

Duluth Parking Commission
Fifty-Fourth Meeting
7:30 a.m. Friday, August 4, 2017
City Council Chambers, Duluth City Hall

Members Present

- Andy Goldfine, Vice President
- Noland Makowsky
- Andy McDonald, President
- Jessica Sterle
- Karin Swor

Members Absent

- Howie Hanson

Guests Present

- Erica Backstrom, Duluth resident
- Mark Bauer, Parking Operations Specialist – City of Duluth
- Doug Melander, Duluth Operations Manager – Interstate Parking Company, Inc.
- James Watschke, Water Street Stakeholder
- Jeff Wilmot, Water Street Stakeholder

Approval of Amended June 2017 meeting minutes

Commissioner Noland Makowsky motioned to approve amended June 2017 Duluth Parking Commission minutes. Commissioner Andy Goldfine seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Approval of July 2017 meeting minutes

Commissioner Karin Swor motioned to approve the minutes of the July 2017 Duluth Parking Commission meeting. Commissioner Jessica Sterle seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Community input on Water Street parking configuration

Water Street stakeholders James Watschke and Jeff Wilmot inquired into the status of the response to their previous expression of concern regarding access to a fishing area on Water Street. City of Duluth Parking Operations Specialist Mark Bauer stated that he had forwarded their concerns, along with suggestions originating in the July parking commission meeting for potential improvements to parking in the area, to the City's engineering, parks, and community planning divisions. Mr. Bauer stated that he would provide Mr. Watschke with contact information for the applicable City divisions to aid in his follow-up on the matter.

Continuation of discussion on residential permit parking zone enforcement practices

Mr. Bauer introduced Duluth resident Erica Backstrom and explained that she had expressed concern regarding the ticketing practices of parking division staff with regard to enforcement of the Duluth East High School Residential Permit Parking Zone. Mr. Bauer stated that parking staff had responded to a complaint of possible misuse of residential zone visitors' permits at Ms. Backstrom's address, visited the address to verify whether the permit-holder was on the property at the time of use, and issued a citation after there was no answer at the door. He stated that the program parameters required the visitor's permit user to be present at the property while the permit was in use. Ms. Backstrom stated that her family's nanny was at the home at the time of the staff visit but had been instructed not to answer the door. Commission President Andy McDonald stated that it seemed excessive to require visitors to remain at a home for the entire duration of a visit. Commissioner Sterle stated that the definition of "visiting," as referenced in the applicable Duluth City Code, was not clear. Ms. Backstrom stated that the program parameters should be enforced as written and added that she should be allowed to appeal the citation that had been issued to her nanny on the nanny's behalf, since she was the issuer of the permit related to her address. Mr. Bauer stated that only the party to whom the citation was issued, or the vehicle owner, could appeal a citation, due to legal concerns regarding privacy and data practices regulations. He stated that, to date, the citation had not been appealed. Ms. Backstrom stated that a phone call should have been made by the parking division to her to verify whether the parker was on-site. Commissioner McDonald asked the parking division to explore the possibility of other methods of verifying that a visitor is on-site while using a permit, perhaps by attempting to directly contact the property owner. Commissioner Goldfine motioned that the parking division be asked to explore the possibility of adding a step to the process of verifying that a parker is on the property at the time a visitor's permit is in use, as well as work toward clarifying the section of City Code that defines "visiting" a property with regard to parking. Commissioner Sterle seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Proposal to add single-space meters to a portion of West Superior Street

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to add five single-space parking meters to a section of the 200 block of West Superior Street. He stated that the area was currently unregulated, having previously featured a bus stop that was no longer in use. Commissioner Swor recommended that one of the five new spaces be designated an ADA-only space. Commissioner Makowsky motioned that a configuration featuring four new meter stalls and one ADA stall be approved. Commissioner Sterle seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Proposal to reconfigure parking related to the conversion of certain downtown avenues to two-way traffic

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal, updated from the July 2017 parking commission meeting, to reconfigure parking on sections of 3rd Street and 1st Street related to the ongoing conversion of the adjoining avenues from one-way to two-way traffic. He stated that the recommendations had been brought to the parking division by the traffic engineering division and that the purpose of the changes was to accommodate adjusted bus stop locations while enhancing sightlines for drivers and pedestrians approaching the intersections. He provided an updated map, converted from the traffic engineering division's original map by the parking division, which illustrated the relocations of two bus stops, parking setbacks on 3rd Street from 1st Avenue West, 2nd Avenue West, and 3rd Avenue West, and the relocation of a loading zone near the intersection of 1st Street and 2nd Avenue West that would require the elimination of one single-space meter. Commissioner McDonald stated that he supported the conversions of the avenues from one-way to two-way traffic. Commissioner Makowsky inquired about the reason 1st and 3rd Streets required configuration changes regarding sightlines and 2nd Street did not. Mr. Bauer stated that he would relay the question to traffic engineering division staff. Commissioner McDonald stated that while he supported the proposed parking configuration changes, he recommended that more effort be made by the applicable city division in the future to gather stakeholder feedback in the affected area. Mr. Bauer stated that he would relay this request to the appropriate city divisions. Commissioner Goldfine motioned that the proposal be approved, along with the recommendation that more robust feedback be gathered prior to future similar proposals. Commissioner Makowsky seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Proposal to convert a loading zone on East 2nd Street to four-hour time limit parking

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to convert a loading zone on East 2nd Street to four-hour time limit parking. He stated that the zone had previously been associated with an adjacent building but that the building was no longer in use. Mr. Bauer stated that the parking division recommended aligning the parking configuration to that of the surrounding area, which featured a four-hour time limit. Commissioner Goldfine motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Swor seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Proposal to extend setbacks from a driveway on 29th Avenue West

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to extend setbacks from the driveway that serves the United States Postal Service facility on 29th Avenue West beyond the standard 7' distance specified by City ordinance. He stated that the request had been brought to the City's traffic engineering division by the USPS, whose management reported that truck drivers accessing the facility had been experiencing difficulty with sightlines and turning radii into and out of the driveway. Mr. Bauer stated that the area stakeholders had been consulted on the request and were not opposed to the proposed change. Commissioner Sterle motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Swor seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Off-street parking update

Interstate Parking Company Duluth Operations Manager Doug Melander provided an update on off-street parking operations. He stated that LED lights would soon be installed in the ramps that did not already feature them and described upcoming facility repair projects, including structural repairs to the HART District Ramp's parking decks and installation of a new vehicle barrier at Library/Depot Upper Lot. Commissioner Goldfine inquired whether the Civic Center Public Ramp had been negatively affected with regard to occupancy by recent layoffs at Maurices. Mr. Melander responded that he had noted a recent decrease in revenue that could be associated with the layoffs and stated that he would continue to work on marketing and promotion of the facility. He also noted that he would work toward a solution regarding possible confusion resulting from "Open/Closed" signage in the facility's middle lane that could cause parkers to misunderstand whether the ramp and lane were open or closed.

On-street parking update

Mr. Bauer provided an update on the ongoing implementation of the citywide mobile parking payment system. He stated that the parking division had completed documentation and mapping of the existing system and was working through the programming and marketing details with the new vendor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bauer
Parking Operations Specialist