



# City of Duluth

411 West First Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

## Minutes

### Parking Commission.

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Friday, July 7, 2023

7:30 AM

Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, City Hall

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#### ROLL CALL

##### Members Present

- Antonio Davis
- Mike Mayou
- Branden Robinson, Vice President
- Brandon Van Tassel
- Robert Woods, President
- Mark Bauer, Ex Officio

##### Guests Present

- James Arndt, Duluth resident
- Carl Crawford, Human Rights Officer – City of Duluth
- Ari Eilola, Duluth Operations Manager – Interstate Parking Company
- James Gittemeier, Senior Transportation Planner – City of Duluth
- Christina Makowsky, Duluth resident
- Noland Makowsky, Duluth resident
- Nicole Otjess, Duluth resident
- John Ramos, Investigative Reporter – Duluth Monitor
- Mike Rasmusson, Duluth resident
- Terese Tomanek, Duluth City Councilor At-Large

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### Approval of March 2023 meeting minutes

City of Duluth Parking Services Manager Mark Bauer presented the March 2023 Duluth Parking Commission meeting minutes for approval. Commission Vice President Branden Robinson motioned that the minutes be approved as presented. Commissioner Mike Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 4-0 (Commissioner Antonio Davis had not yet arrived).

#### ON-STREET ACCESSIBLE PARKING ZONE REQUESTS

##### On-street accessible parking zone requests

Mr. Bauer presented eight on-street accessible parking zone requests for review and potential approval. He stated that he had visited all the sites, consulted with the applicants, and reviewed the requests with the City Commission on Disabilities. Mr. Bauer added that the signage had preemptively been installed for the zones in accordance with standard practice in cases in which Commission review is delayed due to quorum challenges, with the proviso that such signage would be removed should the recommended zones not be approved. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the request for 32 North 63rd Avenue West

be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Mayou motioned that the request for 610 North 57th Avenue West be approved. Commissioner Brandon Van Tassel seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the request for 2305 West Superior Street be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Van Tassel motioned that the request for 1058 87th Avenue West be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the request for 5806 Elinor Street be approved. Commissioner Van Tassel seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Mayou motioned that the request for 614 North 60th Avenue West be approved. Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Van Tassel motioned that the request for 4817 West 4th Street be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Van Tassel motioned that the request for 507 North 22nd Avenue West be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

#### UPDATE ON DISCUSSION OF GENERAL FUND TRANSFER FROM PARKING FUND AND PUBLIC SAFETY

##### Update on discussion of General Fund transfer from Parking Fund and public safety

Mr. Bauer updated the Commission on the status of the questions regarding the annual transfer from the Parking Fund to the City's General Fund which had been requested by City Chief Administrative Officer Noah Schuchman for communication with the City's Finance Department. He informed the Commission of the answers that had been received from the Finance team:

1. What is the formula used to determine the dollar amounts of annual transfers to the City's General Fund from the City's enterprise funds? Finance: We are unaware of a formula used to determine the dollar amounts.
2. How often are the General Fund transfer amounts from City's enterprise funds reviewed and changes recommended? Finance: They are reviewed annually during the budget process.
3. What are the process and criteria for making changes to annual General Fund transfers from City enterprise funds? Finance: It depends on the transfer – it may require legislative change authorization (State, City Council) or the submission of a proposal with a suggested source for replacing the transfer revenue (such as a property tax levy increase).
4. Who determines the dollar amounts of the annual General Fund transfers, and who has the authority to make changes to these amounts? Finance: It depends...some are legislated. Authority is dependent on the transfer regulations (if any). Otherwise, administration ultimately approves non-legislated changes. We are required to submit a balanced budget for the general fund.
5. What strategies could be implemented in order to reduce the General Fund's dependence upon receiving such a large transfer from the Parking enterprise fund, perhaps as part of a five-year fund recovery plan? Finance: An increase in the property tax levy. Also when we're talking about a five-year recovery plan – remember – the City gave the parking fund \$500k of ARPA funds and forwent the parking transfer to the general fund (\$1.3M) in 2020 in exchange for the cost of snow emergency signs (approx. \$600k). The City is supporting two new RED ramps of which profits will go to the parking fund.

Mr. Bauer stated that even though the Parking Fund's revenues had recovered

somewhat, due primarily to parking rate increases, the Parking Division's ability to address basic public safety needs at the parking facilities, repair outdated and rapidly-failing access and revenue control equipment across the parking system, and to upgrade equipment to current standards and public expectations would continue to be severely limited without adjustment to the annual transfer amount or funding from another source. He stated that continuing to raise public parking rates would not constitute a wise or sustainable long-term plan. Commissioner Robinson motioned that a formal request be transmitted to City Administration that the Duluth Parking Commission be involved in the annual discussion of the General Fund transfer amount from the Parking Fund. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

#### PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE PARKING ON A PORTION OF 57TH AVENUE WEST

##### Proposal to eliminate parking on a portion of 57th Avenue West

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to eliminate a small section of parking on the east side of 57th Avenue West, near the point at which the Cross-City Trail crosses the avenue. City of Duluth Senior Transportation Planner James Gittemeier described the proposal, indicating that the equivalent of three parking stalls would be eliminated in order to line up the crossing of the Cross-City trail from the east with its corresponding access point on the west side of the avenue at 90 degrees perpendicular to the roadway. Commissioner Robinson inquired whether this was part of a larger plan for the Cross-City Trail; Mr. Gittemeier replied that it was. Commission President Robert Woods asked whether the City's Parks and Recreation Division had been consulted on the proposal. Mr. Gittemeier replied that they had been consulted and were supportive. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

#### PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A PARKING PROHIBITION ON THE EVEN SIDE OF 3RD STREET FROM MESABA AVENUE TO 12TH AVENUE EAST

##### Proposal to establish a parking prohibition on the even side of 3rd Street from Mesaba Avenue to 12th Avenue East

Mr. Bauer introduced a proposal to formally prohibit parking on the even side of 3rd Street from Mesaba Avenue to 12th Avenue East. He stated that a State of Minnesota project to improve the roadway was upcoming and that the State had requested a formal action to reaffirm the existing configuration that featured the parking prohibition. Commissioner Robinson asked whether the parking prohibition could extend all the way to 21st Avenue East. Mr. Bauer stated that this would be a possibility in the future but recommended that the proposal be approved as presented for the time being. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

#### PROPOSAL TO RECONFIGURE PARKING ON A PORTION OF THE 300 BLOCK OF EAST 2ND STREET

**Proposal to reconfigure parking on a portion of the 300 block of East 2nd Street**  
Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to reconfigure parking on the even side of the eastern portion of the 300 block of East 2nd Street. He stated that he had met onsite with representative of the Twin Ports Area Intergroup, who had requested in a previous Parking Commission meeting that improvements be made to the area's parking configuration that would allow for more short-term parking availability for visitors to their help center, which provides support to individuals recovering from addiction. Mr. Bauer noted that the area to the immediate west of the TPAI features multi-tenant residential buildings and that the proposed configuration allowed for non-time-limited parking on the western portion of the block to serve the residential needs while implementing a two-hour time limit on the eastern portion that would provide greater short-term parking availability for the center. Commissioner Mayou motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

#### PROPOSAL TO RECONFIGURE PARKING ON A PORTION OF THE 1800 BLOCK OF WEST MICHIGAN STREET

**Proposal to reconfigure parking on a portion of the 1800 block of West Michigan Street**  
Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to reconfigure parking on a portion of the 1800 block of West Michigan Street at the request of the Enger Lofts management team. He stated that there were concerns that vehicles were parking too close to the stop sign at the intersection of 19th Avenue West and Michigan Street as well as a need for a designated loading zone for the Enger Lofts building. Mr. Bauer presented a plan that would include both of those elements. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

#### PROPOSAL TO RECONFIGURE PARKING ON A PORTION OF NORTH 4TH AVENUE EAST

**Proposal to reconfigure parking on a portion of North 4th Avenue East**  
Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to convert North 4th Avenue East from 4th Street to 7th Street from several different parking configurations to a consistent no parking 1:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. configuration. He stated that parking staff had noted confusing and inconsistent parking signage in the area and that the Parking Services Division had implemented a successful conversion to the proposed configuration in other areas of Duluth that featured a combination of businesses and residential needs. Commissioner Mayou motioned that the proposed reconfiguration be approved. Commissioner Van Tassel seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

#### PROPOSAL TO CONVERT ONE SINGLE METER STALL AT 1931 WEST SUPERIOR STREET TO AN ACCESSIBLE STALL

**Proposal to convert a single-stall meter at 1931 West Superior Street to an accessible stall**  
Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to convert a single-stall parking meter at 1931 West Superior Street to an ADA accessible parking zone. He stated that the

request had been generated by a new business that was moving into the location that had identified a need for adjacent accessible parking. Mr. Bauer noted that the installation of such a zone would be consistent with placement of accessible parking zones throughout Duluth. Commissioner Van Tassel motioned that the proposed conversion be approved. Commissioner Mayou seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

#### PROPOSAL TO CONVERT A PORTION OF EAST 4TH STREET TO ALTERNATE SIDE PARKING 1:00 A.M. TO 7:00 A.M.

This Parking Commission was withdrawn.

#### PROPOSAL TO REMOVE METERS FROM A PORTION OF THE 300 BLOCK OF WEST 2ND STREET

Proposal to remove meters from a portion of the 300 block of West 2nd Street  
Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to eliminate parking on the even side of the 300 block of West 4th Street adjacent to the St. Louis County Government Services Center's parking ramp. He stated that the GSC's property manager had initiated the request to better allow for snow removal and maintenance on the facility. Mr. Bauer noted that the existing meters in the area were primarily utilized by visitors to the GSC and that there were adequate parking alternatives in the area. Commissioner Robinson expressed concern that an approval of the proposal could serve to establish a precedent of eliminating parking adjacent to similar structures. Mr. Bauer stated that he was not overly concerned about this possibility and that this situation was somewhat unique. Commissioner Mayou motioned that the proposal be approved. Commission Robinson seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

### OFF-STREET PARKING UPDATE

#### Off-street parking update

Mr. Eilola provided an update on off-street parking operations. He stated that the current security staffing levels at the parking ramps provided 24/7 patrols of two contracted officers at a time who roam from ramp to ramp. He stated that their efforts to deter unwanted activity in the facilities had been largely successful. Mr. Bauer noted that Duluth Police Department calls for service at the ramps had remained consistent for several months and were much lower than the call rates prior to implementation of the security staff. He stated that the ongoing security staffing was very expensive, however, and not sustainable long-term. Mr. Eilola stated that soon new stickers would be installed at the parking ramps that would provide to the public contact information to report any concerning activities they notice in the ramps. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the Parking Services Division provide a report to the Commission illustrating calls for service at the parking ramps, including a snapshot of historical calls for service beginning one year ago and continued reporting going forward. Commissioner Woods seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

### ON-STREET PARKING UPDATE

#### On-street parking update

Mr. Bauer stated that there were no significant updates regarding on-street parking.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **Public Comments**

Duluth resident James Arndt stated that he felt the \$25.00 event parking fee he had recently been charged at the Library/Depot Lot was too high and that it had appeared that lot staff were not properly-credentialed. Interstate Parking Company Duluth Operations Manager Ari Eilola stated that proper signage had been in place and that staff had been in uniform. Mr. Arndt also stated that he felt that the City should not charge residents a fee for permits to park in Residential Permit Parking Zones. Duluth resident Nicole Otjess stated that she was concerned about illegal/unwanted activity occurring in a designated parking area on Skyline Parkway near 27th Avenue West. She stated that the area should feature a parking prohibition and be blocked off. Mr. Bauer stated that the Parking Services Division was aware of the complaint and was working with the City's Parks and Recreation Department to work toward a recommendation for the area, since it is near a City trailhead.