

Burlington Department of Public Works Special Commission Meeting
Draft Minutes, October 28, 2015
645 Pine Street

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Robert Alberry; Tiki Archambeau (via phone); Jim Barr; Chris Gillman; Solveig Overby; Jeff Padgett; Tom Simon.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

Commission Chair Padgett calls meeting to order at 7:00pm; commenting on this work session focusing on specific topic: Downtown Parking & Transportation, Residential Parking Management Plan, and Transportation Demand Management Action Plan; will try to limit comments to 2 minutes to allow all to speak; notes public forum and public comment section under Item 3, asking those commenting on particular agenda item to choose one of those times to comment; most importantly, no decisions tonight - all about conversation.

Item 1 – Agenda

Commissioner Barr makes motion to accept agenda and is seconded by Commissioner Alberry; Commission Chair Padgett notes the agenda makes it appear Public Comment subsection to Item 3 will only allow for 2 minutes total but clarifies this actually means 2 minutes for each speaker and reminds everyone votes need to be done individually due to Commissioner Archambeau attending via phone. Vote:

Commissioner Archambeau: Aye
Commissioner Simon: Aye
Commissioner Gillman: Aye
Commissioner Overby: Aye
Commissioner Barr: Aye
Commissioner Alberry: Aye
Commission Chair Padgett: Aye

Item 2 – Public Forum

Claire Wool, Ward 6, states being on advisory committee for residential parking study; excited city/DPW hired consultant to look at parking; references last week's meeting at city hall and the disconnect between the committee and consultant over advice for actions to take in near future; says DPW director mentioned tabling some recommendations from consultant to allow time for more citizen feedback which was appreciated; brings up planning assemblies saying residential parking system broken and people need to focus on fixing system in meetings.

Item 3 – Commission Work Session on Residential Parking Management Plan and the Downtown Parking & Transportation Study

A) Staff Presentation by DPW Director Chapin Spencer and DPW Environmental Planner Nicole Losch: overviewing how 3 plans intersect and recognizes complexity and says viability of city depends on parking system; Downtown Parking & Transportation Plan (DT) is about expanding capacity and better way finding through signage; Transportation Demand Management Action Plan (TDM) focusing on getting commuters downtown in variety of

different ways; Residential Parking Management Plan (Res) focus is on preserving and updating residential permit program and looking at ways to expand and manage parking demands in each neighborhood.

DT plan started in 2013 focusing on deteriorating garages/equipment; work includes \$9M in capital repairs by 2018, retooling 2 hour free parking with possible merchant parking validation programs, and enforcing Sunday afternoon parking; so far 280 smart meters installed, fixing garages has started, installing wayfinding signs ongoing, and launching pay by cell phone next month.

Res plan comes from residents asking for changes in process; based on public input DPW has made a number of revisions; ended relationship with consultant and wants DPW to work directly with advisory committees – Environmental Planner Losch and himself acting as contact point with people; tactical approaches differing per neighborhood which may include time limit signs on spaces, meters and/or pay stations, and stripping parking spaces; improvements to include maintaining current street level Residential Parking Permit (RPP) areas, enforcing anti-counterfeiting permit measures, and capping number of RPP's to 4 per unit; notes other proposed changes include new online petition process, preserving flexibility for accommodating visitors, and different payment structure for permits; acknowledges Commuter Permit Pilot (CPP) program is most controversial component and if no support will look at removing from plan.

As for TDM plan the city is looking at options for employers and employees including their own; in terms of city staff looking into developing flex time policy with staff and looking at commuter incentives for city employees

Comments on timeline: 2 1/2 weeks left on public input; by late November final drafts of plans released and a 12/16 DPW commission vote on the Res plan; notes major changes would require charter changes; as soon as meetings done this week looking to get back in touch with advisory committees.

B) Commissioner Response/Questions

Commissioner Simon: are there any controversies concerning DT plan and if CPP program dropped how would that affect other 2 programs; Director Spencer answers concerning DT controversies that charging on Sundays and amount to pay downtown, and CPP program that doesn't think it would negatively affect other 2 programs.

Commissioner Archambeau: wants public feedback on CPP program and to hear what the problem is with keeping it in plan.

Commissioner Gillman: notes comments on reduced RPPs for people who opt into CPP program, but wondering why would anyone choose to do this optional plan and why anyone would want others parking in their neighborhood; Director Spencer notes that Boulder, CO has commuter permits that may originally have been part of a Res plan, but that this may be tool DPW doesn't implement, and that it's an option if neighborhoods wants to reduce their permit fee rates.

Commissioner Overby: says work being done on all 3 plans phenomenal; wants to see best use of all parking assets; notes change will be uncomfortable but we all have to step back and think of what's best for community; very excited about opportunity Res plan data has presented

Commissioner Barr: states DPW can always use more resources for funding and that charge for Res plan is a way to help mitigate that; concerned about transferable permits and possibility of people selling them; wonders why city doesn't stick with guest pass city already

has but do in better way, like via online; concerned with Res plan “Zone vs. Streets” – good that with large number of permits versus actual street spaces it would help spread out parking but notes some streets do have enough space for parking and wonders how to balance this.

Commissioner Alberry: says commission really has to pay attention to what neighborhoods and what taxpayers are saying.

Commission Chair Padgett: notes Res plan has been a bottom up affair but concerned that this report shows power now in hands of DPW, asks if DPW envisioned using this to propose RPP for neighborhoods that didn't have it, asks about priority of projects by DPW in terms of their numbering, and if staff perceives the RPP/CPP program as a threat; Director Spencer responds that these are neighborhood driven request but that DPW does have the power since neighborhoods can't act without commission/DPW action, that projects are listed by way of practicality, and Environmental Planner Losch states that she hasn't heard directly about RPP/CPP program perceived as a threat but sees heads nodding in audience agreeing while Chapin says he sees it from a standpoint of being one of many possible tools.

Commissioner Simon: asks what are driving forces behind CPP program; Director Spencer says one is fiscal needs, another is wise use of resources, and another is balancing needs of differing users in city; he says residents needs are important but that ultimately these are public Right-of-Ways and the city needs to do things that are the most efficient, and not necessarily proposing to change already RPP areas but going forward that RPPs may overburden system and can't be everywhere.

C) Public Comment

John Cane, Ward 1, is glad people are still talking about “Zones vs. Streets” as there's a lot of wisdom in zones; doesn't like tactic of paying for sticker and getting a discount if you go along with commute parking; questions if a permit is a tax due to possibility of it funding other things; if commuter permits are going to be like lottery he's not in favor.

City Councilor Adam Roof, Ward 8, says DPW's been fantastic to work with; okay with analogy of toolbox but thinks fees come down to affordability issue; says commuter program pilot shouldn't be scrapped as it has some value in certain parts of the city.

Richard Hillyard, Ward 1, states being on advisory committee for residential parking; welcomes opportunity to reconvene committee and look at details; still doesn't see any initiative on Park-n-Ride; feels onus on parking in neighborhoods is on residents and that's regrettable; asks if city can go forward collectively instead of by dictate.

Anne Geroski, Ward 6, says streets have uses other than parking; permit fee would hurt as residents already pay taxes; brings up new Champlain College residential building not requiring parking spaces and her problem is other people coming in and parking there; shouldn't have to pay for someone else's problem; says biggest problem is RPP program not enforced unless you complain over phone.

Bill Reilly, Ward 6, supports Anne's perspective and states problems are institutionally driven.

Kathleen Ryan, Ward 6, says neighboring street has no restriction; golden to already have a RPP but no parking on adjacent street unless Champlain College not in session; says parking cars on street is great – it slows down traffic and they're designed for that; says everyone pays taxes but doesn't think it gives people a right to a spot on street; doesn't think Maple St should be a residential parking street but wonders how we do designate appropriate street; supports CPP

program because it may relieve pressure on adjacent streets; wonders what happened to satellite parking proposals and that a satellite parking garage should be considered.

Laura Massell, Ward 6, no longer feels RPP program amenable to public but it's getting better; feels there's coercion and that's bad; feel people who live next to institutions are bearing a greater burden; love to see analysis of all commercial areas and wonders have we exploited all areas to get funds from – not just downtown but South End; says quid-quo-pro language inappropriate

City Councilor Sharon Bushor, Ward 1, pleased with departure of consultant because now DPW, commission, and public in contact – makes it a Burlington issue; every resident comes from different street with different situation; some streets older with no on-street parking, some not; wants community to have a dialogue because people can't speak for areas they don't live in; doesn't want goal to be financial, though knows city needs money; we can do other things, but doesn't have to be on backs of residents.

Kathryn Cartularo, Ward 6, says downtown parking on Sunday afternoons doesn't fit; city wants people to come downtown and if charging for parking they're going to go to Williston; concerns about having to go online to apply for parking passes when 9 grandchildren show up to visit – don't take passes away from her.

Barb Headrick, Ward 6, ask to imagine all streets filled to 85% capacity – not an environmentally green picture; asks to think of where commuters are going and make a plan to address that; not right that institution commuters – like UVM – are parking on residential streets; should not be about residential streets turning into parking lots; against meters going up in residential areas; should not be zones because non-residents will park in better parking spaces and residents will have to park further away; thinks that having permits issued per dwelling unit will lead to more congestion.

Josette Noll, Ward 6, says university and other institutions are not providing parking and they need to address their parking issues; residential settings changing with commercial coming in and businesses affecting residential; value of property has gone downhill.

D) Commission Discussion

Commissioner Simon: bets 90 percent or more of plans are non-controversial and wants to separate out controversial parts. Commission Chair Padgett: agrees on high level ideas but has problems with execution of them and says tools, like CPP program/RPP plan deal is awful. Commissioner Simon: wants to make a list of tools that need work; thinks people don't understand what the quid-pro-quo thing is saying residents think it's about a discount on permits and not neighborhoods getting RPP without the CPP program. Director Spencer: corrects him saying that is what it is about.

Commissioner Overby: commission focusing too much attention on tiny things; these are 3 complex plans which work together over 10 years; not financial from her perspective but about trying to reduce use of cars, pressures on the Res plan will be reduced through other 2 plans. Commissioner Simon: only plan commission has jurisdiction over is Res plan. Commission Chair Padgett: DT plan was commissioned by city council but is about things commission has jurisdiction over.

Commissioner Overby: start Sunday parking fees at 1pm – not noon – due to church services and lunch crowd. Commission Chair Padgett: whole goal is about turnover. Commissioner Overby: data is what drives plans and if people aren't parking on Sundays the city shouldn't charge. Director Spencer: cities like Portsmouth, NH have Sunday parking but if

you're a resident and show ID you get free parking and there should be that kind of balance here. Commissioner Simon: wonders if anyone is fundamentally opposed to changing Sunday. Commissioner Barr: there are challenges, though he's not necessarily against it and goes on to say it's the availability of parking, not the cost, which keeps people away.

Commission Chair Padgett: shifts conversation to biking (as it's part of DT plan) and wonders where spaces will be found. Director Spencer: plan recommends traffic fund be part of an "entrepreneurial investment" for future transportation; now it's just for maintaining a low-level of service; says fund currently running at \$5M but by reducing certain costs it could move up to \$7M. Commissioner Alberry: asks if there's a cap on the fund. Director Spencer: due to old ordinance language, he believes, the garages can't generate more revenue than the minimum needed to maintain them; that's an issue because they need \$9M for repairs and a lot of it will need to come from street parking; brings up chance to bring in more money here as the biggest night at hotels for parking is Saturday and no fees are currently collected Sunday; would like gates down 24/7. Commissioner Overby: DT parking's other problem is parking decks – people are not wanting to use them and says if the city's putting \$9M in we need to be certain it's for things people will use. Commissioner Barr: as part of DT advisory committee he says that the only option was to fix what we currently have and add wayfinding signs.

Commissioner Simon: discusses subjects in Res plan of numbers and costs of permits; brings up concern of families needing to buy multiple passes; thinks of Buell St and students leaving cars there all year just to drive home for Christmas; likes limit of permits per structure; would like to disincentives more cars. Commissioner Alberry: brings up ordinance about abandoned cars. Director Spencer: not strongly enforced and action based on individual complaints. Commissioner Overby: this brings why satellite parking should be considered. Commissioner Barr: speaking to institutions gives example of UVM requiring 1st year students not having cars but thinks institutions should do more; hopes commission will do more to force them; says landlords need to do more too as institutions don't have as much power over students living in community that people think they do. Commissioner Overby: thinks about people being invited downtown to live with new residential developments going through – they won't have institutional pressures on them; just individuals who need cars for their livelihood. Commissioner Barr: at very least we need to par down amount of permits per units. Commission Chair Padgett: city is going from an infinite number issued down to 4 per unit – a good direction. Commissioner Gillman: the perception though is that everyone's going to have commuter parking and we need better guidelines. Commission Chair Padgett: recommends what DPW is doing should be better packaged as "tools" and not "requirements." Commissioner Barr: important to give residents a feeling of ownership in tools before using. Commission Chair Padgett: is hearing how people don't like how tools are being implemented.

Commissioner Simon: sounds like DPW is going to have more interaction with people on advisory committee and feels that's going to come up with a livable consensus for everyone by the time it gets to the commission. Commission Chair Padgett: says to wait and not throw commuter parking out yet. Commissioner Archambeau: there seems to be consensus about tool driven approach; certainly recognizes each neighborhood has unique challenges but still needs to look at global picture; not going to make everyone happy but if problems approached with data commission will serve city well.

Commission Chair Padgett: reminds everyone it's 9:30. Commissioner Barr: hopes commission has given DPW enough input. Director Spencer: brings up differing unique perspectives Commissioner Archambeau was talking about, the important ideas behind "tools,"

and after talking with people that some tools may be too cumbersome for our small town; will take all input and talk with advisory committee and come back in December; if commission doesn't vote on Res plan it's not end of world; but commission does need to get to a point where it approves plan – need to do best we can with what we've got.

Commission Chair Padgett: asks should we move to Item 4.

E) Action Requested

None.

Item 4 – Adjournment

Commissioner Barr makes motion to adjourn and is seconded by Commissioner Simon.

Vote:

Commissioner Archambeau: Aye

Commissioner Simon: Aye

Commissioner Gillman: Aye

Commissioner Overby: Aye

Commissioner Barr: Aye

Commissioner Alberry: Aye

Commission Chair Padgett: Aye

Meeting ended at 9:36pm.