

Traffic Commission Minutes
February 8th, 2024

When: Thursday February 8, 2024 at 5:30pm

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Attendance:

Traffic Commission members: Chair Jill Lathan, Councilor Naima Sait, Lena Webb, Assistant Chief Sean Tierney

Staff: Jackie Stagnari, Suzanne Rinfret, Anna Rebelo, Adrienne Pomeroy, Brad Rawson, Adam Polinski, Justin Schreiber, Lauren Craik, Laura Accaputo, Sgt. Michael McCarey

Other: Conor Brennan, Stefanos Stamides, Stephen Mackey

Meeting Ground Rules:

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:38pm.

The Chair asked the secretary to conduct a roll call vote for attendance.

Chair Jill Lathan – present
Councilor Naima Sait – present
Lena Webb – present
Assistant Chief Sean Tierney – present
Lt. William Rymill – absent

Item #1 – Acceptance of the Minutes from the January 11, 2024 Traffic Commission Meeting.

Motion to approve made by Lena Webb, seconded by Assistant Chief Tierney. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan-yes. Councilor Sait-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Assistant Chief Tierney-yes. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Item #2 – Request for an accessible parking space for 26 Merriam St. (to be located opposite 26 Merriam St.).

Item #3 – Request for an accessible parking space at 41 Montrose St.

The Chair requested that items #2 and 3 be bundled together. Adrienne Pomeroy, ADA Coordinator, stated she has reviewed these applications and supports approval of both spaces. She noted there is no parking on the even side of Merriam St., which is why the space will be located across the street.

Motion to approve made by Assistant Chief Tierney, seconded by Councilor Sait. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan-yes. Councilor Sait-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Assistant Chief Tierney-yes. The motion carried 4-0-0.

Item #4 – Request to change the hours of the loading zone at 223-237 Holland St. from 8:00am-2:00pm to 8:00am-12:00pm. The spaces would revert to metered parking from 12:00pm-8:00pm, and resident permit parking from 12:00am-8:00am.

Brad Rawson, Director of Mobility, explained that Councilor Pineda Neufeld submitted this item for the agenda and that the Commission has seen a few items in past meetings regarding loading zones, meters, and accessible spaces in the Teele Square business district. Adam Polinski, Senior Planner-Mobility, presented [this slide deck](#) which included information on the Holland St. project's background and timeline, as well as the summary of a video study conducted by the Mobility Department that observed parking usage on this stretch of Holland St. As a result of these observations, staff were not recommending any changes to the loading zone regulations in this area.

The Chair recognized three members of the public to comment on this item. Conor Brennan, owner of PJ Ryan's, shared that he cannot control when deliveries happen, stressed the need for parking to be available for his customers to come in during lunch time for longer than 5 minutes, and expressed concern that he has had to let employees go recently and seen other businesses in the area close. Stephen Mackey, Somerville Chamber of Commerce President, wished to be recorded in support of the business owners' request to reduce the loading zone times. He stated his opinion that these meetings should be public hearings. Stefanos Stamides, owner of

Angelina's Pizzeria, stated that he is also in support of reducing the loading zone times. Although a lot of his business is takeout, he has seen a reduction in people coming into his business to sit and eat lunch. He also cannot control his delivery times and has had to let employees go. He expressed concern for the neighborhood and its small businesses.

Councilor Sait asked why there were only two days studied and how those days were selected. Adam shared that this type of video study is a new process for the department and is fairly labor intensive. These two days were all they were able to study to have data available for this meeting. Chair Lathan asked if there were future plans to collect more data. Brad shared that this is a process they want to replicate and scale up in future projects. Councilor Sait expressed concern for the small businesses that attended this meeting, and suggested tabling this item to a future meeting to allow time for additional data collection. Brad stated that at this time, based on their citywide responsibilities, Mobility does not have the resources or staff time to support additional data collection in this neighborhood. He recommended that the Commission either accept or deny this item, rather than table.

Motion to approve made by Councilor Sait, seconded by Lena Webb. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan-yes, Councilor Sait-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Assistant Chief Tierney-no. Lena Webb then asked for clarification on what a yes vote was approving. The Chair clarified that an approval meant changing the loading zone hours from ending at 2pm to ending at 12pm and asked if Lena wanted to change her vote. Lena confirmed she wanted to change her vote to deny. The Secretary requested a re-do of the roll call vote on this item. **Chair Lathan reread the item and stated there was a motion to approve. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan-yes, Councilor Sait-yes, Lena Webb-no, Assistant Chief Tierney-no. Motion to approve did not carry (2-2-0).**

The Secretary called for clarification on the previous re-do of the vote, as it was not actively seconded. The item was re-read by the Chair, who asked for a motion to accept or deny. **Councilor Sait made a motion to accept, but there was no second.**

Motion to deny made by Lena Webb, seconded by Assistant Chief Tierney. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan-no, Councilor Sait-no, Lena Webb-yes, Assistant Chief Tierney-yes. The motion did not carry (2-2-0).

It was clarified that because both the motions to approve and deny did not carry, no action would be taken. The loading zone will remain in effect from 8am-2pm.

Councilor Sait left the meeting at 6:30pm.

Item #5 – Request to make the following changes to curbside parking regulations in the Brickbottom neighborhood:

- a) Regarding the curb on the east side of Chestnut St nearest 20-100 Chestnut Street, from approximately 40 ft south of Poplar St to 680 ft south of Poplar St, request to convert the existing four-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM to two-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM.

- b) Regarding the curb on the east side of Chestnut St nearest 20-100 Chestnut Street, from approximately 680 ft south of Poplar St to 700 ft south of Poplar St request to convert the existing four-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM to an Accessible Parking Space.
- c) Regarding the curb on the west side of Chestnut St nearest opposite 20-100 Chestnut Street, from Poplar St to Chestnut St, request to convert the existing four-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM to two-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM.
- d) Regarding the curb on the east side of Linwood St nearest 15-71 Linwood Street, from approximately 50 ft south of Poplar St to 620 ft south of Poplar St, request to convert the existing four-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM to two-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM.
- e) Regarding the curb on the east side of Linwood St nearest 15-71 Linwood Street, from approximately 620 ft south of Poplar St to Fitchburg St, request to convert the existing four-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM to Permit Parking Only at all times.
- f) Regarding the curb on the west side of Linwood St nearest 32 Linwood Street, from approximately 50 ft south of Poplar St to 610 ft south of Poplar St, request to convert the existing four-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM to two-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM.
- g) Regarding the curb on the west side of Linwood St nearest 32 Linwood Street, from approximately 610 ft south of Poplar St to Fitchburg St, request to convert the existing four-hour parking (except by permit) 8AM-2:30AM to Permit Parking Only at all times.

Brad Rawson shared that Mobility has been working with residents in the Brickbottom Artists building to try and make sure there is the right balance of different types of parking in this transitioning industrial warehouse district. Justin Schreiber, Senior Planner-Mobility, [presented slides](#) that showed the existing conditions as well as the proposed parking changes in this neighborhood. He noted that there is a 200-space underground parking garage at the new office building at 100 Chestnut St., but the current four hour except by permit regulations make it extremely easy for folks working in that building to simply utilize our on-street parking rather than use the garage. There are also a lot of contractors working on the various projects in this area, which contributes to a lack of turnover for these parking spaces.

Assistant Chief Tierney inquired about the reasoning for switching from four hour parking to two hour parking. Justin stated that this proposal is the result of working with a group of residents in the neighborhood. The four hour parking was a holdover from years ago, and the current parking system offers a number of different permits for visitors, artists, and contractors, which allows them to utilize two hour spaces past the time limit if needed. Lena Webb shared her appreciation for the focus on the turnover of spaces.

Motion to approve made by Assistant Chief Tierney, seconded by Lena Webb. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Assistant Chief Tierney-yes. The motion carried 3-0-0.

Item #6 – Request to make the following changes to curbside parking regulations on Inner Belt Rd:

- a) Regarding the curb on the east side of Inner Belt Rd, nearest 10 Inner Belt Rd, from approximately 20 ft south of Roland Street to approximately 360 ft south of Roland Street, request to convert unregulated spaces to 2 hour parking except by permit 8am-2:30am, and permit parking only 2:30am-8am.
- b) Regarding the curb on the west side of Inner Belt Rd, from approximately 160 ft south of Washington Street to approximately 260 ft south of Washington Street, request to convert taxicab stand to No Parking Any Time (between the two curb cuts on Inner Belt Rd adjacent to 30 Washington Street).
- c) Regarding the curb on the east side of Inner Belt Rd, from approximately 30 ft south of Washington Street to approximately 140 ft south of Washington Street, request to convert unregulated space to No Parking Any Time for the right turn lane (from Washington St to Roland Street, adjacent to the parking lot of 75 Crescent).

Lauren Craik, Planner-Mobility, explained Mobility has been working with the Parking Department to clean up a few unregulated or outdated parking areas in this area of Inner Belt Road. For item #6a, the proposal is to convert unregulated space to two hour except by permit parking. For item #6b, the proposal is to convert a taxi stand that is no longer in use to No Parking Any Time. For item #6c, the proposal is to convert unregulated space to No Parking Any Time. This space is used as a right turn lane.

The Chair recognized Stephen Mackey to comment on this item. Stephen reiterated his opinion that Traffic Commission meetings should be public hearings, and that the agenda should include who will be presenting each item. The Chair clarified that the information is available to people who request it ahead of time.

Motion to approve made by Assistant Chief Tierney, seconded by Lena Webb. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Assistant Chief Tierney-yes. The motion carried 3-0-0.

Motion to adjourn made at 6:51pm.

Motion to adjourn made by Assistant Chief Tierney, seconded by Lena Webb. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Assistant Chief Tierney-yes. The motion carried 3-0-0.