

**Duluth Parking Commission
Thirtieth Meeting
7:30 a.m. Friday, November 7, 2014
City Council Chambers, Duluth City Hall**

Members Present

- Craig Chilcote, Vice President
- Andy Goldfine
- Linda Krug
- Steve LaFlamme, President
- Andy McDonald
- John Simpson
- Matthew Kennedy, Ex Officio

Members Absent

- Mary L. Cameron

Guests Present

- Jeff Aanenson, Duluth Operations Manager – Interstate Parking
- Douglas Aretz, Co-Owner – Duluth Fish and Seafood Market
- Mark Bauer, Parking Operations Specialist – City of Duluth

Approval of 10/3/14 meeting minutes

Commissioner Andy McDonald motioned to approve the minutes without change.
Commissioner Linda Krug seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

Petition to convert a portion of West 10th Street to south side parking only

City of Duluth Parking Manager Matthew Kennedy described a petition to convert West 10th Street from 25th Avenue West to its terminus west of 27th Avenue West from its current configuration of calendar-based alternate side parking to south side parking only. City of Duluth Parking Operations Specialist Mark Bauer explained that, although a petition requesting this change was signed by nearly every resident on this portion of 10th Street, a review by the parking services division, which included multiple site visits, indicated that this change was not warranted or advisable. Mr. Bauer noted that City of Duluth Maintenance Operations Manager Kelly Fleissner agreed that the requested change was not advisable, due to the overriding need for city snow removal crews to be able to plow the road completely. Mr. Bauer stated that there was no significant obstruction that would impede parking on the north side of the street and provided photographs illustrating this. He noted that the conditions of the area bordering the street were similar to those on many other streets in Duluth on which the alternate side parking configuration is in effect. Commissioner McDonald stated that the Superior Hiking Trail includes this portion of 10th Street as part of its route but that this fact is not substantially relevant to the material change addressed by the request. Commissioner John Simpson motioned to support the parking services division's recommendation that the request not be approved. Commission Vice President Craig Chilcote seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

Proposal to allow both sided parking on a portion 60th Avenue East

Mr. Kennedy described a proposal to convert 60th Avenue East between London Road and Superior Street from its current configuration of west side parking only to both-sided parking with a 1:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. alternate side parking configuration. Mr. Bauer explained that the proposal was generated by a request by Douglas Aretz, co-owner of the Duluth Fish and Seafood Market, who plans to open his business in the area and expressed a need for additional on-street parking. Mr. Bauer explained that research did not reveal a definitive reason for the current west side only configuration but that it may relate to the annual smelt runs at the mouth of the nearby Lester River and the crowds they previously attracted. He noted that due to natural changes the smelt runs no longer attract these crowds. Mr. Bauer noted that 60th Avenue East measures 44 feet in total width, which is wide enough to allow both-sided parking. To allow for snow plowing and other street maintenance, Mr. Bauer recommended a 1:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. alternate side configuration in addition to allowing both-sided on-street parking at all other times. Commission President Steve LaFlamme motioned that the change be approved as recommended by the parking services division. Commissioner Linda Krug seconded the motioned, which was approved 6-0.

Proposal to expand loading zone on Michigan Street

Mr. Bauer described a proposal to expand the existing loading zone on East Michigan Street behind Tycoon's Alehouse. He explained that there currently is an area large enough to park three vehicles that is unregulated on the north side of the street, adjacent to a one-space loading zone to the east and a larger loading zone to the west. He described proposed signage adjustments that would create one large zone of the entire stretch, thereby enhancing safety in the area. (He noted that, due to the lack of available loading zone parking, delivery vehicles often park near the divider between Michigan Street and the Interstate Highway 35 onramp, causing other vehicles to dangerously alter their driving routes to navigate around the delivery vehicles.) Mr. Kennedy added that parking division monitors have confirmed the need for this adjustment and have noted the problems caused by delivery vehicles in the area at present. Commissioner LaFlamme requested that the parking division also assess the area of 3rd Avenue East and Michigan Street for similar loading zone issues. Mr. Bauer stated that he had surveyed this area already and found it to be too narrow to provide a loading zone. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned that the proposal by the parking services division be approved as described. Commissioner Simpson seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0. Commissioner LaFlamme requested that the businesses along Michigan Street that will be affected by this change be alerted to it prior to implementation. Mr. Bauer agreed to alert the businesses accordingly.

Proposal to eliminate Saturday enforcement of parking fees

Mr. Kennedy described a proposal to eliminate Saturday enforcement of on-street parking fees. He described the history of Saturday on-street enforcement and the discrepancies between the posted signage, which specifies Saturday enforcement, and the actual enforcement practices, which generally do not include Saturday enforcement of fees. Mr. Kennedy described the results of a recent survey of area businesses, which indicated that only 14% of those surveyed favored fee enforcement on Saturdays. He described that that option chosen by most respondents and recommended by the parking services division was to formally discontinue enforcement of paid on-street parking on Saturdays and adjust all applicable signage accordingly. He noted that the proposed change only would affect on-street parking; off-street facilities would continue to be enforced 24/7 according to their posted signage. Commissioner LaFlamme noted examples of areas in which the enforcement periods may need to be adjusted in the future depending on specific needs. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned that the proposal to formally eliminate Saturday on-street enforcement be approved. Commissioner Krug seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0. Commissioner LaFlamme requested that a press release altering the public to the change be created and distributed prior to implementation; Mr. Kennedy agreed to this request.

Proposal to eliminate single-space meter grace period

Mr. Kennedy described a proposal to eliminate the grace periods between rate tiers for all on-street and off-street single-space parking meters. He described the history of the issue, which included discussions with Greater Downtown Council President Kristi Stokes and City of Duluth Chief Administrative Officer David Montgomery; it had, at that time, been agreed to delay making this change with the idea of implementing it at the same time as some new parking enhancement. Mr. Kennedy explained the timing of the new proposal, noting that it coincides with the elimination of Saturday enforcement of on-street parking fees and the implementation of the city-wide pay-by-phone system and further implementation of on-street multi-space meters. He explained that the intent was to couple this change with items designed to benefit parkers and that this desire had been expressed by the Greater Downtown Council in the past. Mr. Kennedy noted that, of a sample he had researched of approximately 90 cities with on-street parking meters only one or two of them included grace periods in their programming. Mr. Bauer stated that the philosophy behind the proposed change was to eliminate the "unfair advantage" those aware of the unadvertised grace periods had over those who did not. Commissioner LaFlamme described the history of the discussion of the grace period issue, noting that the grace periods had previously been implemented to provide a positive element to on-street parking at the time of a previous rate increase and that an additional purpose was to diffuse the common complaint among ticketed parkers that the meter had "just expired." Commissioner Krug pointed out that, once the new multi-space payment kiosks are installed, the grace periods will be eliminated anyway, since the kiosks are not programmed with grace periods. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned that the commission not approve the proposal to eliminate grace periods. Commissioner Andy Goldfine seconded the motion, and the proposal was rejected 6-0.

Proposal to prohibit north-sided parking on a portion of Grand Avenue

Mr. Kennedy described a proposal to convert Grand Avenue between 42nd Avenue West and 43rd Avenue West from both sided parking to south sided parking only. Mr. Kennedy stated that proposal was generated from a concern forwarded by the City of Duluth mayor's office regarding the sightlines for drivers entering and exiting the new Kwik Trip convenience store, as well as those for the drivers on Grand Avenue as they approach the location. A site visit by parking division staff revealed that both the north and south sides of the block were signed "No Parking 2 AM to 6 AM" with no other restrictions. Mr. Bauer provided a description of the site and stated that, due to the overriding safety concerns, the parking services division recommended approval of the proposal to prohibit parking on the north side of this block of Grand Avenue. Commissioner Krug motioned that the recommendation of the parking services division be approved. Commissioner Goldfine seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

Accessible parking signage request for West 2nd Street

Mr. Kennedy described a request from a resident at 2201 West 2nd Street for accessible parking signage to be installed on West 2nd Street adjacent to his home. He described that the resident faces various health challenges and noted that there was currently a designated accessible space on-street adjacent to the property next door at 2203 West 2nd Street. Mr. Kennedy noted that the traffic engineering division recommended approval of the request. Commissioner LaFlamme motioned to support the recommendation of the traffic engineering division to approve the space. Commissioner Simpson seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0.

Update on selection of ramp access control equipment

Mr. Bauer provided an update on the selection of access control equipment for Technology Village Ramp, East Superior Street Public Ramp, and Medical District Ramp. He stated that Harstad Controls had been selected as the project's vendor, and that the selected equipment is manufactured by SKIDATA. Mr. Bauer stated that the first facility to be converted to the new equipment will be East Superior Street Public Ramp, tentatively in late 2014, with Technology Village Ramp and Medical District Ramp to follow in early 2015.

Update on pay-by-phone system implementation

Mr. Bauer provided an update on the implementation of the citywide pay-by-phone option for on-street parking. He stated that a side-by-side comparison of three vendors had been assembled, with two of the vendors displaying clear advantages over the third, but that a fourth vendor soon would be added to the comparison study prior to final selection of a vendor. Mr. Bauer explained that recently the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee had expressed their most desired features of a new pay-by-phone system and that these desires would be strongly considered in the final selection. Mr. Bauer said he would further update the commission as the selection process moved forward.

Update on next phase of multi-space pay station implementation

Mr. Bauer provided an update on the placement of and timeline for implementation of phase one of the implementation of on-street multi-space payment kiosks. He provided a map showing the proposed locations of the new meters throughout the downtown business area and stated that an early 2015 start of implementation for the 44 payment kiosks was expected.

Update on Lower Kenwood residential area community forum

Mr. Kennedy provided information regarding a Lower Kenwood residential area community parking forum, set to take place at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, 11/7/14. He stated that there is an ongoing organized effort among residents of the area to address parking concerns, including petitioning for addition of residential permit parking zones. Mr. Kennedy also described recently increased enforcement of parking violations in the area by the parking division and the Duluth Police Department and plans to install additional signage in the area to reinforce existing parking configurations. He stated that the parking division will report on the outcome of the forum and a planned mailed survey in the next parking commission meeting.

Off-street parking update

Interstate Parking Duluth Operations Manager Jeff Aanenson provided an update on off-street parking. He briefly described Interstate's winter action plan for the off-street ramps and lots and discussed parking plans related to the upcoming Christmas City of the North Parade. Mr. Bauer provided an update on the remaining maintenance items for 2014, including overhead beam structural repairs at Medical District Ramp and a new vehicle barrier at the Library / Depot Upper Lot.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bauer
Parking Operations Specialist

Matthew Kennedy
Parking Commission Secretary