoning is that people go over the speed bump and then go right through the stop sign at times.

Ms. Mortell next begins the presentation on Raymond Road from Loring Avenue to Lafayette Street and presents a map of the area. Mr. Kucharsky notes this road has been on staff radar for some time, and some initial counts were conducted after resident requests as the area is a known cut-through. The first of two neighborhood traffic calming applications came in June 2021, and there was an initial review in September 2021 after the counts were completed. After seeking more data, in July 2022, a second application was received. Mr. Kucharsky explains that at the time staff were reevaluating the prioritization tool, and that Raymond Road scored fairly high. Ms. Mortell continues and discusses the street characteristics and existing conditions. The street currently meets the requirements for a 25mph statutory speed limit, but there are currently yellow warning 20mph signs on the street that are not officially in the ordinance. Ms. Mortell presents average daily traffic data, noting most of the traffic is Eastbound from Loring because of how the street becomes a one-way, with totals around 3,000 cars per day. She also presents speed data, showing average speeds of 25 to 29mph, with a large volume of drivers going over 30mph. Ms. Mortell also presents crash data from 2017 through present, and notes eight total crashes with two non-fatal injuries. Ms. Mortell discusses and presents photos of existing and proposed conditions. The proposed design includes a series of six speed humps with no impact on parking, located at utility poles and/or sign poles to eliminate swerving. She reviews the proposed plans in detail, which include a new pedestrian route around existing trees that block the path of travel on the sidewalk near the intersection with Lafayette. Ms. Mortell indicates the public comment period is open through May 31st and that people may submit feedback at [www.publicinput.com/salemtrafficalming](http://www.publicinput.com/salemtrafficalming)

Commissioner Garmendia states he is unsure why there is even a sidewalk at that section of Raymond Road because where the trees are placed it is completely impassible. He states he supports the idea that something should be done to fix that section of sidewalk, and the pavement markings are a great temporary step, with a permanent sidewalk extension as a goal. He expresses support for the plans overall. Chair Shallop echoes Mr. Garmendia's comments, as does Lt. Tucker.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

City Councilor Andy Varela introduces himself and states that he has spoken with residents on Raymond Road about traffic calming measures, and that the neighbors are looking forward to the speed humps. He also suggests it may discourage some of the cut-through behavior. Councilor Varela notes that some residents expressed concerns about traffic getting backed up, and he asks if the proposed striping work at the intersection of Raymond Road and Lafayette Street project could be delayed until calming measures on Lafayette Street are implemented or perhaps until there is more discussion.

Deborah Goldberg, of 54 Raymond Road, introduces herself and states that the space between the last two speed bumps is long and that perhaps that is a large stretch for cars to speed up. Ms. Goldberg also states that the temporary barrier by Lafayette did not work because people get into the left lane to turn left and the right lane to turn right to help move traffic along. As such, she states that a bump out on either side would be a safety concern for emergency vehicles. Ms. Goldberg expresses concern that Raymond Road has

become a through-faire for 18-wheelers, tour buses, and large vans and vehicles. She suggests larger signs and restrictions for trucks.

Richard Pelletier, of 41 Raymond Road, introduces himself and thanks the Commission. He states he has been here for 20 years, and Raymond Road has become a racetrack in recent years. Mr. Pelletier states many cars do not stop coming down Raymond Avenue at the corner of Raymond Road, and that he has had many near misses coming out of his driveway. Erica Pelletier also introduces herself and states she is in full support of the traffic calming measures.

Tom Kane, of 11 Raymond Road, introduces himself and states he appreciates the work being done. Mr. Kane notes another stretch where another hump might be considered.

### **October Order & Ordinance Recommendations**

Chair Shallop notes this is a continuation of a discussion from the last meeting.

Mr. Kucharsky presents the October resident permit parking amendments. Section 75A, October Resident Parking is currently from October 1 through November 1, and notes it was being proposed to begin the third Saturday in September. There were concerns raised about the limitations starting earlier at the last meeting, and so staff looked into some parking data to present tonight. Mr. Kucharsky also presents the recommended order for temporal year-round resident parking as well, with hours between 5PM and 7AM Monday through Friday and 12PM to 7AM on weekends. The streets identified for temporal resident permit parking are Chestnut Street from Cambridge Street to Summer Street, Derby Street from Becket Avenue to Webb Street, Essex Street from Monroe Street to Summer Street, and Hawthorne Boulevard from Essex Street to Charter Street. Mr. Kucharsky next presents passport data from 2022 showing weekly transactions, with the peak in October between the Food Truck festival and Halloween. He also presents garage parking data. Mr. Kucharsky also presents staff recommendations, which suggests waiting to extend the October parking and monitoring the upcoming season prior to implementing, as well as monitoring rate changes and the new free resident parking, and continuing to update the resident permit program.

The Commissioners agree with staff recommendations.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Deborah Goldberg, of 54 Raymond Road, introduces herself and asks if residents in her neighborhood could get permits to go into Salem to go out to dinner or visit friends. Mr. Kucharsky indicates free parking will be in place in many lots for residents in October, as discussed at last month's meeting, pending Council approval.

Bob Arabian, of 51 Lafayette Street, introduces himself and asks if the free parking will be available for residents who live downtown as well. Mr. Kucharsky states yes, it is for Salem residents as long as your vehicle is registered with the City. Mr. Arabian also expressed

concerns with downtown residents not currently being able to participate in the October resident parking. Mr. Kucharsky notes that perhaps this is something that could be revisited once the resident permit program is updated based on license plate technology.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Garmendia motions to not recommend the changes related to October parking to begin on the third Saturday in September to the City Council. Commissioner Lt. Tucker seconds the motion. **The vote is three (3) 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 May 10, 2023, at 6:00PM.

#### **MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

**April 12, 2023**

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Garmendia motions to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2023, meeting as drafted. Commissioner Lt. Tucker seconds the motion. **The vote is all in favor, the motion passes.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

*On a motion duly made by Commissioner Garmendia and seconded by Commissioner Lt. Tucker, the Traffic and Parking Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM.*