

**City of Salem  
Traffic and Parking Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 23, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission was held remotely on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 6:00pm, in accordance with Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021.

**Present:** Commission Chair Tonya Shallop, Commission Vice Chair Eric Papetti, Commissioner Jeff Swartz, Commissioner Jaime Garmendia, Commission Lt. David Tucker, Director of Traffic and Parking David Kucharsky, and Traffic and Parking Staff Russell Findley **Absent:** None

**CALL OF MEETING**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

**Director's Update**

Mr. Kucharsky provides an update regarding ongoing work at both City garages, noting that major construction is set to begin next month at the Museum Place Garage. He explains that this is phase two of a multi-phase project to improve the drainage and overall infrastructure. A majority of the work will be taking place on the roof of the facility to address joists, punch throughs, and other structural issues. Mr. Kucharsky adds that ADA improvements will also be addressed on the second and third levels, and that security cameras will be installed throughout. Mr. Kucharsky explains that there has been ongoing work at the South Harbor garage to improve the stairwells, and the new prefab stairs will be installed over the next couple weeks, with all work complete in May hopefully. He notes that Destination Salem plans to use the old retail space for a Visitor Center, and public bathrooms will be added.

Regarding the city bike share program, Mr. Kucharsky states that an eighth Blue Bikes station will be added across from the Hawthorne Hotel, with nine docks. The Willows and Blaney Wharf stations will also be reactivated in time for ferry service to begin and activities starting in the Willows.

Mr. Kucharsky states that counts will begin on North Street as part of the pilot of safety measures at Liberty Hill and North Street. After the counts, staff will work with DPW to install the pilot. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, Mr. Kucharsky explains that the

plan is to then go forward with the plans developed by Toole Design. There are some additional revisions to the designs based on feedback from Councilor Riccardi. Mr. Kucharsky notes this is separate from the other work being done by Toole Design to take a deeper dive into enhancing the conventional bike lanes, which is also ongoing. Mr. Kucharsky states staff are waiting to hear if the City will receive a shared streets grant from MassDOT.

Mr. Kucharsky introduces Jaime Garmendia as our newest Traffic and Parking Commissioner.

Commissioner Garmendia introduces himself and states he has been a Salem resident for eleven years. Mr. Garmendia explains that he is a project manager with the MBTA working on commuter rail systems, and that he has always worked in public service in the transportation sector.

Chair Shallop thanks and welcomes Commissioner Garmendia. Each Commissioner introduces themselves and welcomes Commissioner Garmendia.

Commissioner Swartz asks Mr. Kucharsky about the potential for losses of parking spaces in the two garages during the construction. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the roof of the garage will need to be shut down at times during the waterproofing and drainage updates. He adds that staff will be reaching out to the Essex Condos because they have some reserved spaces there.

### **Neighborhood Traffic Calming: North Washington Square from William to Winter St.**

Mr. Kucharsky presents plans of North Washington Square and explains some of the traffic calming elements proposed for this section of Washington Square based on prior plans and a consultant survey of the roadway. The proposal involves the intersection with Brown Street and uses flex posts to narrow the section of Washington Square just past the intersection toward Williams Street, with the hopes of slowing vehicles down. Mr. Kucharsky notes the proposal includes properly designated and lined parking spaces, and additional traffic calming features such as striping. The next element is by Mall Street, using flex posts to prevent quick angled cut turns onto the street, which residents have complained about. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the design element will force cars to take the left perpendicular to the entrance to Mall Street, and also shortens the length of the crosswalk for pedestrians. The proposal removes the existing crosswalk just after the intersection of Mall Street as it is currently not accessible, and there is no entrance to the park at this crosswalk. Approaching Oliver Street, Mr. Kucharsky indicates the crosswalks will be left as-is. To address movement coming from Winter Street, flex posts are proposed to channel vehicles as they approach the intersection, to make a slower right hand turn and improve sight-lines for pedestrians at cross walks. Mr. Kucharsky also notes that the current striping of the center line is a bit closer to the park side, creating a wide lane on the opposite side, and that the proposal moves the center line over slightly. He adds that the walk signs and stanchions will be reintroduced as well.

Chair Shallop thanks Mr. Kucharsky and promotes the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. She opens the floor to Commissioners.

Commissioner Garmendia asks about the existing no parking area near the intersection with Oliver Street. Mr. Kucharsky explains that there is no parking within ten feet of a crosswalk from the approaching side per current ordinance and provides details on the striping. Mr. Garmendia asks if that crosswalk leads to an entrance to the park, and Mr. Kucharsky confirms.

Commissioner Swartz asks about the style of crosswalk at the Oliver Street intersection, and Mr. Kucharsky explains it is being maintained.

Vice Chair Papetti asks about the materials to be used for the crosswalks, and whether they will be paint or thermoplastic. Mr. Kucharsky indicates he is planning to use thermoplastic because of the high traffic. Mr. Papetti states that it not only lasts longer but is more visible in the dark and in the rain. Vice Chair Papetti asks about the project limits, noting there may be traffic calming issues in the area beyond the measures proposed. He specifically refers to the intersection with Winter Street, suggesting a big part of the issue is that it is a part of Route 114 and when people are coming from Winter Street onto North Washington, they can take a right turn without stopping, on a curve that is very shallow. Mr. Papetti also notes there is no stop sign for cars turning left off Winter Street as well. Mr. Kucharsky states the plan was for lower cost implementations, and that modifications to the intersection would require more study and resources, however, he does plan to look at it and utilize having more on-call engineers to evaluate potential solutions in the near future. He states this proposal is meant to be an interim measure.

Commissioner Swartz asks if the light at the intersection at Oliver Street will be a solid or flashing light, and Mr. Kucharsky states it is a pedestrian-activated light that currently exists and will remain.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Rich (no last name given) of 31 Washington Square states he was under the impression that the little stand up warning signs in the crosswalks were going to be replaced, and suggests they worked well to slow traffic, but the problem was that they got run over. He also echoes Vice Chair's Papetti's comments regarding the intersection with Winter Street, and discusses how dangerous the crosswalks there can be. Mr. Kucharsky confirms that the stanchions will be coming back.

Jen Santo introduces herself as Chair of the Salem Common Neighborhood Association. She indicates she lives on the corner of Washington Square North, Williams, and Mall Streets. Ms. Santo asks if the thermoplastic will be white or yellow like the center line, and Mr. Kucharsky explains it will be white. Ms. Santo next asks how many stanchions will be in the road starting by the statue, all the way to Winter Street. Mr. Kucharsky states there will be one in each of the three crosswalks. Ms. Santo notes this is Route 1A as well as Route

114 and asks if that means getting temporary rubber speed humps is not possible. Mr. Kucharsky states that is correct, design guidelines do not recommend them. Ms. Santos asks about placing them on Williams and Mall Streets if resources or funds allow, as they are cut-through streets, despite signs that state no thru-traffic. Mr. Kucharsky states they are planning to put speed cushions on Mall Street, and design plans will be presented related to that at the next TPC meeting.

Sue Formica of 13 Mall Street introduces herself and asks about potential signage at the crosswalk at Williams Street, noting that that crosswalk feels more dangerous because of the curve. As a result, she usually crosses at Oliver Street with her children. Mr. Kucharsky indicates they are looking into installing a crosswalk sign with LED lights at this location as well. Ms. Formica also notes that the faded crosswalk has decent visibility and emphasizes that it often feels safer than crossing at Williams Street. Ms. Formica asks about timing, and Mr. Kucharsky indicates he will be meeting soon with DPW to discuss striping, and that some of the signage has already been ordered. The hope is to be complete by end of May.

Gabriel Ciociola of 11 Winter Street introduces himself as the Vice President of the Salem Common Neighborhood Association, and states he is happy to see this work getting done. Mr. Ciociola thanks Mr. Kucharsky and the Commission for this initiative and asks if there is any plan to look at the streets around the Common as a whole, as this is one of four streets surrounding the park. Mr. Ciociola suggests looking at it as a complete unit. Mr. Kucharsky explains that all four streets are not being looked at currently, but that pursuant to surveys regarding the other corners, further work in the area will depend on budget and resources. Chair Shallop also explains that the Commission views these traffic calming measures as discreet projects throughout the City, and that there has been a focus on approaching them through an equity lens to make sure that the benefits reach throughout Salem, including areas with less active neighborhood associations.

Vice Chair Papetti also suggests piloting hardening the center line at the intersection of Winter and Washington Square North, when taking a left onto Winter Street to force people to take the turn more slowly.

## **Request for Traffic Ordinance Recommendation**

### **Federal Street**

Mr. Kucharsky presents the striping plan for the area, focusing on the intersection of Washington Street and Federal Street. He explains much of the striping is reinforcing what already exists, and identifies the metered spaces, including six angled spaces replacing four parallel spots on the North side of the street. He also identifies the location of flex posts and other vertical elements to narrow the roadway to calm traffic and reduce the length of crosswalks for pedestrians. Along the stretch of the courthouse, Mr. Kucharsky indicates they were able to fit in two more parking spaces. Mr. Kucharsky also identifies accessible spaces and parking for police working at the court houses. On the South side of Federal Street, he notes areas where parking is not feasible due to narrowness and multiple

driveways. Mr. Kucharsky explains that most of the buildings across from the court houses used to be law offices, but are now condos, which ties into the ordinance.

Chair Shallop asks if the cost of putting in the additional metered spaces balances with the expected revenues, and how those things are considered. Mr. Kucharsky indicates that these have been identified as some of the most coveted spaces at \$1.50 per hour and introducing more will bring in more revenue. He also notes that some of the work is done in-house for cost savings.

Next Mr. Kucharsky presents the ordinance sections that need to be rescinded, rescinded and replaced, and added associated with the proposed changes. Some spaces that were previously in front of law offices will be zoned as year-round resident permit parking, and he identifies the location of the metered parking and where it is being extended. The accessible space is being added in the ordinance to make sure it is accounted for.

Commissioner Swartz asks about the location of blue bikes, as he does not consider the current location ideal, and suggests perhaps looking into placing them on Washington Street around the corner. Overall Mr. Swartz states the plans and ordinance changes seem to make sense.

Vice Chair Papetti asks about the angled parking and whether back-end angled was considered, as he worries about the last car backing out into the crosswalk. Mr. Kucharsky states he can look into it.

Commissioner Garmendia notes the area by the post office on Gedney Street has a similar parking situation, and though is a lower speed and lower traffic area, is curious to see if there is any information regarding accidents from angled parking like that. He also suggests concrete rather than flex posts in that area to prevent cars from backing into pedestrians in the crosswalk.

Commission Lt. Tucker states that he likes the plans overall but agrees that the space on the end near the crosswalk could be a concern.

Chair Shallop asks about creating residential permit parking for the condos, when ostensibly the purchasers of the high-priced condos knew the parking situation prior to moving in. She questions whether this is an instance of taking spaces from the public and essentially granting them to the residents who have bought condos but is also sympathetic to the need for parking. She asks if anyone else has any thoughts on the matter.

Commissioner Garmendia asks if the residential parking is limited to people who live on Federal Street or people in the immediate area. Mr. Kucharsky explains that it is by zone, and this would be the green zone C, which includes a lot of the McIntire District, Lynde Street, and others. Mr. Kucharsky explains the zones a bit more, and notes that they are looking into reconfiguring them in some areas so that they make more sense.

Vice Chair Papetti states that each of the residential buildings does have substantial off-street parking associated with it, although he is unsure how that compares to the unit counts.

Mr. Kucharsky clarifies that much of the residential parking already exists in most of the area, just some of it is 24-hour resident permit parking and some is from 5PM to 8AM and otherwise metered.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Crystal Connors of 15 Lynde Street introduces herself and expresses support for extending the resident permit parking on Federal Street because she often needs to park there as there is a shortage of parking in the area. She notes that parking on Federal Street does not just support the luxury condo owners, but regular individuals as well.

Darina (no name or address given) echoes the comment of Ms. Connors and notes she and other neighbors have felt frustrated about the lack of resident parking in the area.

John (no last name given) of 32 Lynde Street asks if the plan adds residential spaces or takes them away in the end. Mr. Kucharsky explains that the recommendation would not create new spaces but re-designate them as residential spaces from spaces that were combination residential and metered. The commenter asks about parking spaces that are currently used, that while may not be legal, will not be possible with the spacings and rules regarding distance from driveways. Mr. Kucharsky notes staff did the best they could to fit in as many spaces as possible while keeping safety in mind.

Commission Lt. Tucker asks what the net gain of resident spaces will be, and Mr. Kucharsky states there are four spaces that are combination residential and metered that will become 24 -hour residential. Lt. Tucker notes the parking in the area is heavily utilized.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend the proposed ordinance changes associated with Federal Street to City Council. Commission Lt. Tucker seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed. The motion passes.**

### **Lynde Street**

Mr. Kucharsky presents the plan for Lynde Street, noting there is not as much going on as on Federal Street. He identifies existing striping that will be refreshed, proposed additional striping/hatching in no parking zones, metered spaces, and an accessible space that is being repealed as the resident that it was instated for has moved. He identifies other accessible spaces that will remain. Next, Mr. Kucharsky presents the proposed ordinances, and identifies those that are being rescinded, as well as other elements meant to clean up the existing ordinances. Some of the spaces are currently being used as resident parking and will be formalized as part of the proposed changes. Mr. Kucharsky also notes a fix to correct the distances of the parking zone, which currently extend it past the crosswalk into Federal Street. He suggests it must have been an error.

Chair Shallop asks about whether a service zone is needed in the area, and Mr. Kucharsky states one of the no parking areas might be a potential location if one is needed but that he will look into it further.

Commissioner Swartz states many of the nearby businesses around the corner do not have rear access for loading and suggests the south side near the masonic building makes sense for a service zone.

Commissioner Garmendia states he has a note from a resident on the street who could not attend and asks if it is appropriate to bring it up. Chair Shallop says it is. Mr. Garmendia states the resident of 28 Lynde Street is concerned about the metered parking on the opposite side of the street, as they feel it should be residential permit parking. The note discusses the lack of parking in the area, and difficulties particularly in October.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Kim Judkins of 15 Lynde Street introduces herself as a new condo owner, and echoes earlier comments about needing more resident permit parking in the area. She notes that many residences do not have off-street parking, and that at 15 Lynde has 36 units and seven parking spaces. Ms. Judkins also contends there have been issues with people parking in the tour bus parking area when it does not run in the off season. She argues there is more need for residential permit parking than metered spaces.

John (no last name given) of 32 Lynde Street states he has lived here for over 20 years and parking is always an issue. He states the meters across from his residence could certainly be switched over to residential.

Terry Reggipe of 28 Lynde Street, Unit D introduces herself and states she has lived here since 1999 and has seen many changes, some good, some not, but she agrees with everyone that has suggested the meters be made residential. She also expresses concerns that many people come down the road the wrong way.

Darina (no last name or address given) states that in front of 14 Lynde Street currently three compact cars can park there, and she asks if three compact spaces could be considered for that area.

Crystal Connors states that part of the reason there is not an even bigger backup of parking is because many of the residents park in the metered lots at night and move them during the day when they go to work. She stresses there is a complete lack of parking in the area.

Commissioner Swartz suggests making the tour bus space seasonal, noting the nearest one is near the Witch House. He also reiterates the need for a service zone.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Swartz motions to recommend the proposed ordinance language changes associated with Lynde Street to City Council. Commissioner Garmendia

seconds the motion. **The vote is five (5) in favor and none (0) opposed. The motion passes.**

### **October Resident Parking Ordinance Recommendations**

Chair Shallop reminds all that this discussion began at the last meeting and there were some recommendations to increase fines during October, but then it was discovered there may be even more fines to consider increasing.

Mr. Kucharsky explains that staff reviewed Section 17A of the ordinance where fines are listed. He notes there are various fines ranging from \$15 to \$50, including parking within ten feet of a hydrant, parking on a crosswalk, parking on a sidewalk, blocking a driveway or private road, blocking a bus stop, and parking in resident permit parking without a permit. The proposal is to maintain the existing year-round fine, but to increase the fines in October to \$75.

Chair Shallop thanks Mr. Kucharsky for his presentation.

Lt. Tucker also notes that parking in front of hydrant and crosswalk are automatic tows year-round. He states he is in favor of raising the fines in October, but also acknowledges those that also get towed will pay a hefty penalty.

Commissioner Garmendia asks Lt. Tucker how frequently these violations occur in October, and Lt. Tucker states it is difficult to say but that they certainly happen. He notes that the sidewalk parking is a year-round issue, as are resident sticker violations.

Chair Shallop states she supports raising the fines for October. Vice Chair Papetti states he is also in support.

Chair Shallop opens the floor to public comment.

Darina suggests raising the fines for cars that are not residents of Salem and keeping the fines regular for people with residential stickers. She states that the cost may not be much for a tourist visiting but could be high for someone living in town.

**Motion and Vote:** Commissioner Papetti motions to recommend the ordinance changes to increase the price of parking fines in October to City Council. 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**

Chair Shallop provides Commissioner Garmendia with a summary and recap of the ordinance changes that the Commission and staff have been working on to give the Commission the capacity and authority it was originally intended to have when the



Commission was created. She notes that language has been updated pursuant to working with Councilor Watson-Felt, and that she would like to put it on the next meeting agenda.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS SCHEDULE**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 13<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 at 6:00PM.

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

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