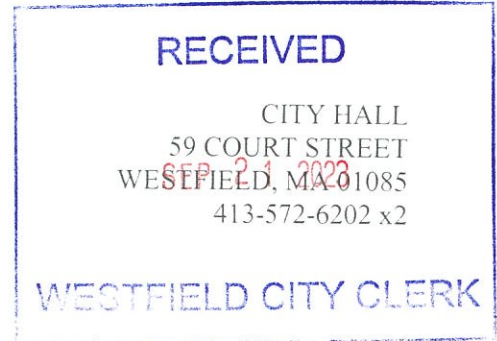




City of Westfield, Massachusetts
OFF-STREET PARKING

Elli Meyer, Chair
Joseph Golio
John Regan
Bridget Matthews-Kane,
Council Liaison



OFF-STREET PARKING COMMISSION
Wednesday, June 21, 2023
Municipal Building
59 Court Street, Westfield, MA
Room 315 6:00 PM

MINUTES

Acting Chairman Joseph Golio called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Acting Chairman Golio and Commissioner Gustafson were present. Commissioner Ellie Myer was absent. Also in attendance was Community Development Director, Peter Miller.

Upon motion of acting Chairman Golio, and duly seconded by Commissioner Gustafson, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: To take summer break from July to August and set the next Off Street Parking Commission meeting for September 20, 2023.

Upon motion of acting Chairman Golio, and duly seconded by Commissioner Gustafson, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: To approve the minutes for May 3, 2023.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Commissioner Gustafson stated that he knows an individual who needs to come before the Off-Street Parking Commission that has a snow cone cart. He added that she works part-time at their bakery and that she used to be a baker for Disney and a few other places. She would be serving shaved ice. Peter Miller stated that they could work with her when the times comes and make arrangements with her and for her to notify him once she is ready.

REGULAR MEETING:

Peter Miller stated the following about the Elm Street/ Gravel Lot:

- Elm Street Project is ongoing.
- The contractor has been off-site for the last three weeks and expects them to return within the next 10 days.
- The order for light foundations has been made and is being fabricated and will be delivered over the course of next week.
- When the contractors do the light foundations, they will also dig to put in the conduit for the underground electric, which is a significant part of the project.
- The next portion of the project will likely be water, like the sprinkler systems.
- The next leading item would be the granite, asphalt, and landscaping.
- Has not run into any major concerns but the leading time on the granite caught them off guard. Generally, you can get granite within 3 weeks to a month, but now it has been 3-4 months.
- Has been doing biweekly meetings to keep the project flowing.
- Had some issues with the lights and what kind of lights they could use, due to the City's strict ordinance, that everything has to be facing down lit.

Commissioner Gustafson asked what that meant. Peter Miller stated that there can't be a lot of outward lighting. He added that currently the streetlights are exempt. He had originally specked for lights that resembled the current streetlights, but the Planning Board notified him that those lights were not compliant with the city ordinance. Peter Miller added that hopefully by September-October they will be able to lay sod and hopefully host something later in the Fall to celebrate the completion of the project. Peter Miller stated that compared to Summer of 2021, nothing was maintained, he is pleased with where they are in the project. Commissioner Gustafson asked if all the lots or a single lot in particular that were in bad condition. Peter Miller stated that the worst ones were the Reader lots and Franklin Street. Everything was overgrown and filled with weeds and trash. He added that they were losing parking spaces due to uncleanliness, and those were gained back this Spring.

Commissioner Gustafson stated that they could incorporate the trade school students to maintain parking lots throughout the summer. Peter Miller added that the Department of Public Works even hires non-trade school kids and laborers to maintain the parks but due to them being tedious, nobody really wants to do them.

Peter Miller stated the following about the Food Trucks:

- Vlad's Pizza has been enjoying the Riverwalk Lot and has picked up different clients. Generally, they are there on Wednesdays and Fridays and they do Farmer Market on Thursday's and have come up with a really good schedule.
- Talked with Jack from the Hot Dog cart and he said the same thing, that he is doing really well on the Riverwalk Lot and is looking forward to going back to Elm Street when the time comes.
- Is continuing to do research into not only Food Truck regulations but also Food Truck recruitment.
- The mayor wants to investigate every opportunity to bring people to use the Plaza.

- Will continue to share that with the Commissioners.
- The Commissioners will still have authority over the licensure of Food Trucks.
- The Health Department would be the Food Trucks primary licensing, but permission to use the spaces will still be the Off-Street Parking Commission.
- The School Street Boutiques had their first events on the second Friday of the month, and they went smoothly, and they had a couple of vendors participate.
- Will try to close the lots the night before the events for a smoother transition, so they're not chasing cars the morning of the event.

Spring Maintenance:

Commissioner Gustafson asked who he employs to handle clearing out the lots for events Peter Miller stated that it's himself. Peter Miller added that he reached out to the Department of Public Works to assist him with putting out barricades and delivering them to the lot and put a sign up that says the lot will be closed for the following day. He added that he does use the parking enforcement officer to flyer the cars a couple days ahead of time and also informs people through the Downtown mailing list. He added he will add the Commissioners to the mailing list as well.

Peter Miller stated the following about priorities for Fiscal Year 2024:

- The primary goal is to get the Elm Street Lot up and running.
- Work through the permitting process to allow for as much heavy activity as possible and maintenance.
- No interest in pursuing changes in the policies in any of the lots at this point unless someone has different ideas.
- Is not looking to raise prices for parking permits and is not ready to do that for at least another year.
- The three-hour limits for the lots are working pretty well.

Commissioner Gustafson agreed that the three-hour limits, without getting any type of permit, is a really good deal. with a city this size does pay as you go, like Northampton. He added that parking is a premium, especially in the inner city. Peter Miller agrees that they've done their best to balance those two things. He wants people to understand the value of parking because they need people to cycle in and out within a couple of hours. He added that there aren't many times when there aren't spaces available, especially on Franklin Street, but there aren't a lot of times when there's no parking available.

Commissioner Gustafson asked how a project like the Elm Street project got started. Peter Miller stated that the City will gather ideas from many different sources. This project in particular, stemmed primarily from a conversation the Mayor had with the Westfield Redevelopment Authority, who owns the land. He added that the Redevelopment Authority is a side branch to the city government and doesn't answer the Mayor per se, but the Mayor appoints the members. Peter Miller added that the projects start from hundreds of different places, sometimes City Councilors, citizens, meetings with the mayor, and they will try to figure out what is possible, and it will go to the appropriate board to receive their approval. Peter Miller stated the lack of interest from

political leaders to put affordable housing on the Elm Street Lot site. He had thought that the housing would bring some density to the area, and that they battled for several years but rather see it lay fallow and unused for 10 more years, he wanted to make it more valuable to somebody. Acting Chairman Golio agreed that it's been many attempts. Commissioner Gustafson stated that as soon as the project is complete, he knows that the people will love it.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Approval of monthly bills.

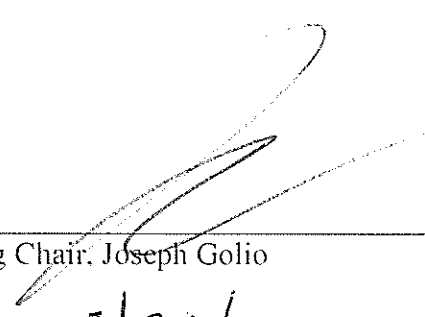
- a. Upon motion from acting Chairman Golio, and duly seconded by Commissioner Gustafson, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: To APPROVE the monthly regular and revolving bills as submitted.

Upon motion of Acting Chairman Golio, and duly seconded by Commissioner Gustafson, it was UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: To ADJOURN the meeting at 6:45 PM.

A True Record, Attest:

Valentina Rafalskiy

Head Licensing Clerk



Acting Chair, Joseph Golio

Date Approved

9/20/23