

Traffic Commission Minutes
June 22, 2017

Attendance: Thomas Graney, Stan Koty, Robert McWatters

Staff: Laura Accaputo, Terence Smith, Suzanne Rinfret, Brad Rawson, Mike Tremblay

Officials: Alderman Niedergang, Alderman Heuston

Other: Matt Dorenius, Bob Bouche, Kathy Bouche, Joann Manning, Mike Cahill

The meeting was held at City Hall, 93 Highland Av, Committee Room

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5pm

Item #1 - Request for the following parking regulation changes, on a 90-day trial basis:

- Conversion of approximately three existing resident permit parking spaces on Merriam Street between Somerville Avenue and the residential driveway approximately 75 feet south of Somerville Avenue to a loading zone; and
- Conversion of the existing temporal loading zone on Merriam Street approximately 120 feet south of Somerville Avenue to a resident permit parking space

The purpose of these requested regulation changes are to improve safe vehicle circulation on Merriam Street, and provide a more suitable location for loading vehicles in the vicinity of 40 Merriam Street (Bantam Cider Company).

- Terence Smith deferred this item to Brad Rawson
- Brad Rawson stated this request came as the result of meeting with the ward alderman and residents of the neighborhood. It is based on some quick studies of turning movements and radii and will be fine-tuned upon further review and studies.
- Alderman Heuston stated there was a petition to make Merriam Street a one way, the street is not wide enough for two way traffic and many cars have been side swiped. She noted that businesses in the area get deliveries and sometimes the trucks are 65ft long and block the street because the loading zone is not long enough. She explained this is part of a three step process and the second step will come in July. This will be a request to remove the jersey barriers at the end of the street which were placed there by the city. She stated the street cannot become a one way unless they are removed; another option would be to create a significant loading zone on Somerville Ave. She also requested, if approved, a notice be sent to Bantam Cider advising them of the new location of the loading zone.

Robert McWatters made a motion to approve, seconded by the Chair. Motion passed: 3-0.

Item #2 - Request for the following parking regulation changes, on a 90-day trial basis:

- Removal of one resident permit parking space on the north side of Murdock Street approximately 30 feet east of Cedar Street to allow extension of the intersection setback from 20 feet to 40 feet

The purpose of this requested regulation change is to improve pedestrian safety at the corner of Murdock Street and Merriam Street, since no sidewalks exist on Murdock Street and pedestrians are exposed to conflicts with vehicles turning from Cedar Street onto Murdock.

- Terence Smith deferred this item to Brad Rawson.
- Brad Rawson stated this request came as the result of a community meeting with the City Engineer, Ward Alderman, Director of Capital Projects, and residents of the neighborhood. He stated this is a temporary safety improvement.
- Alderman Niedergang stated there were residents in attendance regarding this item. He stated initially some residents advocated for removal of four spots on Murdock at Cedar, the conditions are very unsafe, due to the narrowness of the street cars are parked too close to houses and fences causing people to walk in the street. He invited the residents in attendance to speak on the item.
- Mike Cahill stated he agrees with the 20ft from the corner restriction but does not agree with restricting it an additional 20ft. He noted he would also like this done on the south side of Cedar St at Murdock St due to the poor sight lines.
- Matt Dorenius stated 20ft makes sense but losing an extra spot is tough and will be detrimental to the neighborhood. He is not in favor of losing a spot.
- Suzanne Rinfret clarified the first 20ft is not a spot as there is a 20ft restriction at all intersections in the city. If an additional 20ft is restricted that will result in the loss of one spot.
- Joann Manning stated there are two houses on Murdock Street with no driveway and those residents have to park on the street, where are they supposed to park if this is approved? She also stated this 20ft rule is not enforced anywhere else in the city.
- The Chair stated the 20ft restriction is a state law and has always been in existence. He noted it is always enforced in the winter otherwise the plows could not make the turns.
- Suzanne Rinfret stated it is always enforced if safety is compromised because safety vehicles cannot turn down onto streets. Thomas Graney agreed and stated the SFD notifies Traffic and Parking when trucks have a hard time getting down streets and asks for enforcement.
- Joann Manning asked why the fire hydrant on Cedar St is never enforced and Alderman Niedergang explained this was brought up at the meeting and Traffic and Parking has been monitoring it. Suzanne Rinfret noted she has been sending logs to Alderman Niedergang and they are checking the area three times per day. She also recommended residents call 311 so we can establish a trend of when cars are most often parking there.
- Alderman Niedergang also noted that many residents at the meeting were in favor of this request. The Chair requested this item be taken up at a future meeting and notification be sent to residents so they can attend. Alderman Niedergang stated he would send out the notification to residents.
- Alderman McWatters stated he would be opposed to losing four spaces and recommends the item be tabled until the July meeting so he can hear from more residents. He also requested a later meeting time so residents can make it to the meeting.

Robert McWatters made a motion to Table the Item, pending notification by the Alderman to the residents, to either the July 20th or August 17th meeting, meeting to be held at 6:30pm, seconded by the Chair. Motion passed: 3-0.

Robert McWatters made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:30pm, seconded by the Chair. Motion passed: 3-0.

