

Committee Report - Parking Committee

Sep 22nd 2022 at 5:30 pm

Committee members in attendance: Chair: Doenges, Vice Chair: Talbott, Alderman Ettori, Chief Kilcullen, Commissioner Rotondo

Others in attendance: Mayor Allaire; Alderman Barbagallo; Alderman Franco, Devon Neary and members of the public.

There were 4 items on the agenda for this meeting - We began the meeting with the discussion on the winter parking ban.

Winter Parking Ban -

The parking chair presented a document that highlighted our current winter parking ban and noted that several other Vermont cities follow the same method for winter parking in the city. The chair then reviewed several other options for winter parking bans throughout the state and the northeast.

The mayor took a moment to mention the complexity of making changes to our city-wide parking ban. This comment was followed up by the DPW Commissioner who stated that at this point in the season, wide sweeping changes would be difficult, however this year, DPW could support an exemption to the winter parking ban on Forest St. The DPW commissioner explained the new layout - and that DPW would support the winter parking ban exception, for the section of Forest St. from River St. to West St.

Alderman Ettori made mention that the plans intent of the one-year exception, was not to then reverse the decision the following year, but to ensure we had a short-term solution and allow the board to discuss and target a longer-term plan for city wide winter parking issues.

Devon Neary - Executive Director of the Regional Planning Commission mentioned that this would a good pilot to gather data towards our next steps for a larger adjustment to the parking ban. Commissioner Rotondo agreed that his team could collect data and report back to the parking committee.

There was some brief discussion regarding extending the parking ban to other streets, and it was stated that focusing on Forest St. would be the best scenario for this season and the most appropriate due to the roadway configuration changes.

Alderman Ettori suggested we have Attorney Bloomer guide us on the best way to ensure that the ban for Forest St. be suspended for the season. Chief Kilcullen mentioned that they could suspend ticketing on Forest St. however it would be good to have the city attorney guide us in this matter

Alderman Ettori: Moved to allow overnight parking during the winter On Forrest St. from River St. to West St. for one year. (Pending consultation with the city attorney)

The motion passed unanimously.

We will need to amend this motion with one of the options presented by Attorney Bloomer (See attached options)

Several members of the public left at this time.

Park Mobile:

The chair gave a quick update to the committee regarding Park Mobile - The city attorney and Park Mobile are working on the final items in the contract and the process is underway. Alderman Talbott requested a timeline to how quickly we would have Park Mobile in place, as there is an intern resource at the DRP available that could make educational videos for the public. He stated that the Downtown Partnership has offered to assist in education aspect for the new parking application. No motions were made on this topic.

Kiosk Terminals:

We returned to the discussion from our previous meetings of what to do with the Kiosks, as they approach end of life. The discussion steered towards removing the kiosks and either replacing them with Park Mobile and new meter heads, OR only park mobile. Discussion continued around the options to replace the kiosks as Devon Neary brought up the example of Barre, Vermont and their hybrid solution of digital coin meters and the park mobile application, as they found that coin was still a desired option in addition to the app.

Commissioner Rotondo also agreed that keeping and maintaining the kiosks was costly and not an effective solution for those maintaining the system. Now that the construction season is over, DPW will research the cost to replace the meter heads and target a date to remove the kiosks and upgrade the meters once we have those costs. These dates and strategies are targeted for discussion in our next parking committee meeting.

It was clear in the meeting, with 15% of Rutland City's population being senior citizens (65+) that ensuring they were not left out of the paid parking solution was a must. Alderman Barbagallo stated that their use of the app could possibly be limited.

No motions were made on this topic.

Parking Rates:

We once again reviewed the parking rates, including the potential raise in parking ticket rates. The goal in raising the rate of the ticket is "enhance compliance" with paying for parking vs getting a ticket. Alderman Barbagallo brought up the question of time limits of street parking and if we did raise the rates, would that conflict with tickets given in private parking lots. Chief Kilcullen mentioned that those private tickets were issued by a 3rd party. The parking ticket rates were requested to be researched further, in line with cities that are similar size to Rutland, and to be presented at the next parking committee meeting.

It was discussed that currently, the process for processing parking tickets may be able to be refined, as there is a large amount of paperwork for each ticket issued. Refining that process could reduce the cost of processing a ticket to the city if efficiencies are found.

Alderman Ettori asked if the parking rate increase was discussed with the DRP and Alderman Talbott said that in previous DRP meetings there had been no resistance. Alderman Talbott stated that the DRP would be happy to poll downtown business owners about the potential changes to the parking rates, and he would bring it up at their next meeting.

With no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 6:28pm

FOREST ST. OPTIONS

Option 1A

Amend 5044(b) to explicitly exempt that stretch of Forest Street, indefinitely. The ordinance would then need to be amended again to remove the exemption (or make other changes to the parking ban). These changes are generally sent to C&O Committee, but can be enacted at the same meeting in which they are offered if done so in writing and when there is unanimous consent by the BOA.

§ 5044. All-night parking prohibited

*(b) No person owning, operating or controlling a motor vehicle shall park, or cause to be parked said motor vehicle on any street or highway within the City of Rutland from 12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. inclusive from December 1 through March 31 inclusive; **provided, however, that the foregoing restriction shall not apply to Forest Street from West Street to River Street.***

Option 1B

Amend 5044(b) to explicitly exempt that stretch of Forest Street, until November 30, 2023. The ordinance would then need to be amended again before December 1, 2023 to extend the pause (or to make other changes to the parking ban)... otherwise the pause would automatically sunset after this winter season. [See above for info on enacting the ordinance.]

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Option 2

Ask the Mayor to use his power pursuant to Section 9.2 of the Charter to suspend the fines for this winter.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/24APPENDIX/009/00009.02>

As a technical matter, it would still be illegal to park there overnight (and the police could technically ticket or tow(!)), but the fines would not need to be paid. I assume under this scenario that the Police Chief would advise the PD that the fines have been suspended, so writing a ticket would be a waste of time.