

Traffic Board Meeting
Aug. 13, 2009

Where – Aldermanic Chamber City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue

Date – Thursday August 12, 2008 @ 6:00PM

Attendance: Peter Miller, J. Gerard Carvalho, Michael Buckley (Traffic Board Members)
James Kotzuba, Director Traffic & Parking
Lawrence Murphy, Parking Coordinator Traffic & Parking
Laura Accaputo, Secretary Traffic Commission
Frank Wright, City Solicitor
Board of Aldermen Members: Dennis Sullivan, Tom Taylor, Walter Pero,
William Roche, William White, Robert Trane
General Public (from attendance sign in sheet): Lisa McFarren, Joe Grafton,
Joe Lynch, Arnold Melo, Danny Adams, Briana Pendleton, Courtney
O’Keefe, Ron Bonney, Justin Gruneau, Mary Haggerty, Terance Brennan,
Jeff Quatera, Richard Raiche, Elizabeth Ryan, Charles Roderick, Derek
Atkins, Skip Schloming, Reme Gold, Susan Axe-Brunk, Ray Zonghetti,
Tom Bent, Dan Maher, Steve Mackey, Rachel Silber, Barry Rafkind

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM

Item #1 – Review of petitions received on July 31, 2009. The petitions challenge the decision of the Traffic Commission on May 21, 2009 to extend the hours of operation of parking meters, increase rates of parking meters, and extend Resident Permit Parking city wide in the City of Somerville.

Item #2 – PUBLIC HEARING

Peter Miller explained that the Traffic Board was convened to hear matters of record ordered by the Traffic Commission with particular regard to 3 or 4 specific items. He explained the Traffic Board is the appeal board for residents to appeal a decision of the Traffic Commission.

They received 2 petitions, and will review certification of petitions and go forward to hear testimony before them. He explained the ground rules as follows: in addition to civility they insist that testimony be limited to 2 minutes in an effort to ensure everyone’s voice is heard. The Secretary will note speakers for public record.

Petition #1 – (87 signatures) Petition will be admissible

Motion to **Accept** made by Michael Buckley, 2nd by J. Carvalho, unanimous

Petition #2 – (47 signatures) Petition will NOT be admissible – (not enough signatures)

Motion to **Deny** made by Peter Miller, 2nd Michael Buckley, unanimous

Peter Miller asked if any groups were present and if they wanted to speak as a group or individually.

Lisa McFarren – Willow Ave

- Against city-wide permit parking
- Although she respects the Traffic Commission, she feels there was a “Lack of Communication” to residents regarding this issue.
- Her Alderman (Gewirtz) was not aware.

Alderman Taylor – gave statement to Board Members from Traffic Commission

- 1 – Notification was flawed
- 2 – Give public a chance to speak
- 3 – He received 3 or 4 dozen called from residents that feel Permit Parking is not needed everywhere and few want it.
- 4 – Traffic Commission did not allow him to speak

Peter Miller checked with Frank Wright from City Solicitors office as to whether or not the meeting was publicized. He asked James Kotzuba who said Traffic Commission meeting is posted 48 hours in advance and meetings are always held on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

Alderman White – we need to give residents a chance to speak. What will be the effect on businesses? Will there be an opt-out provision or a reverse application procedure? He has also received many complaints regarding the extension of meter hours.

Alderman Sullivan – agrees with changes but feels there was not enough communication for such “Sweeping Changes”

Alderman Pero – Supports Resident Only Parking as the central part of the city will be inundated with cars with the new “T” coming, however when we went through sweeping changes to trash regulations we went through months of input

Joe Grafton – Member Somerville First, affiliates w/SPARC

- In this challenging economy – this will have a large impact on Non-Profits, residents, visitors, businesses
- Controversial
- Somerville should do better, task force must take positive steps
- Somerville must be seen as a city OPEN FOR BUSINESS
- There will be long term implications and long term effects

Joe Lynch – Member of SPARC – at meeting as a private citizen

- No objection to increase of fees
- Turn Over Traffic Commission vote and return extension of hours to 8PM not 10PM in lots and on streets.
- RPP Citywide Overturn – Technicality “did not exclude Sundays & Holidays”
- Suggested T&P should hire a private firm to study impact of change

Arnold Melo – Albion St

- For city-wide permit parking

Dan Adams – 7 Garfield Av

- For city-wide permit parking

Courtney O’Keefe – SPARC Coalition, Davis Sq, Union Sq Main Streets,
Somerville local studio, Magoun Sq Neighborhood,
Somerville First.

- Against city-wide RPP
- Will have impacts on Artists, Residents, Businesses, Religious Community
- Ask T&P to repeal vote of 5/21/09 or modify hours to 2:30AM-10AM and on main streets 2:30AM-7:00PM
- Provide employee parking for non profit businesses

Ron Bonney – resident, business owner, chair of Chamber of Commerce

- Said this administration has been very transparent
- Chamber of Commerce – on line surveys
- Asked Traffic Commission to support changes made by Taskforce
- Portability of Business Permit
- Residential Permit technology – Kiosk Park Cards
- Businesses will sell Park Cards
- Thoroughfare list will be extended

Mary Haggerty – Cypress Street

- For city-wide permit parking

Justin Gruneau – Willow Av

- Against city-wide permit parking
- Process Flawed
- Has no problem with meter fee increase
- Put changes on hold – if it has to be then try for 2-hour except by permit

Terance Brennan – not a resident

- Against city-wide permit parking

- Aggressive enforcement is bad C
- Concerned with security when parking in different areas

Jeff Quatema – Cambria St

- Against city-wide permit parking
- Rents rooms to people for 6 to 9 months
- He would be interested in charging a higher fee for a temporary permit.

Richard Raiche – 35 Prichard Ave

- Process is legitimate – But not appropriate
- Somerville has no private lots for extended parking
- We need a public process
- Not against Permit Parking – implemented w/renewal dates
- For now all issues should be revoked and brought back for Review, too much too soon without proper consideration.

Elizabeth Ryan – Kidder Av

- Against city-wide permit parking
- Unnecessary burden to pay for temporary permit

Charles Roderick – Garfield Av

- For city-wide permit parking
- Has permit parking on his street and wants it limited to area

Derek Artkins – 4 Farragut Ave

- Against city-wide permit parking
- For meter rate increase, Against extension of meter hours
- Likes living on a non permit street
- City has a process for streets that want to become permit parking

Skip Schloming – Small Property Owners Association

- Should be an exception for company vehicles from 7AM-7PM

Remy Gold – Mudflat Studios

- Against city-wide permit parking
- Need affordable, safe permits for students and artists

Susan Axe-brunk – landlord 154 Walnut St.

- Against city-wide permit parking
- Currently has no problems parking

Ray Zongetti –Somerville resident, businessman, Chamber of Commerce, Parking Solutions Task Force

- Made sight visits to businesses and squares
- Task force is an ongoing work in progress

- 75% of the City is already RPP
- Task force will continue to listen to all concerns
- Patience

Dan Maher – Resident & Business Owner

- Against city-wide permit parking
- City should scrap the whole thing until studies are done
- City should look into a parking plan such as Redwood City, California

Rachel Silber – Rents studio on Vernon St.

- Against city-wide permit parking
- Would like to see a member of the Art Community on the Taskforce

Barry Rafkind – 4 Ossipee Rd

- Member of SPARC should be on the Task Force
- Against city-wide permit parking
- Permit parking should continue to be considered on a street by street basis
- Residents should have received more notification
- Feels it is all about generating revenue

Tom Bent – Resident & Business Owner

- Green Line Issues
- Redwood City, California parking solutions, such as implementing a Kiosk approach to meters
- Smart meter – credit, debit, or cash for payment
- Business owners are concerned with extended meter hours and worried about patrons not having enough time on meters

Alderman Trane

- For city-wide permit parking
- Concerned with all of the misinformation going around
- Resi-Stat Model
- Somerville is a city of Squares
- Task force is looking into technology notification
- Meter Labels with large print instructions
- First offense should be a warning only
- Still must work out issues

Public Hearing portion of the Traffic Board Meeting closed @ 8:05PM

James Kotzuba

- Somerville is a densely populated city
- 2/3 of the city streets are already Residential Permit Parking
- We have a robust Business Permit Program (used as a model for other cities)

- 20 of the Main Drags are currently 2Hr except by Permit 8AM-2:30AM and Residential Permit Parking 2:30AM – 8AM
- Still working out issues for artists on Vernon St, Non Profit Organizations, etc...

Item #3 – Deliberation

Item #4 – Decide by majority vote whether to repeal the Traffic Commission action of May 21, 2009 to change parking meter rates from \$.50 per hour to \$1.00 per hour
Motion to Decline repeal made by M. Buckley, 2nd J. Carvalho, unanimous

Item #5 – Decide by majority vote whether to repeal the Traffic Commission action of May 21, 2009 to extend hours of operation at all parking meters (except in Davis Sq and Magoun Sq) to 8PM
Motion to Decline repeal made by M. Buckley, 2nd J. Carvalho, unanimous

Item #6 – Decide by majority vote whether to repeal the Traffic Commission action of May 21, 2009 to extend hours of operation at all parking meters in Davis Sq and Magoun Sq to 10PM
Motion to Decline repeal made by M. Buckley, 2nd J. Carvalho, unanimous

Item #7 – Decide by majority vote whether to repeal Article V Section 5-7 “Residential Parking Program Approval Procedures” and implement Residential Permit Parking on all public streets in the City of Somerville Monday-Saturday, 24 Hours (effective 8-1-09)
Motion to Decline repeal made by M. Buckley, 2nd J. Carvalho, unanimous

Michael Buckley questioned the effective date of 8/1/09 and Jim Kotzuba explained that this will be delayed pending signs being posted and communication to residents.

Meeting adjourned @8:20 PM