

Duluth Parking Commission
Sixty-Second Meeting
7:30 a.m. Friday, May 11, 2018
City Council Chambers, Duluth City Hall

Members Present

- Andy Goldfine, President
- Noland Makowsky
- Jessica Sterle
- Michael Warsop, Vice President
- Em Westerlund

Members Absent

- Karin Swor

Guests Present

- Mark Bauer, Parking Operations Specialist – City of Duluth
- Carl Crawford, Human Rights Officer – City of Duluth
- Doug Melander, Duluth Operations Manager – Interstate Parking Company, Inc.
- Garner Moffat - Lincoln Park Business Group
- Renee Van Nett, 4th District Councilor – Duluth City Council

Approval of April 2018 meeting minutes

Commissioner Em Westerlund motioned to approve the minutes of the April 2018 Duluth Parking Commission meeting. Commission Vice President Michael Warsop seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

On-street ADA signage requests

City of Duluth Parking Operations Specialist Mark Bauer proposed that three on-street ADA signage requests be approved. He stated that he had reviewed the applications and visited the properties, verifying the accuracy of the applications and the need for the on-street parking spaces, and that he had consulted with the City of Duluth Commission on Disabilities regarding the requests. Commissioner Noland Makowsky motioned that the request related to 112 West 5th Street be approved. Commissioner Warsop seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Warsop motioned that the request related to 3931 West 4th Street be approved. Commissioner Westerlund seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Commissioner Warsop motioned that the request related to 421 Michigan Avenue be approved. Commissioner Makowsky seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Lincoln Park on-street parking recommendation

Mr. Bauer reported on the parking division's recommendation regarding the need for on-street parking meters and associated fees in Lincoln Park. He stated that the parking division, along with a representative of the City's business development team, had recently met with representatives of the Lincoln Park Business Group, per the parking commission's directive from the April 2018 meeting, and that the on-site meeting had been seemingly helpful to all parties. He stated that the stakeholder survey results regarding the possibility of the removal of the on-street meters and fees had remained unchanged from the previous parking commission meeting, with 41 surveys distributed, resulting in 14 returned - nine in favor of retaining the on-street meters and fees and five in favor of removal. Mr. Bauer stated that the parking division did not recommend removal of the Lincoln Park meters and fees, based on the stakeholder survey results, conflict with the pending Imagine Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Plan, and parking industry and municipal business area best practices. He stated that the parking division would continue to actively work with the City of Duluth business development staff and the Lincoln Park business community on alternative

ideas to assist with Lincoln Park's parking needs, particularly concentrating on off-street parking options while working toward technological enhancements to the on-street parking system. LPBG representative Garner Moffat confirmed that the recent meeting with city officials had been productive and requested that the City conduct a community meeting to further discuss Lincoln Park business district parking plans moving forward. Duluth City Council 4th District Representative Renee Van Nett expressed support for such a meeting and offered to assist in facilitating the meeting. Commissioner Warsop motioned that the parking commission recommend to the Duluth City Council that the on-street parking meters and fees be retained in the Lincoln Park business district. Commissioner Makowsky seconded the motion, which was approved 4-0 (Commission President Andy Goldfine abstaining).

West Duluth on-street parking recommendation

Mr. Bauer reported on the parking division's findings and recommendation regarding on-street time limits in portions of West Duluth. He stated that an area stakeholder had previously requested a study on the need for the existing two-hour time limit parking in areas of Grand Avenue and Ramsey Street. He stated that 57 surveys were distributed, and of those 18 were returned. Mr. Bauer stated that of the 18 returned, nine were in favor of eliminating the time limits and nine supported retaining the time limits. He stated that he had met with the West Duluth Business Club since the April 2018 parking commission meeting, at the commission's request, and discussed the City's study of the parking in the area, explaining both the benefits and the costs of time limit parking on-street. He stated that the parking division would like to see greater support for a configuration change prior to recommending such a change and that no further completed surveys had been received since the previous commission meeting. Mr. Bauer stated that the parking division did not recommend any changes to the on-street parking time limit in the area at this time but would continue to attend WDBC meetings along with City business development staff to remain engaged with the community regarding their parking needs. Commissioner Westerlund motioned that the parking division's recommendation be approved. Commissioner Warsop seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Proposal to extend a two-hour time limit on East 8th Street eastward

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to extend a two-hour 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. time limit eastward, from 27th Avenue East to Wallace Street, on East 8th Street. He stated that the parking commission had previously approved the implementation of a two-hour 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. time limit immediately west of the proposed area and that this had resulted in greater parking congestion to the east of that zone. He stated that the request had been generated by area residents, who claimed that there was inadequate available on-street parking during daytime hours for themselves and their guests. Mr. Bauer stated that he had recently conducted a survey of the area residents regarding the proposed change and that of the 11 surveys mailed, seven were returned. Of those seven, all stated they were in favor of the change. Commissioner Westerlund motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Warsop seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Proposal to remove one parking meter on the 400 West block of 1st Street

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to remove a single-space meter on the 400 West block of 1st Street, adjacent to the Civic Center Public Ramp. He stated that several parties had expressed concern that vehicles parked at the meter obstructed the sightlines between motorists exiting the ramp, those on the roadway, and pedestrians. He stated that the Duluth Workforce Center had expressed concern with the removal of the space but that the parking division's opinion was that the safety concerns outweighed the cost of the loss of the space. Commissioner Westerlund motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Warsop seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Proposal to remove a two-hour time limit on a portion of 7th Avenue East

Mr. Bauer presented a proposal to remove a two-hour time limit on a portion of the East side of 7th Avenue East, below 1st Street and adjacent to the former Expert Tire building. He stated that a member of the public had requested a study of the area and that the owner of the adjacent building was supportive of the removal of the time limit. He stated that his site visit had revealed that the adjacent building has adequate off-street parking to serve its current needs and added that the new configuration would align with that of the surrounding area. Commissioner Sterle inquired whether the neighboring residents were

surveyed. Mr. Bauer stated that they were not, because the parking division estimated that the new configuration would better serve the needs of the residents, as well as the visiting public. Commissioner Warsop motioned that the proposal be approved. Commissioner Sterle seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0.

Comments regarding the conversion of a portion of West Michigan Street to two-way traffic

Mr. Bauer provided an update on the upcoming conversion of a portion of West Michigan Street from one-way to two-way traffic. He stated that he had performed a survey of the area and recommended parking signage enhancements to coincide with the conversion, and he noted that some of the businesses were concerned about having adequate loading zones following the conversion. He stated that it was common practice for some of the area businesses to perform loading activities from trucks parked in one of the one-way driving lanes and that this would be more difficult following the conversion. Mr. Bauer stated that he would soon follow up with any proposed changes to the loading zones.

Off-street parking update

Interstate Parking Company Duluth Operations Manager Doug Melander provided an update on off-street parking operations. He stated that the Canal Park off-street fee enforcement season would begin on May 15. He stated that the lots had recently been re-striped and cleaned. He stated that additional structural repair items had been identified at Hart District Ramp and that work on these was ongoing. In response to Commissioner Goldfine's inquiry, he stated that the repairs were expected to be concluded by Memorial Day. Mr. Melander stated that the recent closure of the pedestrian access doors from 3rd Avenue East into Medical District Ramp during certain times had successfully reduced the number of trespassing and public nuisance incidents, which had previously been on the rise. Commissioner Goldfine encouraged Interstate Parking to continue to work toward a balance between public safety and customer access to the ramp. Commissioner Sterle expressed concern, from a customer service standpoint, that the parking ramps do not currently accept American Express cards as a form of payment.

On-street parking update

Mr. Bauer provided an update on on-street parking operations. He stated that the Superior Street reconstruction project was proceeding relatively smoothly with regard to public parking and that the parking division would soon provide an update to the commission regarding the new on-street parking technology that would be installed at the end of each phase of the project. He stated that the parking division had recently placed a moratorium on the issuance of expired motor vehicle registration tickets, due to recent problems the State of Minnesota's MNLARS system had been having regarding timely issuance. Mr. Bauer stated that an updated downtown area parking study was currently being performed by a third-party vendor at the direction of the Duluth Economic Development Authority and that he would share the results of the study with the commission when they became available. He added that he would soon be performing a study of the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center's parking operations at the request of DEDA, with the intent of providing suggestions on how to better manage large events and minimize on-street traffic backups.

Proposal to reduce the quorum number for Duluth Parking Commission meetings

Commissioner Goldfine motioned that parking commission recommend that the number of parking commissioners needed to obtain a quorum for each meeting be reduced from five to four. Commissioner Sterle seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. Mr. Bauer stated that he would research the next steps in the change process and would report back to the commission.

Meeting adjournment

Commissioner Goldfine motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Warsop seconded the motion, which was approved 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bauer
Parking Operations Specialist