

BURLINGTON PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION  
645 Pine Street  
Minutes – December 21, 2011

**Commissioners present:** Robert Alberry, Nathan Lavery, Mark Porter, Marc Sherman & Maxwell Tracy  
**Commissioners absent:** Margaret Gundersen & Jared Wood

Commissioner Alberry called the meeting to order at 6:22 p.m.

**Item 1: AGENDA:** Commissioner Alberry asked if there were changes to the Agenda; no changes.

**Item 2: PUBLIC FORUM:** Commissioner Alberry invited members of the audience to come forward:

Greg Roy of Dale Road recently had an abnormally low water bill which he reported to the Customer Service representative at the Water Division. Mr. Roy came forward to publicly express his appreciation for the technician (Bruce) who responded to the service call, saying he was friendly, personable, professional and efficient.

**Item 3: REMOVAL OF PARKING ON THE NORTH SIDE OF ALFRED STREET**  
(Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer and Director Steven Goodkind)

This item, brought up by Alfred Street residents, was discussed at the previous two Commission meetings. At tonight's meeting, Mr. Fleming reviewed options for the commissioners, should they feel compelled to make a decision to address the residents' concerns. Congestion due to numerous vehicles parked on the street (primarily, the north side) as well as snow accumulation, make it difficult for those on the south side of the street to enter and exit their driveways. Resident Kathleen Sullivan and dental practice owner Joe Kropf, DMD were present and answered the commissioners' questions.

Commissioner Sherman expressed concern about setting precedence by eliminating parking, and by being a complaint-driven organization instead of a proactive planning organization. He has been advocating for a city-wide parking policy; Commissioner Lavery agrees. Commissioner Porter supported an overnight parking ban on one side of the street.

**Commissioner Lavery**, in support of Commissioner Porter's recommendation, **moved** to implement on a temporary basis, a "No Overnight Parking" restriction on the north side of Alfred Street between Shelburne Street and Perrotta Place. Overnight parking is defined as midnight (12 a.m.) to six o'clock a.m. **Commissioner Sherman seconded, requesting that a representative of the Alfred Street residents return to the Commission at the February meeting** to report on whether or not the "No Overnight Parking 12:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m." has improved the situation. Unanimous approval.

**Item 4: REMOVE PARKING ON THE EAST SIDE OF PINE STREET NORTH OF LOCUST STREET** (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

In response to a resident's request to move a "No Parking" sign on Pine Street two spaces north of the Locust Street intersection, staff proposes removing two parking spaces Pine Street to improve sight

distance for drivers exiting Locust Street. **Commissioner Porter moved** to accept staff's recommendation; Commissioner Tracy seconded. Unanimous approval.

**Item 5: ADDITION OF METERED PARKING ON THE NORTH SIDE OF MAIN STREET JUST WEST OF SOUTH WILLARD STREET** (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

As per the Commission's request for staff to examine the north side of Main Street just west of South Willard, staff determined that four (4) parking spaces could be added without compromising the safety of the intersection. **Commissioner Lavery moved** to accept staff recommendation to adopt four, 10-hour meter spaces on the north side of Main Street just west of South Willard Street. Commissioner Tracy seconded. Unanimous approval.

**DPW staff agreed to look into the possibility that the turn pocket on Main Street on the west side of this intersection is too short, and/or whether or not current parking spaces on the south side of Main Street west of this intersection, in conjunction with the turn pocket, inhibit the flow of eastbound traffic.**

**Item 6. MORE MOTORCYCLE PARKING IN THE DOWNTOWN** (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

No discussion. **Commissioner Sherman moved** to accept staff's recommendation to adopt motorcycle parking on lower Church Street and on St. Paul Street in the prohibited parking area. Commissioner Lavery seconded. Unanimous approval.

**Item 7. REMOVAL OF PARKING ON BROOKES AVENUE ACROSS FROM EASTERN MOST BUMP-OUT** (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

DPW staff received this item as a request a couple of months ago. Joel sent a letter to Brookes Avenue residents east of Williams Street soliciting their opinions. Three respondents agreed with removing the parking; two respondents asked that the bump-outs be removed. Staff recommends that parking be eliminated 20' east and west of the bump-out because of congestion on the street in the bump-out area caused by parked vehicles and snow accumulation. **Commissioner Porter moved** to accept staff's recommendation to remove parking 20' on either side of the eastern most bump-out. Commissioner Lavery seconded. Unanimous approval. It was agreed that if there was another traffic calming request for this site, the request be brought before the Commission.

**Item 8: ORCHARD TERRACE PARKING** (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

This item was previously brought before the Commission at the July 2011 meeting, resulting in the commissioners' approval of the addition of one parking space. However, staff learned that with the addition of that parking space, emergency vehicles had insufficient navigation room when turning onto Orchard Terrace.

Staff's new recommendation is to move the "No Parking Here to Corner" sign back about 37' from the corner (to its previous location). As per Commissioner Sherman's request, **Mr. Fleming and/or Director Goodkind will contact the fire chief to ensure that he is in agreement with the change.**

**Commissioner Sherman moved** to accept staff's recommendation to move the "No Parking Here to Corner" sign back to its previous location 37' from the corner, as long as the Burlington Fire Department concurs. Commissioner Porter seconded. Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Sherman advocated for a consistent parking plan to address, among other issues, inconsistencies in paid and free parking spaces in the vicinity of street corners and crosswalks.

**Commissioner Lavery asked Mr. Fleming to** put together a layout of standard steps that should be followed when a resident submits a parking-related request (e.g., have the neighbors been contacted? Have the local businesses been contacted?). Mr. Fleming will bring this document to the next meeting.

**Item 9: PARKING SPACES REMOVED IN 2011**

(Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer and Director Steven Goodkind)

(See packet for December 21, 2011 Memorandum) Overall, 33 parking spaces city-wide were lost. Discussion ensued about the need for an additional parking structure downtown (the parking garage attached to the mall was built in 1978 and is expected to last about 50 years). In addition to providing more spaces, it will eliminate the need to drive around town looking for a parking space and decrease pollution caused by the looping. Efforts being promoted/explored by the city and county: Encouraging bus ridership; creating a park and ride in the south end; developing more bicycle parking/facilities around businesses, etc.

**Item 10: TRAFFIC LIGHT AND PEDESTRIAN DESIGN/TIMING**

(Director Steven Goodkind and Traffic Signal Technician Dave Garen)

Director Goodkind and Mr. Garen provided an informational talk and presentation on past, present and future technology and considerations for smooth and safe pedestrian and vehicle flow. Handouts entitled, "A Plan for Making Downtown Traffic Signals More Pedestrian Friendly," prepared by Dave Garen on June 10, 1996, were distributed. The information in this handout is current except for the cycle length during the hours of 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (now 10 – 3) and 12-4 Saturdays and Sundays (cycle length is 70 seconds).

Commissioner Tracy will follow up with Director Goodkind on the proposed changes to the Archibald Street/North Winooski Avenue intersection (changing the signal and crossing distance).

**Item 11: UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE REPORT** (Director Steven Goodkind)

Director Goodkind and Commissioners Porter and Lavery have been working on the report. Director Goodkind hopes to prepare a final draft in the next couple of weeks, meet once more with the commissioners to get their approval and then begin planning the next phase of this evolving document (determine what information is useful for the Commission, for the public, etc.). Director Goodkind will give the final draft to Commissioners Porter and Lavery to distribute as they wish.

**Item 12: MINUTES OF 11/16/11**

Commissioner Tracy moved to accept the Minutes as recorded; Commissioner Lavery seconded. Unanimous approval.

**Item 13: CHAIR'S REPORT:** No report.

**Item 14: DIRECTOR'S REPORT** (Director Steven Goodkind)

- Preparing FY 2013 budgets.
- New auditor this year; more preparation is required by DPW staff for the audit.
- Hopes to have the new snowfighting plan in the next couple of days (methods used, towing areas). Once finalized, the pamphlet will be posted on the Web site and distributed widely.
  - o A new additive is being used with the salt this year for sidewalks (dirty brownish/purple color, a waste product of rum distillation); seems to work about as well as last year's formula. The formula change is in response to complaints by dog owners claiming their dogs' paws were irritated by the additive used in last year's salt mixture.
  - o Snow hauling was greatly decreased last year; will use the improved method again this year by using sidewalk plows and snowblowers to clear the edge of streets, blowing it into a taller pile on the side rather than hauling the snow to another site (saved time and money). In the downtown area blowers were used to clear out areas around meters and from sidewalks. Purchased two new blowers for DPW's newest tractors (designed to clear streets and have greater capacity to blow the snow higher and farther).
- Loading zones downtown: Director Goodkind and staff will be looking at the loading zone parking universal loading zone times/signage (effective 8 – 5) so drivers may use those spaces after those hours for parking.
- DPW staff has been reviewing "No Parking Here to Corner." The ordinance says it shall be 50' for the "no parking here to corner" signs, or, the Commission may establish something different. It is inconsistent city-wide. In most cases the "No Parking Here to Corner" signs were placed by staff without prior consent from the Commission.
- Staff are eliminating one parking space at the corner of South Champlain Street heading north at the Main Street intersection, due to the hazardous condition it presents (drivers have to pull out into Main Street traffic in order to see oncoming traffic).
- Prompted by Commissioner Sherman's questions about the current Inspection Services process, Director Goodkind reported that he and staff have been looking at the possibility of streamlining some aspects of Inspection Services (e.g., are all current inspections really necessary; is the current level of review prior to issuing permits necessary; are there some permits currently being issued which will be deemed not necessary in the future; is a remote permitting process possible, requiring DPW to accept credit card payments; possible expansion of staff, whether another inspector or administrative personnel; etc.). Commissioner Sherman has "...had an overwhelmingly positive experience..." in his frequent visits to Inspection Services this past year.

**Item 15: COMMISSIONERS' COMMUNICATIONS**

- Commissioner Porter: Could we make a rule to put a STOP sign where there is a "stop" (e.g., at the top of a street)? Is it financially feasible? Director Goodkind said that the Commission could decide to do this, as there is no Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) requirement for it, though there haven't been many requests recently.

Assistant Director Norman Baldwin explained some of the nuances around the city accepting funding from another source. For example, the State of Vermont provided funds to repave Willard Street. Some of the side streets off Willard did not meet MUTCD standards so the State made changes to bring those intersections up to code (e.g., installed STOP signs). The reason that all intersections do not currently have STOP signs is that they may not be warranted (warranted

only if there is limited/restricted site distance). Producing, placing and maintaining the signs 24/7 may require staffing that the city may not be able to provide. An additional consideration for placing STOP signs at all corners may result in loss of parking spaces in the vicinity of the corners.

- Commissioner Sherman: Expressed concern about the lack of a STOP sign at the top of Buell Street where it intersects with Willard Street (limited site distance turning onto Willard Street). Further, he asked if Director Goodkind could ask staff to make a list of all street corners that lack STOP signs and submit the list to the Commission for approval. Director Goodkind said that he would be glad to oblige once proper staffing and time allows him to do so. Assistant Director Baldwin added that each neighborhood needs to be considered individually as to whether a STOP sign is warranted; whether there is limited parking in the neighborhood, and if so, would placing a STOP sign at the corner, which would require eliminating parking spaces, be in the best interest of that neighborhood; does each street design lend itself to a blanket standard, etc.
- Commissioner Porter: Asked if Mr. Fleming would take another look at 295 Maple Street (behind Edmunds) and bring it up at next month's meeting (this item was discussed at a previous meeting). Commissioner Porter looked at the site and feels there is not enough room for cars to pull out of the driveway. Mr. Fleming will look at it next week.
- Commissioner Porter: Both Brookes Avenue street signs have been stolen again.
- Commissioner Porter on behalf of Commissioner Wood: The illuminated "no turn on red" on Winooski Avenue northbound at the Pearl Street intersection has not been functioning for some time. Mr. Garen reported that the illuminated sign was disconnected for the State road construction program last summer and has been replaced with a sign. Mr. Garen will be replacing the incorrect signage with a "No Turn on Red" sign.
- Commissioner Tracy: Requests an update on the paving projects. Director Goodkind will ask Erin Demers, DPW Engineer, to finalize the report by next month's meeting. Also, on behalf of Commissioner Wood: Why was the fog line not painted on Route 7 between the rotary and the South Burlington town line after the State's paving project was completed? Director Goodkind will look into this.

**Item 16: COMMITTEE REPORTS:** No reports.

**Item 17: POLICY UPDATE:** No policy updates.

**Item 18: ADJOURNMENT:** 9:00 p.m.: Commissioner Sherman moved to adjourn; Commissioner Porter seconded. Unanimous approval.