

Traffic Commission Minutes September 1st, 2026 at 5:30pm

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Attendance: Chair Eric Weisman, Councilor Naima Sait, Lena Webb, Assistant Chief Sean Tierney, Lt. Michael Holland

Staff: Jackie Stagnari, Suzanne Rinfret, Brad Rawson

Other: Councilor Emily Hardt, Conor Brennan, Bridget Zerner, Marc Levy, Stefanos Stamides, Ewan Henrie, Jayashree Venkataraman

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:37pm.

Roll Call

Chair Eric Weisman – present
Councilor Naima Sait – present
Lena Webb – present
Asst. Chief Sean Tierney – present
Lt. Michael Holland – present

Item #1 – Approval of the Minutes from the August 4th, 2026 Traffic Commission Meeting.

A roll call vote was taken – Councilor Sait-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Asst. Chief Tierney-yes, Lt. Holland-yes, Chair Weisman-yes. The item was approved 5-0-0.

Item #2 – Request for an accessible parking space at 133 Ten Hills Road.

Jackie Stagnari, Staff Liaison, explained this request was from a resident for a new accessible parking space in front of their house. The application was reviewed by staff and recommended for approval.

A roll call vote was taken – Councilor Sait-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Asst. Chief Tierney-yes, Lt. Holland-yes, Chair Weisman-yes. The item was approved 5-0-0.

Item #3 – Request to remove the current loading zone 8am-2pm regulation from the three metered parking spaces at 223-225 Holland St. These spaces would then be regulated as metered parking from 8am-8pm.

Item #4 – Request to change the effective days of the three loading zone 8am-2pm spaces at 231-235 Holland St from Monday-Saturday to Monday-Friday.

Chair Weisman requested that items 3 and 4 be discussed together.

Councilor Hardt explained that as outlined in her letter to the Traffic Commission, she was bringing this forward on behalf of some small business owners in Teele Square. She expressed support for both safe streets projects and the city's valuable small businesses, including in Teele Square where there are both long standing and new businesses. She mentioned parking changes associated with the Holland St and West Broadway Reconstruction projects. She described the challenging design of the Teele Square intersection, including the location of the fire station, and challenges posed by delivery drivers not just in this location but around the city. She requested the Chair allow the business owners in attendance the opportunity to speak. The Chair agreed to give each business owner two minutes of comment time.

Conor Brennan, owner of PJ Ryan's, stated this process has been ongoing for a few years and that some adjustments have been made, including the relocation of the traffic signal. He discussed the request to remove the loading zone from the three metered spaces and stated that food and beverage businesses get deliveries on Saturdays.

Steve Stamides, owner of Angelina's Pizzeria, stated support for bike lanes and safety around Somerville and requested consideration of the elimination of the three loading zone spots to become general metered spots. He also mentioned the idea of reducing the times on the loading zone from 2pm to 11am to help with lunch business. He also said they do not get any deliveries on Saturdays and supported eliminating Saturdays from the loading zones.

Bridget Zerner, one of the owners of The Hollows, expressed confusion about the existing parking regulations and signs and said she'd heard similar things from other people. She stated support for the proposed changes to reduce the loading zone spaces and days.

Jayashree Venkataraman, owner of the Buzzin' Bean Café, said they experience issues with people not coming to the business because they can't find parking. She expressed support for the statements made by other business owners and the proposed changes.

Councilor Hardt shared on behalf of Mary Kurth, owner of Liars, that a lot of her business was driving in from outside of Somerville and she was already experiencing issues with parking.

Brad Rawson, Director-Mobility, shared that Mobility staff were there, listening, and appreciated the advocacy from Councilor Hardt and the small business community. He noted that Mobility

had not performed any technical analysis on this issue since 2023, that the Traffic Commission had discussed these issues in some detail in 2023 and 2024, and that they did not have any new information for the Commission at this time.

Asst. Chief Tierney stated he still had the same issues that he had when this was last brought up before the Commission, and loading zones were relocated from an alternate location. He noted there was still illegal loading taking place on Holland St and he could not take away a legal area to load or condone illegal loading. He explained when the southbound lane of Holland St is blocked, and there's traffic in the northbound lane, the fire department can't get by. He acknowledged the plight of small business owners but stated opposition to the proposed changes due to trucks loading in the travel lane and blocking the fire trucks.

Chair Weisman requested Asst. Chief Tierney to discuss specifically what the concern about the loading zone was. Asst. Chief Tierney stated the main concern was loading on the southbound side. He acknowledged the existing loading zones may not be used like they should be, that the main point of contention is trucks loading where they shouldn't be loading (not in the loading zone), and unless the loading zones were moved elsewhere, taking away the legal means to load was condoning illegal loading. He stated until the illegal loading activity in the southbound lane changes, he can't support removing loading zones.

Councilor Sait asked Asst. Chief Tierney to confirm that even with the present loading zones, he was still witnessing illegal loading, which Asst. Chief Tierney confirmed was the case. She also inquired if all the business had confirmed they did not get deliveries on Saturdays and if this illegal loading behavior had been observed on Saturdays. Councilor Hardt noted there was one business she did not have a chance to speak to, but the other businesses confirmed they do not get Saturday deliveries. Councilor Sait commented on the importance of not having illegal loading near the fire station and that she could not in good conscience vote yes for the item knowing it was still an issue even with the loading zones present. She inquired if the city has other locations where loading zones are not in effect on Saturdays and how enforcement would work. Suzanne Rinfret, Director of Parking, stated there were other loading zones in the city that operate Monday-Friday, and that it can cause a bit of confusion to add another regulation. She also noted that loading zones are not just for deliveries but also for quick pick up and drop off activities, such as grabbing a sub or a coffee. She also explained the city rebranded the loading zone signs to make it easier for people to understand the different uses of a loading zone.

Chair Weisman asked if Asst. Chief Tierney knew if illegal loading was occurring on Saturdays. Asst. Chief Tierney responded he did not have the data to answer that. Chair Weisman asked Suzanne if she had a sense of enforcement activity in this area and if people were being ticketed for overstaying their time in the loading zones. Suzanne said she would have to pull that data, but her sense was that people do not often get ticketed at the loading zone. She explained how loading zones are enforced by a Parking Control Officer.

Lena Webb asked if staff could speak about the history of the loading zone. Suzanne explained the loading zone requested to be eliminated was originally located on Moore St, but it wasn't working in that location since trucks couldn't navigate the turns and was relocated to Holland St. Lena asked if the business owners were able to control their delivery drivers parking in the

appropriate places. Jayashree stated she could tell their people to park in the loading zone. Steve stated he could talk to the managers and dispatchers that regulate their delivery trucks, noting that can be easier to do with family-owned small businesses than bigger companies. Bridget stated they could reach out to their delivery companies and noted there is a loading zone on Newbury St that is a shorter distance from their location. Conor stated he could ask the companies and asked if the Commission would accept documentation from vendors that stated Saturdays were not available for deliveries.

Councilor Hardt inquired if Safety Sticks could be used at this location to help with enforcement. Suzanne explained the Safety Stick doesn't work in a location where the parking is off the curb, such as on Holland St which has a protected bike lane against the curb. Lena expressed hope that delivery drivers would change their behavior and stated the importance of safe streets and emergency response accessibility. Councilor Sait stated she wanted confirmation from the remaining business that they did not have deliveries on Saturdays before voting on that item and inquired if there was an option to keep this item in committee. Jackie stated a vote to table the item would be in line with what the Commission has done previously. Councilor Sait stated she was ready to vote on item 3 tonight but would like the additional information for item 4. Councilor Hardt mentioned the remaining business is Basma Café and her guess was they don't receive deliveries on Saturdays.

Chair Weisman asked if there was utilization data for the two parking meters closest to the intersection. Suzanne said she could pull the data but it would take some time. Chair Weisman inquired about the parking regulation that existed where the loading zone was previously removed on Moore St and if that could be turned to metered parking to support the businesses. Asst. Chief Tierney noted there were two loading zones on Moore St that the businesses requested to move. Jackie clarified there was still one existing 40 ft loading zone on Moore St opposite Angelina's, and the 60 ft one on the side of Angelina's was removed. Chair Weisman asked about the history of the relocated loading zone. Suzanne clarified it was originally resident permit parking, changed to a loading zone during the Holland St project, then converted back to resident permit parking.

Chair Weisman asked if Asst. Chief Tierney could clarify the impact of illegal loading on this intersection and if it was potentially a life-or-death safety situation or an operational difficulty. Asst. Chief Tierney described the difficulty faced if a delivery driver is not at the vehicle or is in the process of actively unloading, and that the result could be that an apparatus couldn't get to a fire or other type of incident. Lena commented that in terms of a blocked bike lane, even a few minutes blocked could put someone in danger.

Chair Weisman confirmed with Suzanne that she could do her best to pull data on parking utilization on the existing meters in the area. There was a brief discussion on the process to table an item. Councilor Sait confirmed Councilor Hardt would reach out to the remaining business about the Saturday delivery question and communicate that to the Commission in time for the meeting next month.

Councilor Sait made a motion to table item #4. There was a brief discussion about whether to take the motion to table #4 first or vote on item #3 first. The Chair decided the Commission should vote on item #3 first.

A roll call vote was taken on item #3. Councilor Sait-no, Lena Webb-no, Asst. Chief Tierney-no, Lt. Holland-no, Chair Weisman-no. The item was not approved 0-0-5.

Motion to table item #4 for one month to the next meeting made by Councilor Sait, seconded by Lt. Holland. A roll call vote was taken – Councilor Sait-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Asst. Chief Tierney-yes, Lt. Holland-yes, Chair Weisman-yes. The motion to table was approved 5-0-0.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Sait at 6:38pm, seconded by Lena Webb.

A roll call vote was taken – Councilor Sait-yes, Lena Webb-yes, Asst. Chief Tierney-yes, Lt. Holland-yes, Chair Weisman-yes. The motion to adjourn was approved 5-0-0.

Referenced Documents:

- Teele Square Loading Zone request to Traffic Commission Letter
- Holland St Parking Regulations Map
- Traffic Commission Minutes from February 8th, 2024 Meeting