

Traffic Commission Minutes
October 8, 2020

The meeting was held virtually on Thursday October 8, 2020 at 5:30pm

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/679801861> (Please click this link to attend the virtual meeting)

Attendance: Steve MacEachern, Thomas Graney, Mark Niedergang, Lt. Polito

Staff: Laura Accaputo, Suzanne Rinfret, Anna Rebelo, Nancy Salamoun, Ally Kleyman, Brad Rawson, Ted Louis Jacques

Other: Steve Mackey, Tom Klessens, Sally Klessens, Bill Klessens, Margaret Klessens, Rocco Dirico, Jason McClellan, Ms. Santana Sky Braz Store, Karen Grenier, Michael Gillette, Carrie Weinstein, Sara Lennox, Larry Miller, Corey Gillette, Meg Guziewicz, Manuel Decosta

Item #1 – Thomas Graney made a motion to acceptance the minutes from the September 10, 2020 Traffic Commission Meeting, 2nd by Mark Niedergang. Motion passed: 4-0

Item #2 – Request for renewal of Handicapped Parking Space
15 Bartlett St

There were many residents speaking on this issue. There were several emails sent both in favor and opposed to this item. Since the meeting was held virtually and several people were speaking at once the following is a very generic recap of the main points made.

- Nancy Salamoun, ADA coordinator stated the applicant is currently hospitalized but this is her legal residence and the application meets criteria therefore she supports the request.
- Ted Louis Jacques, Director of Veterans Services, confirmed the applicant is a veteran.
- Many neighborhood residents spoke in opposition of the space, stating the applicant hasn't been seen at the premises in 5 years, does not drive and there is another recently approved HP space at this address. They believe there is no need for 2 spaces and provided pictures of the space being empty. It was also noted there is no accessibility to the home or ramps with the spot and they think the space was requested to gain a 2nd spot after a failed attempt to install a driveway.
- Many neighborhood residents and family members emailed and spoke in favor of the space, stating they have seen the applicant many times and that due to Covid she has been in the hospital recently but plans on returning home. They outlined a number of unpleasant interactions with neighbors and provided pictures of notes they received.
- An email was received from Dna. Maria St. Catherine McConnell, Veterans Advocate for US Army Disabled Veterans in support of the request.
- Mark Niedergang read the following list of questions sent to Suzanne Rinfret along with her answers into the record:

If the applicant is unable to physically drive a car, despite having a valid license, are they still entitled to the HP spot?

The Traffic Commission may consider applications for members of a disabled person's household, such as the parents of disabled children or children of disabled senior adults.

How is residency determined for the purpose of this application, i.e. if the applicant does not stay at the house much of the time, or hardly ever, is the address still considered their legal residence for the purposes of a handicapped spot?

The applicant must be the registered owner of the vehicle to be parked in the space. In addition, if the applicant is applying for an HP space with a placard, they must be the individual to whom the placard was issued. The applicant must also demonstrate residency at the location for which handicapped parking is requested. Residency was shown by the issuance of visitor permits, car registration and license to drive.

If someone else drives the applicant places, and that someone else has an HP spot, is the applicant entitled to their own HP spot?

Commission may consider applications for members of a disabled person's household, such as the parents of disabled children or children of disabled senior adults.

Are all the application materials provided and in order?

Yes, all materials were provided; application, registration, license and doctors note.

If all the application materials are in order, what discretion does the Commission have in terms of being able to legally reject the application?

Granting the spot is at the discretion of the commission.

- Mark Niedergang stated he understands the concerns of the neighbors, however due to the testimony heard at the meeting and the recommendation of staff he will support the request. He stated he hopes all involved will treat each other with respect going forward.
- The Chair asked when the next renewal would be and Suzanne Rinfret stated applications are renewed every 2 years.
- The Chair called for a roll call vote for Approval of the request. Thomas Graney voted yes; Lt. Polito voted yes; Mark Niedergang voted yes; and the Chair voted yes. The item was approved 4-0.

Item #3 – Request for removal of the “Shuttle Only” curbside regulation at Statue Park on Holland Street.

- Rocco Dirico, Director of Community Relations for Tufts University spoke in opposition of the request. He stated this is a free shuttle for students, faculty, staff and neighbors that connect people to small businesses that need support now more than ever. He stated they will explore alternate locations but need more time as it is challenging in such a dense city. He also noted removing this stop will incentivize students to use Uber, Lyft or drive.
- Jason McClellan asked they be allowed to find an alternative before the stop is removed as it is actively used.
- Mark Niedergang asked Brad Rawson why it was taking so long to find an alternative location and he explained several options are being looked at but they all have their drawbacks. He stated they all support finding another location that works for all parties as this shuttle provides a vital service.
- Mark Niedergang stated the request comes from the Council and reiterated they only want to move it not eliminate it. He read an email from Councilor Davis into the record outlining his concerns for public health.
- Jason McClellan explained the Covid precautions in place for the shuttle: it is currently operating at 50% capacity like the MBTA and drivers are tested twice a week and given PPE. The shuttle is disinfected throughout the day and in the evening. He noted the shuttle is on a continuous loop and only stops for active loading and unloading.
- Steve MacEachern asked how often the shuttle makes the loop and how many people ride the shuttle per day and Jason answered about 3 times per hour and approx. 200 people per day.
- Mark Niedergang asked if once a new location is found will it require Traffic Commission approval and if it could be implemented right away without legal advertising and Suzanne

Rinfret answered it could be approved temporarily for up to 180 days and implemented immediately without advertising. If they wanted it approved for longer than 180 days it would have to go back before the commission.

- Steve MacEachern asked how long Tufts would need to communicate the changes to riders and Jason McClellan stated 2 – 2 ½ weeks.
- Brad Rawson stated he was likely going to ask for a special meeting of the Traffic Commission on Nov 23rd.

Mark Niedergang made a motion to remove the Shuttle Stop no later than November 23rd, 2nd by Lt. Polito. Motion passed: 4-0.

Item #4 – Request for conversion of 2-hour except by permit parking spaces to metered parking in front of 415 Medford Street.

- Ms. Santana of Sky Braz store supports the request.
- Brad Rawson stated this request is from the business owner and both Councilor Clingan and Councilor Niedergang support it. The Mobility Division recommends 3 spaces be converted.
- Mark Niedergang confirmed he supports the request.

Thomas Graney made a motion to Approve, 2nd by Mark Niedergang. Motion passed: 4-0

Mark Niedergang made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7pm, 2nd by Lt. Polito. Motion passed: 4-0