

Duluth Parking Commission
Fortieth Meeting
7:30 a.m. Friday, December 4, 2015
City Council Chambers, Duluth City Hall

Members Present

- Craig Chilcote, Vice President
- Linda Krug
- Steve LaFlamme, President
- Andy McDonald
- Chad Smith
- Karin Swor
- Matthew Kennedy, Ex Officio

Members Absent

- Andy Goldfine

Guests Present

- Mark Bauer, Parking Operations Specialist – City of Duluth
- Austin Brandon, Stakeholder – Chester Way
- John Clark, Duluth Operations Manager – Interstate Parking Company
- Nicole Forster, Resident – Chester Way
- Bob LeDoux, Street Maintenance Supervisor – City of Duluth
- Garner Moffat, President – Lincoln Park Business Group
- Jenn Reed Moses, Planner II – City of Duluth
- Scott Sutherland, Resident – Morris Thomas Road

Approval of 11/6/15 meeting minutes

Commission Vice President Craig Chilcote motioned to approve the November 2015 meeting minutes without change. Commissioner Linda Krug seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

Temporary allowance for Chester Way duplex residents to park within the Lyons Street residential parking zone

City of Duluth Parking Manager Matthew Kennedy described a proposal (that previously had been discussed in the November 2015 Duluth Parking Commission meeting) to grant an allowance to residents of two duplexes at 135/137 and 145/147 Chester Way to park within the nearby Lyons Street residential permit parking zone. City of Duluth Parking Operations Specialist Mark Bauer stated that he had spoken with the owner of the properties and that the owner had requested a total of 16 residential zone parking permits, four for each of the four residential units that comprise the two duplexes. Nicole Forster, a resident at one of the properties, stated that residents have been parking on Chester Way, even though parking is prohibited on the street. She stated that the residents are afraid of sliding off the steep access driveways leading to the two off-street parking areas that serve the properties.

Commissioner Krug stated that she was disappointed that the properties' developer had not provided adequate off-street parking for the residents. Commission President Steve LaFlamme stated that the root of the problem seemed to be the responsibility of the developer, as did Commissioner Karin Swor. Commissioner Chilcote stated that he was disappointed that the developer chose not to attend the parking commission meeting despite being invited. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned that a provision for eight Lyons Street residential permits, to be issued on a first-come, first-served basis, be approved through the end of the current enforcement season. Commissioner Swor seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

Morris Thomas Road configuration discussion

Mr. Kennedy described a proposal by Scott Sutherland, a resident at 2433 Morris Thomas Road, to convert the existing weekly alternate side parking configuration on his block of Morris Thomas Road to either both-sided parking or north-sided-only parking. Mr. Bauer described the proposal in additional detail and indicated that there seemed to be a discrepancy between Mr. Sutherland's description of safety concerns with the current parking configuration and his requested first-choice solution. Mr. Bauer noted that Mr. Sutherland's first choice for a new configuration, both-sided parking, would not address his concern that vehicles traveling Morris Thomas Road in snowy or icy conditions could slide into vehicles parked on the south side of the street. Mr. Bauer stated that he had spoken with the manager of the City of Duluth Street Maintenance Division and that the manager did not support the configuration change. He explained that the manager also had informed him that the referenced section of Morris Thomas Road is one of the first areas to be plowed and salted during a snow event. Mr. Bauer additionally noted that the typical on-street parking demand on the block is very low. Mr. Sutherland stated that the residents know not to park on the south side of the street. City of Duluth Street Maintenance Supervisor Bob LeDoux stated that his division did not support Mr. Sutherland's requested configuration conversion, declaring that such a change would severely impede his crew's snow removal activities. Commissioner Krug motioned that the referenced portion of Morris Thomas Road retain its alternate side parking configuration. Commissioner LaFlamme seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

Discussion of on-street metered parking in Lincoln Park

Mr. Kennedy introduced the topic of on-street metered parking in Lincoln Park. He reported that the Lincoln Park Business Group recently had requested a review of the necessity of retaining the current single-space parking meters that are located along three blocks of West Superior Street in the business district. He stated that a limited review had been conducted by the City of Duluth in December 2010 and that, in January 2011, the city council had decided to keep the meters in place. Garner Moffat, president of the Lincoln Park Business Group, requested that the city conduct a new study in Lincoln Park, citing low parking demand and business competition with other areas of Duluth as reasons to possibly eliminate the paid parking configuration. He stated that the business group would prefer that the three blocks feature a two-hour time limit on complimentary parking. Commissioner Andy McDonald stated that the Metropolitan Interstate Council in 2002 had performed a study of Lincoln Park that encompassed parking and said that he would share the council's report from that study with the city parking division. Mr. Kennedy asked Mr. Moffat for the minutes of the business group meeting that featured this item, and Mr. Moffat agreed to provide them. Commissioner Krug motioned that the parking division perform a new study of the utilization dynamics of the on-street meters in Lincoln Park and survey the opinions of the area stakeholders regarding the continued use of metered parking. Commissioner Swor seconded the motion, which was adopted 6-0.

Planning division update on Superior Street redevelopment plan

Jenn Reed Moses, a planner for the City of Duluth, provided an update on the Superior Street redevelopment plan. She described the process the planning division had used to acquire feedback on the different proposed plans, and she provided a general description of the plan that eventually was chosen. She stated that this plan will result in a small net increase in parking spaces on Superior Street but that each block would vary regarding net gains or losses. Ms. Reed Moses stated that the resolution authorizing the project would be presented to the city council on 12/14/15 and that the final design would be completed by the end of 2016. She stated that the project itself would be completed during three construction seasons, 2017 through 2019. She added that there were plans for a "pop-up" test bicycle facility on Michigan Street, along the proposed on-street bicycle lane, tentatively in mid-2016.

Discussion of Technology Village Ramp rate adjustment

Mr. Kennedy introduced a proposal to reopen the discussion on a monthly contract parking rate adjustment at Technology Village Ramp. He stated that the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee in its 11/30/15 meeting had discussed the November 2015 parking commission resolution to raise the reserved and non-reserved monthly parking rates by \$25.00 each and that the group had requested reconsideration of this plan. Commissioner LaFlamme stated that he was concerned that the rate increase would be perceived by the public as primarily a revenue-generating action, rather than its actual intention to reduce demand at the routinely-full facility by encouraging parkers to utilize other facilities. He asserted that parkers at the ramp currently do not have other options for parking in the vicinity (due to waiting lists at other facilities) and said that it is unlikely they would be willing to walk from the facilities to the east of Technology Village Ramp without an additional skywalk connection. Commissioner LaFlamme also stated that a substantial increase might impose a hardship on organizations that already had determined their 2016 budgets. Commissioner McDonald suggested that further study and feedback-gathering from stakeholders be performed to determine the potential impact of a rate increase on monthly parkers' consideration of different parking facilities or alternative transportation options. He suggested that those who currently are on the monthly contract waiting list, as well as current monthly parkers, be included in the surveys. Commissioner McDonald motioned that the parking commission resolution to raise the Technology Village Ramp monthly rates be reversed and revisited following further study. Commissioner Krug seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

On-street ADA signage requests

Mr. Bauer described two requests for on-street ADA parking signs, one at 1108 East 8th Street that would serve Trinity Lutheran Church, and another at 12 East 4th Street that would serve One Roof Community Housing. He stated that he had visited both sites and recommended both requests. Commissioner Chilcote motioned that both requests be approved. Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

2016 parking fund budget discussion

Mr. Bauer described the main points of the proposed 2016 parking enterprise fund budget. Mr. Kennedy stated that the parking division did not bond for capital expenses in 2015, particularly for the new access and revenue control equipment in the three large municipal parking ramps, instead financing the new equipment with city parking enterprise fund money. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned to approve the 2016 parking enterprise fund budget as presented. Commissioner Chilcote seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. (Commissioner Krug had left the meeting by this time.)

Discussion of proposed 2016 parking commission meeting dates

Mr. Bauer stated that a list of proposed 2016 Duluth Parking Commission meeting dates was included in the commissioners' meeting packets.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bauer, CPP
Parking Operations Specialist

Matthew Kennedy, CAPP, CPP
Parking Commission Secretary