



# City of Duluth

411 West First Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

## Minutes

### Parking Commission.

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Friday, January 6, 2023

7:30 AM

Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, City Hall

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#### ROLL CALL

##### Members Present

- Linda Krug
- Noland Makowsky, President
- Terese Tomanek
- Robert Woods
- Mark Bauer, Ex Officio

##### Guests Present

- Carl Crawford, Human Rights Officer – City of Duluth
- Ari Eilola, Duluth Operations Manager – Interstate Parking Company
- Barb Parks, Duluth resident

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### Approval of December 2022 meeting minutes

City of Duluth Parking Services Manager Mark Bauer presented the minutes of the December 2022 meeting of the Duluth Parking Commission. Commissioner Linda Krug motioned that the minutes be approved as presented. Commissioner Terese Tomanek seconded the motion, which was approved 4-0.

#### ON-STREET ACCESSIBLE PARKING ZONE REQUESTS

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

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to implement two on-street ADA accessible parking zones. Mr. Bauer stated that he had visited both sites and communicated with the requesting parties. He recommended approval of both requests. Commissioner Robert Woods motioned that the request for 4814 West 6th Street be approved. Commissioner Krug seconded the motion, which was approved 4-0. Commissioner Krug motioned that the request for 1120 ½ 102nd Avenue West be approved. Commissioner Tomanek seconded the motion, which was approved 4-0.

#### LOWER MICHIGAN STREET PARKING METERS DISCUSSION

##### Lower Michigan Street parking meters discussion

Mr. Bauer introduced a discussion regarding rates and time limits at parking meters adjacent to Lower Michigan Street. He stated that Duluth resident Barb Parks had expressed concern regarding the January 2022 rate restructure in the area. Ms. Parks stated that due to the rate restructure she had to start parking in

nearby parking ramps and that the parking stalls in the area are now used much less often than they had previously. She stated that the Park Duluth mobile parking application appeared to be limiting the amount of time she was able to pay for at the start of the day. Mr. Bauer stated that this indicated that there might be a programming error in the system, since the meters had a 12-hour time limit. He asked Interstate Parking Company Duluth Operations Manager Ari Eilola to work with the payment system vendor to resolve the programming issue. Commissioner Krug stated that part of the reason the rate adjustment had been approved was to encourage use of off-street parking facilities. Mr. Bauer stated that he would be more concerned if the rate increase had occurred in an area in which off-street parking was unavailable and noted that this was not the case in this instance.

## OFF-STREET PARKING UPDATE

### Off-street parking update

Mr. Eilola stated that the recently-approved revised rate structures for the City's ramps and lots had been implemented smoothly on January 1st, with very few public complaints. He stated that snow removal expenses for December 2022 had been very high due to the significant snow events that had occurred. Commissioner Krug inquired whether a decrease in monthly parking had been noted following the rate increases. Mr. Eilola stated that no notable increase had been seen. Mr. Bauer read a letter that had been addressed to the Parking Commission from a Duluth resident who was concerned about the recent rate increases, noting the cleanliness issues in the parking ramps. Mr. Bauer stated that the rate increases were intended, in part, to generate more revenue to be utilized to address the cleanliness and security concerns. Commissioner Tomanek stated that she was currently in discussion with Duluth Police Chief Mike Ceynowa regarding the public safety concerns in the parking ramps and the City's ability to fund improvements. Commission President Noland Makowsky expressed concern that the Parking Fund's annual General Fund transfer amount had increased while parking revenues had decreased during and as a result of the ongoing COVID pandemic, while public safety expense needs in the parking ramps has also increased. He stated that it did not seem fair to place the burden of the costs for public safety in the parking ramps solely on the Parking Services Division and the parking public at this time. Commissioner Woods noted that he had researched independently and found that the percentage of the annual transfer from the Parking Fund in relation to its total budget was substantially higher than the City's other enterprise funds; he stated that other funds averaged an 8% transfer, while the Parking Fund's was about 25%. He added that he did not believe that the Parking Services Division would be able to sustain future needed improvements and updates solely by raising public parking fees and questioned whether this would be fair to the parking public. He stressed that the public safety needs in the ramps should be a top priority for the City. Commissioner Krug stated that she believed it was time for the Parking Commission to raise these issues with Mayor Emily Larson and City Administration, stating that she did not believe more studies on the situation were needed and that the wisest course of action was to dedicate the needed funds to address the facilities' public safety issues, either by reduction of the General Fund transfer or redirection of funds from another source. Commissioner Tomanek suggested that Mayor Larson be invited to the next Parking Commission meeting and that a dedicated discussion item on the topic be included in the meeting.

## **ON-STREET PARKING UPDATE**

### **On-street parking update**

Mr. Bauer stated that parking operations had gone relatively smoothly during the recent snow events. Commissioner Woods noted that the accessible parking stickers on the sides of the City's on-street single-stall meters were fading and growing difficult to read. Mr. Bauer stated that the Parking Services Division and Interstate Parking would consider replacement of the stickers, since replacement of the meters, which was included in the Parking Division's 2019-approved Five Year Plan, had been delayed due to budgetary challenges.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **Public comments**

There were no public comments.