

Traffic Commission Minutes  
October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**When:** Thursday October 10, 2024 at 5:30pm

Agenda published 10/3/24

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83678746680> (Please click this link to attend the virtual meeting).

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2JVbHgJU\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2JVbHgJU_M)

**Meeting Ground Rules:**

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

Attendance: Chair Jill Lathan, Councilor Naima Sait, Lena Webb, Lt. William Rymill, Assistant Chief Sean Tierney

Staff: Josh Eckart-Lee, Brad Rawson, Viola Augustin, Anna Rebelo, Jacob Murray, Laura Accaputo

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.

The Chair asked for an attendance roll call to confirm a quorum.

Chair Lathan – present

Councilor Sait – present

Lena Webb – present

Lt. Rymill – present

Assistant Chief Tierney – present

**Item #1** – Acceptance of the Minutes from the September 12, 2024 Traffic Commission meeting.

**Motion to approve made by Councilor Sait, seconded by Lt. Rymill. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan – yes, Councilor Sait – yes, Lena Webb – yes, Lt. Rymill – yes, Assistant Chief Tierney – yes. The motion carried 5-0-0.**

**Item #2** – Request for an accessible parking space at 10 Cypress St.

Jackie Stagnari, Secretary, shared on behalf of Adrienne Pomeroy, ADA Coordinator, that she had reviewed the application, spoken to the resident, and recommended approval for the space.

**Motion to approve made by Councilor Sait, seconded by Assistant Chief Tierney. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan – yes, Councilor Sait – yes, Lena Webb – yes, Lt. Rymill – yes, Assistant Chief Tierney – yes. The motion carried 5-0-0.**

**Item #3** – Request to convert the two metered parking spaces at 2-4 Ibbetson St. to an electric vehicle charging station. The meters will remain active but will be restricted for use by actively charging electric vehicles only.

Josh Eckart-Lee, Sustainability Planner, explained that as part of Somerville's Climate Forward goal to expand publicly accessible level two charging stations across the city, they have been working with a firm to site new EV stations. This location at 2-4 Ibbetson St was one of the top rated locations according to [this report](#).

Chair Lathan expressed concern that this station is benefitting people from surrounding communities rather than Somerville residents. Josh shared that as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, Somerville has been matching the price of surrounding communities for charging and has noted a reduction in the number of unique users. Councilor Sait inquired about the criteria for the chosen locations and a map of all the recommended locations. Josh described various criteria used and the report for this site was shared on screen. Lena Webb asked if there was any data on residents who own EVs living in that area, and if that factors into the report. Josh replied that they do not have data tying car ownership to specific locations, but through the Sustainaville newsletter, they have done surveys to identify which neighborhoods throughout the City residents would like to see additional charging infrastructure. This part of the City already has the busiest station at the Veterans Memorial Ice Rink, so they see a need to amp up service provided in this neighborhood.

Councilor Sait asked if there is a way to track how often charging stations are being used. Josh replied that as the station owner, the City gets live tracking data for the number of daily users as well as the number of unique users. Since instituting the billing program in July, there has been a decrease in the number of unique users, indicating less random users from around the area and more consistent use from Somerville residents or workers/visitors. Councilor Sait inquired about the availability of chargers in surrounding communities. Josh shared that municipally managed and publicly available chargers are available to anyone, although some may have parking restrictions such as stations in Somerville that require a resident permit or a teacher permit in school lots.

**Motion to approve made by Councilor Sait, seconded by Lena Webb. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan – no, Councilor Sait – yes, Lena Webb – yes, Lt. Rymill – yes, Assistant Chief Tierney – yes. The motion carried 4-1-0.**

**Item #4 – Elizabeth Peabody House Loading Zone Request**

- Regarding the curb on the east side of Grant Street nearest 275-277 Broadway, from approximately 20 feet north of Broadway to approximately 80 feet north of Broadway, request to convert the existing Loading Zone from 10am-7pm on Wednesday to a Loading Zone from 7am to 7pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Brad Rawson, Director-Mobility, explained that the Elizabeth Peabody House requested a modification to their [existing loading zone](#) adjacent to their building on Grant St. They are scaling up their food pantry operation and are getting more frequent deliveries starting earlier in the morning.

**Motion to approve made by Lt. Rymill, seconded by Assistant Chief Tierney. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan – yes, Councilor Sait – yes, Lena Webb – yes, Lt. Rymill – yes, Assistant Chief Tierney – yes. The motion carried 5-0-0.**

**Item #5 – Columbia Street Curb Regulation Changes**

- a) Regarding the curb on the east side of Columbia Street nearest 516 Columbia Street, from approximately 30 feet south of Windsor Place to approximately 325 feet south of Windsor Place, request to convert the existing Two-Hour Parking regulation to No Parking Anytime.
- b) Regarding the curb on the west side of Columbia Street nearest 495 Columbia Street, from approximately 30 feet south of Windsor Place to approximately 60 feet south of Windsor Place, request modify the existing 8AM to 5PM Mon-Sat Loading Zone in the Traffic Commission Regulations Schedule C so that it refers to 495 Columbia Street instead of 517 Columbia Street, and request to convert the posted No Parking Anytime regulation to this Loading Zone.
- c) Regarding the curb on the west side of Columbia Street nearest 495 Columbia Street, from approximately 115 feet south of Windsor Place to approximately 250 feet south of Windsor Place, request convert the existing No Parking Regulation to be Two Hour Parking.

Brad Rawson, Director-Mobility, noted that this request does not involve a reduction in curbside parking space. He outlined the [existing conditions in this location](#), and stated that the developer is required to rebuild sidewalks adjacent to their site. This will result in new accessible sidewalks where none previously existed. The City is recommending that parking be relocated from its current side of the street, where there is no accessible path of travel, to the side where the new sidewalks are being built. The old loading zone was in the regulations but wasn't signed properly, so the City is also recommending that it be relocated and reestablished adjacent to the new development. Councilor Sait inquired about the timeline for this work. Brad shared that the sidewalks are currently being built and the parking flip could happen before the end of this construction season.

**Motion to approve made by Lena Webb, seconded by Councilor Sait. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan – yes, Councilor Sait – yes, Lena Webb – yes, Lt. Rymill – yes, Assistant Chief Tierney – yes. The motion carried 5-0-0.**

**Item #6 – Tufts Street Reconstruction Project Information**

- Informational item regarding the Tufts Street Reconstruction Project

Chair Lathan clarified that there would be no vote required on this item tonight. Brad Rawson, Director-Mobility, shared that as part of his team's process improvements, they have been coming to the Commission as the project sponsor before decisions are requested for large reconstruction projects. This is an informational item meant to inform the Commission about the community engagement process and design development and will be followed by a decision request in the coming months as design is finalized. Viola Augustin, Senior Planner-Mobility, shared [this presentation](#).

**Motion to adjourn made at 6:33pm.**

**Motion to adjourn made by Lt. Rymill, seconded by Assistant Chief Tierney. A roll call vote was taken; Chair Lathan – yes, Councilor Sait – yes, Lena Webb – yes, Lt. Rymill – yes, Assistant Chief Tierney – yes. The motion carried 5-0-0.**