

**Duluth Parking Commission**  
**Fifty-Fifth Meeting**  
**7:30 a.m. Friday, September 1, 2017**  
**City Council Chambers, Duluth City Hall**

**Members Present**

- Andy Goldfine, Vice President
- Noland Makowsky
- Andy McDonald, President
- Jessica Sterle
- Karin Swor

**Members Absent**

- Howie Hanson

**Guests Present**

- Mark Bauer, Parking Operations Specialist – City of Duluth
- Cody Mass, Duluth Area Manager – Interstate Parking Company, Inc.

**Approval of August 2017 meeting minutes**

Commissioner Noland Makowsky motioned to approve the minutes of the August 2017 Duluth Parking Commission meeting. Commissioner Karin Swor seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

**Duluth East High School Residential Permit Parking Zone update**

City of Duluth Parking Operations Specialist Mark Bauer provided an update on the status of the revision of the physical boundaries of the Duluth East High School Residential Permit Zone. He stated that subsequent to the parking commission's approval of revised boundaries in the July 2017 meeting, a public hearing and further community input had resulted in amended boundaries to be proposed and approved by the Duluth City Council. Mr. Bauer stated that portions of Rockview Court, 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, Gladstone Street, 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue East, 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East, Gilliat Street, Luverne Street, Lombard Street, and London Road had been retained in the zone in the council-approved revision, differing from the initial recommendation from the parking division and parking commission. Mr. Bauer stated that the parking division had concurred with the council's approved version of the revision package, based on the community feedback received between the time of the parking commission approval and the council vote. Mr. Bauer stated that the permit zone would continue to be monitored closely by the parking division and that future zone boundary changes would be recommended as needed. Commission Vice President Andy Goldfine recommended that the revised zone, as approved by the City Council, be retroactively approved by the parking commission. Commissioner Makowsky seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

**Proposal to implement a first-hour-free rate structure in public parking ramps**

Mr. Bauer introduced a proposal to implement a first-hour-free rate structure at Technology Village Ramp, HART Public Ramp, Medical District Ramp, and the Civic Center Ramp. He stated that the parking division had developed, in conjunction with the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee and Interstate Parking, a revenue-neutral model that would adjust the parking rates so that parkers could enter and exit the ramps within an hour for no charge and pay the same fee as before for the second hour. He stated that the rates for longer-term stays would be adjusted into longer time frames at slightly higher rates to offset the potential revenue loss from the first-hour-free parkers. Mr. Bauer stated that the original request from DPAC was for the first-hour-free structure to be implemented in conjunction with the upcoming Superior Street redevelopment project but that the group had updated their request in order to provide an additional marketable incentive for the public to visit and shop downtown. He stated that the parking division had developed an area stakeholder survey that could be employed at regular intervals to gauge the effectiveness of the new rate structure, both before and after the Superior Street redevelopment, combined with ramp usage data. He stated that he would work with the Greater Downtown Council, DPAC, Interstate Parking, and the City of Duluth's communications staff to promote and implement the new rate structure. Commissioner McDonald suggested that a question be added to the stakeholder survey that asked whether the area businesses would be willing to contribute financially in the future to offset possible revenue losses from further adjusted or reduced ramp parking rates, including the possibility of adjusting the rate structure to offer a "true first hour free," rather than one which compensates for the first-hour loss with adjusted longer-term rates. Commissioner Makowsky inquired whether the first hour free would apply to the flat rates featured in the ramps, such as evening and weekend rates. Mr. Bauer replied that these time periods would also qualify for the first hour free. Commissioners Goldfine and McDonald stated that they would prefer a "true first-hour-free" rate structure, as opposed to the compensated structure proposed by the parking division. Commissioner Goldfine stated that revenue loss associated with a "true first-hour-free" structure could ultimately be beneficial to downtown Duluth. Commissioner Sterle suggested that GDC and DPAC representatives be invited to parking commission meetings to present information on the effectiveness of the first-hour-free structure in early 2018. Commissioner Makowsky motioned that the parking division's proposal be approved with the provision that first-hour-free rate structure be evaluated after a one-year period, at which point a determination would be made whether to continue the program as-is or to make adjustments. Commissioner Sterle seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

## **Proposal to implement a night rate at Medical District Ramp**

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to implement a night rate at Medical District Ramp, which currently featured free parking after 5:00 p.m. seven days per week. He stated that the upcoming opening of the redeveloped Norshor Theater would introduce a large amount of event traffic to the area and that the parking division believed adding a modest fee for public parking associated with this and other recent development in the area would best suit the current needs. Mr. Bauer stated that he had consulted with City administration and it was agreed that a flat fee of \$2.00, more modest than other downtown night rates, would be appropriate to start. He stated that the rate would apply seven days per week and begin at 4:00 p.m. each day. He stated that an event-based pricing structure had been initially considered by the parking division but that it was decided that the area's needs would be best served by the lower flat fee. Mr. Bauer stated that the target date for implementation of the new flat fee was January 1, 2018. Commissioner Goldfine motioned that the implementation of the \$2.00 flat fee at Medical District Ramp be approved. Commissioner Sterle seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

## **On-street ADA signage requests**

Mr. Bauer proposed that the installation of new on-street ADA parking signage be approved at 1302 Commonwealth Avenue, to serve Creative Cutz Salon patrons and others, 624 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street, to serve visitors to the new 624 Block building, and 422 Minneapolis Avenue. He stated that parking division staff had visited each location and recommended the installations based on parking availability and the needs of the residents and visitors. Commissioner Swor motioned that the proposed signage for 1302 Commonwealth Avenue be approved. Commissioner Makowsky seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Swor motioned that the proposed signage for 624 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street be approved. Commissioner Makowsky seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Swor motioned that the proposed signage for 422 Minneapolis Avenue be approved. Commissioner Sterle seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

## **Off-street parking update**

Interstate Parking Company Duluth Area Manager Cody Mass provided an update on off-street parking operations. He stated that Interstate was working with the Civic Center Public Ramp's equipment vendor toward a solution to the concerns expressed by commissioners in the previous parking commission meeting regarding possible public confusion while entering the ramp as to whether the ramp was open or closed. Mr. Bauer stated that the issue was with the electronic signage at the entrance lanes that made it unclear whether the entire ramp was open or closed or just the middle reversible lane. Mr. Mass stated that he would update the parking division and commission as the resolution progressed. Mr. Bauer stated that in response to recent complaints that electric vehicle charging station signage was inadequate at Lake Place Lot, new signage had been developed and installed that better protected the spaces as intended for electric vehicle charging only. Mr. Bauer stated that funding had been approved for substantial structural repairs to the HART Ramp, Technology Village Ramp, and the Library/Depot Upper Lot, and that a winning bidder for the project had been selected. He stated that most of the repairs would be completed by the end of 2017.

## **On-street parking update**

Mr. Bauer provided an update on a discussion in the August 2017 parking commission meeting regarding residential permit parking zone enforcement practices. He stated that while the parking division would continue to work toward clarifying City Code language regarding the proper use of permit zone visitors' permits, the information provided to the commission in the August meeting by a resident of the Duluth East Permit Zone had been ultimately found to be not factual. He stated that the resident had claimed that a visitor to the property had been at the residence at the time a parking ticket was issued for misuse of a visitors' permit but that communications with the visitor had verified that the visitor was, in fact, not at the residence when the ticket was issued, which is a requirement of the program. Mr. Bauer stated that the implementation of the new mobile parking payment system for Duluth was nearing completion and he would continue to update the commission on the progress. He stated that final preparation of the 2018 parking find budget was in progress and that he would present the proposed budget to the commission in the October 2017 parking commission meeting, prior to presentation to the City Council. Mr. Bauer stated that new branding had been developed and implemented for the parking division and the on-street enforcement vehicles that better aligned the division with other police department units and clarified the distinction between the City's on-street enforcement and the contracted management of the off-street parking facilities. Commissioner Goldfine inquired why such distinction was necessary and suggested the possibility of including the off-street locations in the new branding. Mr. Bauer stated that the parking division would review the reasoning behind the brand separation initiative and continue to update the commission. Commissioners Goldfine and Swor inquired what action was being taken to curb the perceived abuse of on-street ADA parking stalls and suggested that further review be performed regarding possible time limits on such stalls in certain areas. Mr. Bauer stated that the parking division would continue to review the spaces and would recommend time limits as warranted. He stated that the parking division closely monitored ADA parking stalls in daily enforcement practice and would continue to do so. He stated that his regular involvement with the City of Duluth Commission on Disabilities had been of great benefit in improving the overall availability of parking for persons with disabilities and that he would continue his attendance at their monthly meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bauer  
Parking Operations Specialist