



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes

Parking Commission.

Friday, November 1, 2024

7:30 AM

Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, City Hall

ROLL CALL

Members Present

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

Members Absent

- Mike Mayou

Guests Present

- Isaiah Helmin, Assistant Manager – Interstate Parking Company
- John Ramos, Investigative Reporter – Duluth Monitor
- Mike Rasmusson, Duluth resident
- Geoff Vukelich, Street Maintenance Operations Coordinator – City of Duluth

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

City of Duluth Parking Services Manager Mark Bauer presented the October 2024 Duluth Parking Commission meeting minutes for approval. Commission Vice President Branden Robinson motioned that the minutes be approved as presented. Commissioner Brandon Van Tassel seconded the motion, which was approved 4-0 (Commissioner Antonio Davis had not yet arrived).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments during the initial public comment period.

REVISED 2024-25 SNOW EMERGENCY PROCESS PRESENTATION

Mr. Bauer presented the City's revised Snow Emergency procedures plan. He utilized a slide show, which illustrated the key revisions. He stated that under the new plan, parkers would, on the first day, simply ensure that they are parked on the correct side of all alternate side parking routes, allowing plows to remove snow to the curb on the opposite side of all routes. He stated that the following day, the public directive was to move all vehicles to the plowed side of all alternate side routes, which would be the side opposite the normal side according to the City's alternate side calendar. The following day, once plowed, the directive would be to move back to the "correct" side of the street. Mr. Bauer

stated that the intents of the changes were to more effectively remove snow from the alternate side routes and to enhance clarity and simplicity in public messaging. City of Duluth Street Maintenance Operations Coordinator Geoff Vukelich provided further information and clarity on the new procedures, stating that the new system afforded the City more control over the timing of the parking configuration changes with regard to snow removal operations. Commissioner Robinson inquired whether there would be any changes on one-sided parking routes. Mr. Vukelich stated that there would be no change to those routes. Commissioner Robinson inquired into the specifics of the timing of the Snow Emergency public declarations. Mr. Vukelich stated that Snow Emergencies would be declared by 4:00 p.m., with a directive that the applicable parking configurations would take effect by 9:00 p.m. Mr. Bauer stated that, under the new system, Snow Emergency “amnesty” lots for public parking would no longer be needed.

ON-STREET ACCESSIBLE PARKING ZONE REQUESTS

Mr. Bauer presented five on-street accessible parking zone requests for approval. He stated that he had visited the sites and consulted with the Commission on Disabilities and the applicants. He recommended that all five requests be approved. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the request for 2227 East 1st Street be approved. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Van Tassel motioned that the request for 329 West 3rd Street be approved. Commissioner Andrew Paszak seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Davis motioned that the request for 1703/1721 East 3rd Street, for a zone to be located at the northernmost diagonal stall on the east side of 17th Avenue East prior to the alley above 3rd Street, be approved. Commissioner Paszak seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Van Tassel motioned that the request for 806 East 4th Street be approved. Commissioner Paszak seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Davis motioned that the request for 715 East 8th Street be approved. Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

PROPOSAL TO INSTALL TEN-MINUTE DROP-OFF ZONE AT 1720 WEST MICHIGAN STREET

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to establish a ten-minute drop-off zone at 1721 West Michigan Street. He stated that the adjacent property housed a property management company that had maintenance and other personnel routinely visited to pick up tools and make other short stops. He stated that the business manager had requested the zone to serve the staff’s short-term parking needs. Mr. Bauer recommended approval of the requested zone. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Van Tassel seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

PROPOSAL TO INSTALL TEN-MINUTE DROP-OFF ZONE AT 318 WEST SUPERIOR STREET

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to establish a ten-minute drop-off zone at 318

West Superior Street. He stated that the new zone would serve the pick-up needs associated with the adjacent Toasty's sandwich shop. Commissioner Robinson motioned that the proposal be approved. Commission President Robert Woods seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. In response to a question by Commissioner Robinson regarding another nearby marked no-parking zone, Mr. Bauer stated that he would check on the zone and report to Commission on his findings and any associated recommendations, if applicable.

UPDATE ON 2025 PARKING FUND BUDGET

Mr. Bauer stated that City staff were continuing work on the 2025 parking fund budget with regard to the potential shortfall at Medical District Ramp due to an anticipated significant reduction in funds collected in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) from the hospital area nearby. He stated that options were being explored to either mitigate the loss elsewhere in the budget or to restore the collection of the referenced funds. He stated that he would continue to update the Commission in future meetings.

OFF-STREET PARKING UPDATE

Mr. Bauer introduced Interstate Parking Company's Duluth-area Assistant Manager Isaiah Helmin, who provided an update on off-street parking operations. He stated that Technology Village and Medical District Ramp's new access control systems would be activated within the next couple weeks. He described plans for the associated public areas' subsequent refreshment, including hardware replacement and painting. He stated that it appeared that following the installation and refreshment procedure at Hart District Ramp, the ramp utilization numbers were increasing as the public noted the improvements. He stated that structural repairs at Hart District Ramp were nearly complete. Commissioner Van Tassel inquired into the details of planned public training on the new ramp systems. Mr. Helmin stated that he planned to meet with all key area stakeholders individually to provide systems training. Mr. Bauer stated that the City appeared to still be on schedule for a June 2025 opening date for the second new public parking facility adjacent to the Essentia hospital campus, funded via the Downtown Regional Exchange District project.

ON-STREET PARKING UPDATE

Mr. Bauer provided an update on on-street parking operations. He reiterated that the City Council had recently approved the revised Snow Emergency operations plan. Commission Woods inquired whether on-street meter collections were regularly audited. Mr. Bauer stated that all aspects of City parking revenue collections were audited on a regular basis by both the City and the parking operator. Commissioner Davis stated that he had heard that the City had limited capacity off-street for vehicle storage related to Snow Emergency and other towing operations. Mr. Bauer stated that while it is accurate that the City had limited off-street parking available, procedurally, tow companies would tow to their own lots and then release vehicles to owners following approval by the Police Department.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOLLOW-UP

There were no further public comments.