

Eli Meyer, Chr
Joseph Golio
John Regan
Bridget Matthews-
Kane, Council Liaison

City of Westfield, Massachusetts OFF-STREET PARKING COMMISSION



CITY HALL
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WESTFIELD, MA 01085
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OFF-STREET PARKING COMMISSION MEETING Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 5:30 PM Zoom

MINUTES

Meeting convened at 5:34 PM

Chairman Meyer, Commissioner Regan, and Commissioner Golio were present.

The next Off-Street Parking Commission meeting was confirmed for Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at 6:00 PM via Zoom. Per Governor Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, the emergency order will expire on April 1, 2022, therefore, the March meeting will be our last via Zoom.

A motion was made by Commissioner Regan, seconded and unanimously VOTED to approve the minutes for the December 15, 2021.

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Update on the Off-Street Parking Lots:

a. Gravel Lot

Peter Miller stated the following:

- The Gravel lot has not held up well at all.
- Snow, icing over, then the melting took a toll on that lot.
- It is treacherous.
- He will be speaking to DPW to figure out how to grade that lot. It is challenging this time of year.
- Will ask if they can throw some gravel in to clean up for now.
- We do have some money in our revolving account to purchase some material if the DPW can spread it for us.
- The lot is getting more use. The Maple Leaf is has become popular and more people are getting out, the lot is seeing more use over the last couple of months.

b. Dumpster Corrals

Peter Miller stated the following

- The first week of January, JDog Junk Removal was hired to clean out Franklin Street and School Street, Reader 3 parking lots, and the dumpster corrals. People have been illegally dumping furniture, old televisions, and bulk items that do not belong there.
- He will be checking those locations again this week to see if they need to be cleaned out again. It appears about every 6 weeks we need to have them cleaned out.
- DPW has a purchase order open for both JDog and for 1-800-got-junk to handle pickups for us.

Peter indicated that we have spoken in the past and the Chairperson has asked to push forward to place cameras in the lots. He did receive a quote through the IT Department who has been working with Valley Communications to come up with a strategy as to placing cameras in the lots.

- Quote came in more expensive than we anticipated at \$24,000.
- Four Cameras – 3 lots
 - 2 cameras - Thomas Street
 - 1 camera - Reader 3
 - 1 camera - Franklin Street

We do not carry \$24,000 in our Off-Street Parking Commission budget for capital needs. We do have our revolving account that we deposit funds from people who purchase parking permits and the purpose of that is for maintenance of the lots.

There is an order establishing a revolving account titled, "Off Street Parking Lot Maintenance Costs Account" and there are six things on the list that are allowable expenses, unfortunately cameras do not fall into any category on the list. Peter asked the commission if they thought it would be wise to go to council to amend the order to include cameras as an allowable use of that funding. We have \$50,000 in the account. We usually spend about \$20,000 each year on the maintenance of the lots which includes emptying the trash, the service and warranty of our meter machine, and the spring and fall cleanups. We do have capacity to do this if we would like. Peter indicated that his primary goal is Franklin Street then secondary would be Reader 3 lot since that is where there is the most dumping issues and then lastly Thomas Street. He can prioritize. Every time we do a clean-up it is \$800. The ultimate goal is to keep the lot clean. It doesn't mean dumping would end, it could provide us with opportunity to pursue people who are doing it or as a deterrent to doing it in general. He asked how the commission thinks he should proceed.

A discussion was held regarding questions about the cameras.

Chairman Meyer asked would it make more sense to have all the cameras installed at once as opposed to piecemeal. Peter indicated he thought it would be more economical to do it all at once. When you do it by piecemeal, they can charge more to come back out. Commissioner Regan stated he would like to do it all at once. Chairman Meyer then asked who would monitor the cameras. Peter indicated that the police department would have capability to monitor them live and then the tape is available for 21 days. She then asked if Peter knew if that is the same in comparison with other towns. Peter answered we are actually doing this together in

conjunction with the Police Department and the Engineering Department as it relates to the bike trail. We are on the same scheme as they are.

21 days is a good amount of time. Peter believes that within 48 to 72 hours we would have been informed on whatever the issue is. Peter gets down to the lots as much as possible and the Parking Enforcement Officer serves as our eyes in the lots. He will take pictures and then send them to Peter for review. The Enforcement Officer is generally there Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday's. Worst case scenario is that it would be five days turnaround if no one from the private or citizen sector called in a complaint.

In the past, we have been called by insurance companies to see if we have cameras when a car has been hit in our lot. We have also lost a couple of our lamp posts by drivers who have hit them and then just left. Peter will have to place a call into our Law Department to see how now having cameras would now work.

A motion was made by Chairman Meyer, seconded and unanimously VOTED for Peter Miller to present to council to amend the order for the maintenance to include the purchase of security cameras for our three parking lots.

c. General Off-Street Parking Lot update

Peter Miller stated the following

- Snow has not been awful, ice definitely has been.
- We have not had a lot of complaints. The challenge has been around ice.
- Peter likes to keep track of costs, which does not come out of our budget. It has been about \$28,000 in clearing and deicing the Off-Street lots.
- Events have totaled about 14 or 15 so far where our vendor has had to come out to lay down salt or shovel.
- It's not cheap to deal with snow.
- He received a concern from Mama Cakes relative to where the snow piles in the Reader 1 lot behind their building were placed.
- The piles have been put in handicap spaces of that lot. There is a concern of liability in not having those spaces available.
- Peter contacted Mountain View. They actually moved a pile in the Depot Square lot that was also in handicap spaces. He will reach out again for Reader lot.
- The challenge with Reader lot is there is not many places to put the snow the way the lot is laid out.
- Peter is going to investigate to see if the handicap spots can be moved over like six spots so rather than on the edge near the Santander property, move them closer to the Church Street Commons side. We would just have to re-stripe the spaces for handicap.
- We have not had to do any hauling this winter and have had no major complaints from motorists.

2. Discussion of the Off-Street Parking signing program for Downtown Westfield.

- Peter Miller is still working on getting those distributed. Mayor McCabe wants to be involved in delivering the signs with him. Mayor McCabe wants to do a

walking tour to distribute parking signs and emergency business assistance applications as well. It is a great opportunity to go out and meet the business owners. Peter welcomes anyone on the commission to walk along if they so wish.

3. Quorum concerns

- Three of the last five meetings have been cancelled
- Challenge going forward is Governor Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, the emergency order will expire on April 1st.
- Only one more month on zoom and then we will need to meet in City Hall.
- Wednesday has been our traditional night, but we could change it.
- There has been talk of expanding duties and the mission of the board may be evolving into a parking and downtown advisory committee.

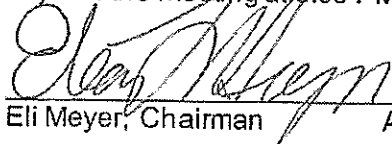
A discussion was held regarding changing the meeting night. Each commissioner was open to changing the meeting day. Peter was going to check into conference room availability and report back.

Administrative Business:

1. Approval of monthly bills.

- a. A motion was made by Chairman Meyer, and unanimously VOTED to approve the monthly regular and revolving bills as submitted.

With no further business, a motion was made by Chairman Meyer, and unanimously VOTED to adjourn the meeting at 6:09 PM.

 3-17-22
Eli Meyer, Chairman Approved: