

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH & TRAFFIC

March 1, 2022 at 5:15 PM

Chairman Barry called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Barry, Long, Stewart, George-Kelly, Sharonov

Messrs.: T. Clougherty, A. Aldenberg

1. The Traffic Division has submitted an agenda which needs to be addressed:

NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Brockton Street, south side, from a point 50 feet east of Bismark Street to Brock Street

Alderman Barry

RESCIND NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Brockton Street, south side, from Bismark Street to Brock Street (ORD 10769)

Alderman Barry

RESCIND HANDICAP PARKING ONLY

On Hanover Street, south side, from a point 80 feet east of Beech Street to a point 20 feet east (ORD 3104)

Alderman Fajardo

The Clerk read an addendum to the Traffic Division agenda into the record:

NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Victoria Street, north side, from W River Drive westerly to the dead end

Alderman Cavanaugh

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Stewart**, it was voted to approve the Traffic Division agenda and the addendum.*

2. Communication from Denise Boutilier, Parking Manager, regarding a request from Kerry Morelli for permission to use Arms Lot for DEKA's ARMI BioFabUSA Spring Meeting in the Millyard from June 6, 2022 to June 10, 2022.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to approve the request.*

3. Communication from Timothy Clougherty, Deputy Public Works Director, with recommendations relative to improving the situation of cars being illegally parked during winter snow emergencies.

Timothy Clougherty, Deputy Public Works Director, stated good evening. As the committee is aware, we have been in correspondence with the Police Department and Parking Division relative to snow emergencies, odd/even parking, and cars remaining on streets during and after snowstorms. Based on the feedback we received, you can see that we made three different recommendations: increasing enforcement as outlined by the Police Department and Parking Division; increasing communications

which is also outlined in the increase of availability of surface parking lots during snow emergencies which we are continuing to explore. We have had another snowstorm since the writing of this letter on Friday of last week, where we did call a snow emergency. It's my understanding that it was much more successful than we had seen in the recent past. In driving around this weekend, as well as doing a tour on Monday with our Chief of Street Operations, I think that the combination of these efforts certainly improved the results and showed some of the things that I think this committee wanted and that other members on the Board had requested. With that, I'd like to open it up to any questions the committee may have.

Alderman Stewart stated thank you. I appreciate everybody putting all of these ideas down. I'm curious, speaking of the snow emergency this past weekend, what were the numbers with regard to how many were towed and how many tickets were issued?

Allen Aldenberg, Chief of Police, stated approximately 140 cars were towed and 115 snow emergency parking tickets were issued, which is up quite significantly from prior storms, especially relative to the parking tickets. That's just the result of a little more emphasis internally at my department relative to snow emergency parking tickets and allocating a few extra people to the snow emergency assignment out of my budget to issue additional tickets. I think moving forward that should be the template. I wouldn't recommend any drastic changes at this point.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I know we talked about the towing contracts that you all have in the last meeting. I'm interested to know if there's any work being put into increasing those contracts, either the minimum number of tow trucks that are on the road during an emergency parking ban or the number of companies that we have contracts with, in order to really meet the need of the 500 to 600 cars that the city has told us is the number that should be towed during an emergency parking ban.

Chief Aldenberg stated we currently have our Police tow contract with our designated companies. At a minimum, they are required to bring two tow trucks for a snow emergency. Adding more tow trucks is only part of the solution because you need to have an area to bring these vehicles. The Derryfield Park parking lot where we tow the vehicles to, once that is filled, we're at capacity and we have nowhere else to bring them. Within 24 hours, those vehicles have to be removed and the companies that towed those vehicles, whichever ones they towed that are remaining at Derryfield, have to be brought back to their tow lot. They only have so much room at their lots and only so much capacity. Before we go down the road of contracting more tow companies, I would like to identify an additional tow lot, perhaps one on the West Side like we used to have at the West Side Ice Arena. You need to have more capacity before you start towing more vehicles, and right now we just don't have that. I hope that answers your question.

Alderman Sharonov stated Chief, you made a request here to change from detail to overtime pay for officers assigned overnight for ticketing. I actually support this request; I think it is reasonable especially if it is going to pay for itself.

Chief Aldenberg stated I think if we were to do that we would solidify any issues within the collective bargaining agreements to make sure we have no issues there. As we

enter the next season, into 2022-2023, that would be the time to have that discussion. The more bodies I can put out there, the more success we are going to have.

Alderman Stewart stated speaking of the parking lot at the West Side Ice Arena, why don't we use that anymore.

Mr. Clougherty stated it could certainly be used. We do use it as an area that people can park during snow emergencies. It is not considered an impound lot though. So we would be switching its use from an area that is available for parking for free during snow emergencies to a manned operation where vehicles are towed and held there until 24 hours after the storm. That's certainly an option.

Alderman Stewart asked do parking lots have to be either or; resident parking or impound. Can you use a portion of each lot if we are looking for additional spaces here and there if there is capacity in some places? Is that a possibility?

Chief Aldenberg asked you're talking about the Derryfield impound lot.

Alderman Stewart responded no, more like the West Side Ice Arena. If it's currently being used for residents to park and say it's only at 70% capacity, could a portion of that lot be used for impounding vehicles?

Chief Aldenberg answered yeah I think just looking at the West Side Ice Arena, you could probably use the back for impound and you could use the front for resident parking. I think the focus should be on providing as much open space free parking for our residents as opposed to being more focused on the revenue part of it.

Mr. Clougherty stated part of the challenge with what you're asking about, and just to use a different example for clarification, say we were to use Memorial High School. If we were to use West High School, Derryfield, and Memorial High School, every location where you're going to impound vehicles requires that location to be manned and have the ability to do cash transactions. You have to secure the vehicles so people aren't just coming in and taking their cars; they have to pay that fee and then retrieve their vehicles. It's a little bit of logistics also. Speaking more to what the Chief was saying, we wouldn't support the front parking at the West Side Ice Arena because there are too many winter activities there before, during, and after snowstorms. We wouldn't want to prevent normal patrons from being able to use that lot. But we are in the process and we've identified a bunch of other lots and somewhere around 850 additional parking spaces. A challenge we have is that we have to work with parking and police to enforce the snow emergency parking provisions associated with these emergency lots which means they have to be removed within a certain period of time. I don't remember exactly what that period of time is, but if they're not removed then we're having them removed and we're running into the same challenges we do with impound with having enough towing companies and enough space within those companies' premises to store the vehicles. We don't want to prevent activities or other people that would normally use the lot from being able to do so because these cars are all snowed in. Once they're snowed in, it creates a difficult situation for us to plow. A prime example of that is the Beech Street parking lot. I don't know what condition it's in

today, but as of about 4:00 PM yesterday, there were 40 or 50 cars in there still snowed in and still parked there. That's a challenge that we've got to work through.

Chairman Barry asked where was that, Tim.

Mr. Clougherty responded Beech Street adjacent to Gill Stadium and south of JFK Coliseum.

Chairman Barry stated we're not even really dedicating that to snow emergency parking. People just park there because they always have. People that live in the neighborhood, right?

Mr. Clougherty stated they were up until this storm but we decided to open it up this storm. If you drive by there, you'll see the nature of this issue that I'm talking about.

Chairman Barry asked they haven't moved since the storm.

Mr. Clougherty answered no. Some of them have been there longer than they should be and we're working on addressing that as well.

Chairman Barry stated that's something we need to deal with because our goal is it's overnight.

Mr. Clougherty stated that's certainly the goal. This isn't just general long-term parking for anyone that wants to be there. There are cars there with flats and other things so we know they've been there for longer than they should be.

Chairman Barry stated plus as a city we still need to plow that lot.

Mr. Clougherty responded absolutely. It is in tough shape. I went through with an SUV yesterday and I wouldn't have wanted to go through with a sedan.

Chairman Barry stated now that's another dilemma. Do we need to set something up that's in an ordinance that says you're only allowed to park there overnight but it has to be removed during the day? I know we're trying to make it easier.

Chief Aldenberg stated I wouldn't recommend regulating more. That could be covered under just a general ticket.

Chairman Barry stated that's what I'm saying, a ticket; not to tow but at least give them a warning saying you have to move this vehicle.

Mr. Clougherty stated I believe that regulations exist and they require, if it's not posted, that we have to sticker and give 24 hours' notice. If it's deemed a snow emergency lot, we have to post it accordingly and then we have the ability to at least tow. I don't know what kind of ability we have to ticket. Those avenues do exist currently. We just need to make sure we have the personnel to enforce them.

Chairman Barry stated our goal is to try to make it easier for people and make it efficient for them to walk to and from an area. We thought that especially in the inner city that's an ideal location but we didn't intend that they're going to park there unless they're all on school vacation this week.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I agree with the other aldermen here that you guys have done a good job of putting together some information. I think this past storm we definitely did a better job out there, but I think there are two things that are important to note. We are not looking to tow cars for revenue. We're looking to tow cars so we can do an adequate job of plowing our streets. The second thing is that winter is going to come again and we have some months between now and next winter and we have a lot of work to do to get this to a place where it's actually an acceptable plan. I think we're heading in the right direction but we have work to do. I'm hopeful that all of the things you're talking about, increasing impound lots, towing contracts, all of those things are things that you guys are going to be working on in off months and we're not going to be having this same conversation next winter.

Chairman Barry stated one other thing before we end is the overtime that we discussed and that is in our packet. Is that going to be implemented for next year or did you already start?

Chief Aldenberg stated I did not start that. If we were to do that that would be next season. I just want to make sure that it's not violating any collective bargaining agreements.

Chairman Barry stated I think this is great and I appreciate all the work that you guys put into this because it's exactly what we're looking for. When you look at the communication we have, and I was talking to Alderman Long about it, we just don't have any other communication left. We've done everything we can. We've hit every avenue we can. Is there more? Possibly, but... we could put two tin cans together with a string and see if we can get them that way. We've got enough here. I really appreciate it.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Stewart**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee