

**Duluth Parking Commission
Thirty-Sixth Meeting
7:30 a.m. Friday, June 12, 2015
City Council Chambers, Duluth City Hall**

Members Present

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

Guests Present

- Mark Bauer, Parking Operations Specialist – City of Duluth
- Samuel McKinney, Director of Duluth Operations – Unparalleled Parking
- Clinton Reff, Assistant Fire Chief – Duluth Fire Department
- Brad Scott, Civil Group Leader – LHB, Inc.
- John Simpson, Director of Facility Development – St. Luke's Hospital

Approval of 5/1/15 meeting minutes

Commissioner Linda Krug motioned to approve the minutes without change. Commission Vice President Craig Chilcote seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

Proposal to authorize a two-space valet parking zone on East Superior Street

City of Duluth Parking Operations Specialist Mark Bauer described a proposal to convert two metered parking spaces on the lower side of the 100 block of East Superior Street, near the eastern end of the block, to valet-only parking on Fridays from 5:00 p.m. to 2:00 the next morning, on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 the next morning, and on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight. He explained that the spaces currently are configured as metered public parking from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Mr. Bauer explained that the proposal was initiated by Unparalleled Parking, a valet company that currently is working with Tycoons Alehouse to establish adjacent to the alehouse an on-street valet service that would park patron vehicles in a nearby private parking lot. Mr. Bauer stated that he had met on site with Unparalleled Parking and Tycoons representatives to survey the area and identify the spaces to be used, performed a door-to-door survey of all area stakeholders, worked with the City of Duluth Planning Division to coordinate Unparalleled Parking's application for a sidewalk use permit for staging a valet stand, and consulted with the city attorney's office regarding the future changes to city code that will be needed to more comprehensively address valet parking in Duluth. Mr. Bauer reported that, of the six surveys distributed to the area stakeholders, he had received two back, both in favor of the conversion. He added that the concept of implementing valet parking in downtown Duluth had received support from the mayor's office, the chief administrator's office, and the police chief. Samuel McKinney, director of Duluth operations for Unparalleled Parking, presented their proposal to the commission. Commission President Steve LaFlamme inquired whether both of the two spaces would be needed for valet use. Mr. McKinney replied that both would be needed to facilitate the smooth entry and exit of vehicles in the valet zone. Commissioner Andy Goldfine inquired whether the spaces would be available to the public during the valet zone hours. Mr. McKinney replied that they would not. Commissioner Goldfine inquired whether a fee was charged to valet operators in other municipalities for similar operations. Mr. McKinney replied that some cities charge a fee, while others do not. Commissioner Goldfine stated that the City of Duluth should charge a fee for use of the spaces as a valet zone. Commissioner LaFlamme inquired whether the valet zone would be staffed consistently during the specified hours. Mr. McKinney replied that it would. Commissioner Karin Swor inquired whether the meter fees still would be enforced at all other currently specified times. Mr. Bauer affirmed that the fee enforcement would continue outside the specified valet zone hours. Commissioner LaFlamme suggested that a contract be developed between the City of Duluth and Unparalleled Parking regarding valet use of the parking spaces. Mr. Bauer replied that he currently was working with the city's legal team to develop such an agreement. Mr. Bauer added that the agreement and associated city code language would be drafted in such a way as to emphasize the non-proprietary nature of valet zones in Duluth, stating that the intent would be to establish guidelines that would be applicable to any valet operator in the city.

City of Duluth Parking Manager Matthew Kennedy added that the time parameters of the valet zone could be reviewed and later changed by the parking commission, and he suggested that the proposal at hand be modified to empower the City of Duluth Parking Division to reduce the hours of this valet zone without further parking commission approval. Commissioner Krug motioned that the proposal to convert the two metered spaces to a valet zone during the hours specified be approved, with the provision that the city could later limit the valet zone hours without further parking commission approval. Commissioner Andy McDonald seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

Establishment of ten-minute drop-off zone near St. Luke's Lakeview Building

Mr. Kennedy introduced a proposal to create a ten-minute patient drop-off zone on the upper side of the 1000 block of East Superior Street, adjacent to the St. Luke's Lakeview Building. Mr. Bauer described that the zone was currently unregulated, aside from applicable citywide default regulations. He stated that he had surveyed the area and did not identify any potential opposition to the zone creation from area stakeholders. John Simpson, director of facility development for St. Luke's Hospital, stated that the zone is needed due to the inability of tall vehicles to fit within the overhead clearance of the Lakeview Building's attached front drop-off area. He added that the currently unregulated on-street spaces encourage all-day parking, rendering them unavailable for other uses. Mr. Simpson stated that St. Luke's would perform snow clearing duties during winter to ensure the zone is accessible for the patients. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned that the proposal be approved as presented. Commissioner Goldfine seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

Establishment of fire department parking zone on Minnesota Avenue

Mr. Kennedy introduced a proposal to designate a portion of Minnesota Avenue on Park Point as a fire department-only zone. Mr. Bauer described that the request had been generated by the Duluth Fire Department to address the need for its water rescue staff to be able to access the shoreline from Minnesota Avenue. He stated that the fire department had, at times, experienced difficulty accessing the boat launch area due to vehicles being parked on the west side of Minnesota Avenue, blocking access to the beach. He described that a 12-foot area along the western edge of the avenue was needed to address the fire department's needs. Commissioner Goldfine asked Assistant Fire Chief Clinton Reff what type of equipment needed access to the launch site. Mr. Reff replied that a pull-behind boat trailer would need to fit through the area. Mr. Bauer stated that the referenced portion of Minnesota Avenue currently was default alternate side parking. Commissioner Krug motioned that the proposal be approved as presented. Commissioner Chilcote seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

Planning division report on Superior Street redevelopment plan

Mr. Bauer introduced Brad Scott, Civil Group Leader for LHB, Inc., who provided an update on the Superior Street redevelopment project. Mr. Scott noted that the current plan specified 217 total parking spaces, a net gain of two from the current 215. Mr. Scott stated that the city's planning division and LHB, Inc. were seeking approval for certain portions of the overall plan that related to parking prior to the June 23 public meeting during which the plan would be further presented and discussed. Mr. Kennedy inquired whether approval was being sought for the entire plan or merely the three specific elements referenced in the handout provided to the commissioners. Mr. Scott stated that he would have to defer to Jenn Reed Moses, a planner for the City of Duluth, for the answer. Commissioner LaFlamme suggested that any approvals be deferred until after the June 23 public meeting. He stated that he was not comfortable voting on the matter without further stakeholder input and would prefer to vote on the plan as a whole once completed. Commissioner McDonald expressed the need to consider the design as a whole, rather than small portions of it. He noted that attention should be given to the concept of better directing parkers to the off-street ramps as part of the overall plan. Commissioner Krug noted that there had been recent interest from the public in revisiting the concept of including a bike lane on Superior Street and stated that she would also prefer to see the plan presented as a whole prior to voting on it. Commissioner LaFlamme inquired when the overall plan would be presented to the city council. Mr. Scott replied that he anticipated this to occur in mid-August. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned to table the item pending further stakeholder feedback and development of the overall Superior Street redevelopment plan. Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

Establishment of three new taxi stands downtown

Mr. Kennedy introduced a proposal to create three new taxi stands in downtown Duluth. Mr. Bauer described the three proposed taxi zones: one on the upper side of the 200 block of West Superior Street, one on the upper side of the 100 block of West 1st Street, and a third on the west side of the zero block of 2nd Avenue East. He explained that the West Superior Street and 2nd Avenue East zones would be taxi stands 24/7 and that the West 1st Street zone would be a taxi stand from 9:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. daily. Mr. Bauer described the results of surveys provided to stakeholders in all three areas that indicated strong support for all three proposed zones. He added that he had developed the proposal in conjunction with the owners of the three largest taxi cab companies in town, and all three supported the plan as presented. Mr. Kennedy noted that the portion of the proposed 2nd Avenue East zone that currently featured a drop-off zone was already being heavily utilized by taxi cabs. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned that the proposal be approved as presented. Commissioner Krug seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0.

Removal of a single-space meter on Superior Street near 4th Avenue West

Mr. Kennedy introduced a proposal to eliminate a single-space parking meter on the 400 block of West Superior Street. Mr. Bauer explained that the meter had been removed prior to the commission meeting by apparent directive of the traffic engineering division due to concerns that an average-sized vehicle would not be consistently able to park in the space without protruding into the adjacent crosswalk. He noted that, while the proper procedure did not appear to have been followed in the elimination of the meter, the parking division did agree with the removal itself due to the safety concerns. Mr. Bauer stated that he had spoken with all parties involved and emphasized the importance of following the appropriate procedure going forward. Commissioner Goldfine inquired whether there were examples in other municipalities of designating similar stalls as for "compact cars only." Mr. Bauer stated that he was not aware of any such instances but added that implementing such a space could open the door to disputes regarding the definition of a "compact car." Commissioner Krug motioned that the removal of the meter be approved. Commissioner Chilcote seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0. Commissioner LaFlamme abstained from the vote due to a potential conflict of interest regarding the matter. At this point, Commissioner LaFlamme excused himself from the meeting due to an overlapping appointment.

Removal of a drop-off zone on East 1st Street by the former Expert Tire store

Mr. Kennedy introduced a proposal to eliminate a 15-minute drop-off zone on the 600 block of East 1st Street, adjacent to the now-closed Expert Tire store. He explained that parking tickets recently had been issued in the zone due to area parkers perceiving the zone as unnecessary following the closure of Expert Tire. Mr. Bauer stated that no other area business currently made use of the zone. Commissioner Goldfine motioned that the proposal to remove the zone and conform the area to the neighboring parking configuration be approved. Commissioner Chilcote seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

On-street ADA signage requests

Mr. Kennedy introduced two on-street ADA signage requests, one at 2214 West 12th Street and the other at 2967 Exeter Street. Mr. Bauer noted that both requests had received the support of the City of Duluth's traffic engineering division. Commissioner McDonald motioned that the requests be approved. Commissioner Chilcote seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

On-street parking update

Mr. Bauer provided an update on on-street parking operations. He stated that the Canal Park parking fee enforcement season was proceeding smoothly and that the parking division recently had participated in several media interviews regarding the new 2015 daily rate structure in three parking lots in Canal Park. Mr. Bauer stated that strong effort had been made by the parking division to make clear that the rates in Canal Park had, for the most part, not been raised but rather at three parking lots had been segmented into longer portions of time to reduce the need for ticketing and simplify the payment process. Mr. Bauer also updated the commissioners on the provision granted to the resident of 6209 Nicollet Street by the city to install off-street parking pads on his property in response to his concerns that he would have nowhere to park once parking is prohibited on Nicollet Street. Mr. Bauer stated that curb cuts for the two driveways had been completed and that pavement soon would be laid down. Commissioner Goldfine inquired into the details of how on-street parking enforcement is administered. Mr. Kennedy described the process of generating stall reports from multi-space pay stations and ticketing unpaid spaces, as well as the process of visually verifying whether a single-space meter has expired.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bauer, CPP
Parking Operations Specialist

Matthew Kennedy, CAPP, CPP
Parking Commission Secretary