

Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2019

The meeting was held at the TAB Building, 167 Holland St 2nd flr

Attendance: Thomas Graney, Mark Niedergang, Steve MacEachern, James Polito, Lena Webb

Staff: Laura Accaputo, Suzanne Rinfret, Jackie Stagnari, Dan Amelin, Adam Poliski, Nancy Salamoun, Dan Bartman

Other: Matt Mclaughlin, Gerry Ardolino

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

Item #1 – Motion made to acceptance the minutes from the November 14, 2019 Traffic Commission Meeting made by Thomas Graney, 2nd by Lt. Polito. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #2 – Request to relocate an existing Loading Zone sign on Somerville Avenue (located in front of #222 Somerville Ave, Vinal Bakery) approximately 20’ east, and installing a “No Parking” sign in the existing LZ location.

Thomas Graney made a motion to Approve, 2nd by Lt. Polito. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #3 – Request to install “No Parking 6AM-4PM; Permit Parking Overnight” signs on Somerville Avenue from #200-#220 to accommodate upcoming box culvert work. Due to the size of the contractor’s work zones, only one-way westbound traffic will be allowed between Target and Merriam Street. During daytime working hours, one of two available travel lanes is used by the contractor to haul excavated soil materials, which leaves only one usable lane. By installing these “No Parking” signs, it will allow for the existing parking lane to be used for two-way traffic during non-working hours.

Lt. Polito made a motion to Approve, 2nd by Lena Webb. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #4 - The Administration requests that the Traffic Commission amend Article XV Section 15-2.1 Residential Permit Parking of the Traffic Regulations to reflect updated conditions for obtaining residential parking permits.

- Thomas Graney stated he believes the public should have more time to dissect this policy as it will affect a lot of people. He believes the idea has its merits but doesn’t address the traffic problems new developments bring especially with the bridge closures. He also noted people over 65 should be exempt from these restrictions.
- Dan Bartman explained the purpose of this policy is to preclude the future residents of new development from creating additional traffic & parking problems, such as traffic congestion and on-street parking shortages, while helping to reduce air pollution and improve both pedestrian safety and emergency service response times. Additionally, this policy will help implement multiple objectives of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, SomerVision. He also noted it was decided that age is not a qualifier to determine if you need an automobile and therefore is not recognized as one of the exceptions for this policy. He then read a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document into the record and asked that the legal ad provide a link to the document.

- Mark Niedergang stated he has raised transparency issues before but there has been extensive public discussion of this policy during the last three years. He stated neighbors oppose new development because of parking issues and this new policy has tremendous support from the community.
- Matt McLaughlin, Ward 1 Councilor, stated he supports this policy and believes it is a vital part of the zoning ordinance. He explained parking is the number 1 issue at every development meeting. He believes this will address the housing shortage without causing parking issues. He also stated a 90 unit development on Beacon St agreed to forgo permits and for the first time ever neighbors did not oppose it.
- Thomas Graney stated his fear that this will eventually expand to include everyone within a ½ mile radius of a T Station and people with driveways.
- Mark Niedergang stated this policy will not take away existing parking permits.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to Approve, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Prior Business

Item #5 – Review of the Handicapped Parking space at 15 Russell Rd

- Mr. Ardolino raised the same concerns he has had since last February when the first trial period for this space was expiring.
- Nancy Salamoun stated she spoke with the applicant and the space is being used for pick up and drop off from medical appointments and per the regulations the space can be used this way.
- Mr. Ardolino also noted the applicant often uses the driveway at #17 when exiting vehicles as it is closer to her stairs. He believes this will open a can of worms if allowed.
- Mark Niedergang stated he cannot vote against a person that needs a spot. He suggested the Parking Department monitor the street regularly for violations and also noted he thinks it's terrible when people with driveways don't use them and would like the city to regulate that.
- The Chair made a recommendation that we table the item for an additional 90 days.

Thomas Graney made a motion to table the item for 90 days, 2nd by Mark Niedergang. Motion passed: 5-0.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:10pm, 2nd by Lt. Polito. Motion passed: 5-0.

The Chair made a motion to Table the item for 6 months, 2nd by Mark Niedergang. Motion passed: 5-0.