

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

September 26, 2023

6:15pm

PRESENT: Alderpersons Fulop, Carroll, Garza, Webb

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Volkert, Director of Public Works Darryl Kranz, Lieutenant Mike Cummings

Call to Order – Alderperson Fulop called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Hartford City Hall, 109 North Main Street.

Roll Call – All members of the Committee were present; Alderperson Webb filled in for Alderperson Savage.

Public Comment Period –

Matt Kandler, 1079 Kennedy Dr. Current winter regulations are unacceptable and need to be addressed. Two teenagers, him and wife have car. During winter months he has nowhere to go with one car. He wants to be able to park car in road and thinks the City should have alternate parking.

Brandon Rolsma, 403 S Main St. Has one car garage with limited parking. Has vehicle, work vehicle and his wife's vehicle. Daughter can't come home from school on weekends and breaks because she has nowhere to park. His sixteen-year-old can't get car because there is nowhere to park. Can park two more vehicles alongside garage but now can't. There needs to be a change to parking restrictions.

Jason Hawkinson, 74 S Teri Lane. Thinks regulations are outdated. He is going to have three teenage daughters very soon. Wife and husband have car and work vehicle. Don't fit in driveway and now demanding sidewalks in area so it will be worse. Supports alternate street parking.

Discussion and consideration of amending Ordinance 340.0014 (2) to allow BID permitted parking in Mill Street parking lot: City Administrator Steve Volkert explained that there was a proposal by the BID to allow for additional parking for those who have or will have a BID permit. The BID permit is a free permit given out by the BID president to those who have businesses in the BID District and for their employees to park in the Johnson St parking lot. They are requesting that those same parking options be allowed for the Mill St parking lot. Mr. Volkert discussed this with David Troeller, the parking enforcement officer, who confirmed what Jason Wix said that there are about 25 vehicles in the Johnson St parking lot with BID permits. Jason advised there are about 200 permits out there but not everyone is using the parking allotted to them. During the hours of 7am-4pm there is plenty of parking available to customers Monday-Friday so recommend staff assist downtown business employees with providing convenient parking between hours of 7am-4pm and amending Ordinance 340.0014 (2) to allow the issuance of BID parking permits for the Mill Street parking lot. If approved here, it will go onto the council for review. The Ordinance will be marked to be reviewed in one year to find out if Mill St parking lot starts to get bogged down due to this change.

Alderperson Carroll stated he thinks this makes sense and likes the one-year review.

Aldersperson Fulop asked how many parking stalls this will allow. City Administrator Steve Volkert advised there isn't a maximum allowed as it is based on how many employees there are in the BID. There are quite a few that have been given out but many are for restaurant employees and with the high turnover there are probably 20-30 people using them out of the 200 that are requested. Mr. Volkert also reminded everyone that because of the agreement with The Mineshaft who helped pay for that parking lot and legally owns half of that parking lot they are given ample parking just for their employees alone. Mr. Fulop wanted to know whether those are managed by Jason Wix as well and Mr. Volkert stated no, those and the additional parking permits issued by Cobblestone Hotel are issued by his department on an annual basis based on the agreement we have with them. Mr. Fulop wanted to know what mechanism we have in place if there are 200 parking permits issued that we aren't purging after they've gone. Mr. Volkert didn't know if they were issued every year and if not, we can start doing that to see how many we really will need so its not ongoing. Mr. Fulop stated that is maybe a consideration after we see what happens with this. He feels 200 is a large volume and he wants to make sure we have the parking allocated to the people that need to be there. Mr. Fulop wanted to know whether the Library is public parking as well. Mr. Volkert advised it is public parking that is not timed.

MOTION by Aldersperson Webb, seconded by Aldersperson Carroll authorizing the amending of Ordinance 340.0014 (2) to allow BID permitted parking in Mill Street parking lot.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Discussion and consideration of a resolution to change winter parking regulations with alternatives provided: City Administrator Steve Volkert advised that this is a policy analysis to review the different options available which was requested by the Council several months ago. He studied other communities and put an estimate together. He came up with several different options. One – keeping existing policy in place with no changes; Two – opening an option in public lots; Three – allowing parking on grass with a maximum of two vehicles; Four - permitted parking on alternate sides of street; Five - free parking on alternate sides of the street. When he looked throughout the state, the two biggest options were alternate side parking and no parking at all.

Aldersperson Webb asked what neighboring communities like West Bend do. Mr. Volkert explained that West Bend does free alternate side parking. Mr. Webb asked what Germantown does to which Mr. Volkert replied that he does not remember but that they studied several different communities – he just can't remember off the top of his head which ones. Mr. Webb wanted to know why option five the free parking on the opposite side is the least favored option. Mr. Volkert stated that financially it will cost the most money. It is a second time through for the plows and maybe even a third time through. West Bend has 16 trucks out on the first night and on the second night half those trucks have to go through again which is additional work, gas, overtime, mileage and salt. Mr. Volkert explained that when they asked other communities if they think their option is the best, they all stated that there's other ways to do it but the same question is are you willing to do/pay more. Also there is a greater risk of accidents when you put more vehicles in the street during plowing and even worse when there's ice. Director of Public Works Darryl Kranz explained that if the temperature drops below a certain point then you can't get the snow off the road the next day which is his biggest concern. Also, you'll have a neighbor parking in front of another neighbor's house which will cause complaining. Mr. Kranz also stated

that in the last three years there have been more incidents of freezing rain where his team sat up in the middle of the night waiting for the temperature to drop 2 degrees so they could start salting. The cars on the alternate sides of the street will make it so much harder for his guys. He understands its very inconvenient but it makes it a lot easier for his guys to do their job. Mr. Volkert stated that the number of cars calling in right now to be able to park will dramatically go down because there will be no one to call after the dispatch is at the county level.

Aldersperson Webb asked about switching to option two where we open up public parking lots. He wanted to know how many spaces that would open up. Mr. Volkert stated about 400 in six designated locations. Mr. Webb stated that if you live on one edge of the City or the other you are out of luck. Mr. Volkert explained that if you live in Rettler Farms then you will be walking to Woodlawn Park to get your car. The other spots are Rural Street, South Wilson, South Main and Centennial Park. Mr. Volkert further advised that they tried to identify all parks they could use to get the most parking spots.

Aldersperson Fulop asked where the issue is exactly. Mr. Volkert stated it is the older houses in the center of the City with single lane driveways and single car garages that have more issues. The newer subdivisions have two-three car garages and double, triple wide driveways so they can fit six cars without a problem. Mr. Fulop asked Mr. Kranz how often he has to remove snow and salt. Mr. Kranz stated there is about 45 snow events a year. There are a lot of cars parked in the road during the day so his crew tries to get in between 3am-6am to clean both sides of the road. Mr. Fulop asked Mr. Kranz whether he notes which spots he needs to go back. Mr. Kranz said the worst areas are probably First through Eighth Street and he used to have to ask the Police Department to come out and ask one car to move just so they could plow the street it is so narrow. Mr. Volkert added that even if you go with alternate side parking it won't be allowed on every street. The streets that it won't be allowed on will be First through Eighth where the streets are very narrow. Aldersperson Carroll stated that there are streets that only allow parking on one side of the street so there will be some nights where no one can park anyway. Mr. Volkert stated an issue he heard a lot from the City of West Bend, which allows alternate side parking, is that there are many areas where they still don't allow parking so the City of Hartford would have to take time to identify which streets wouldn't be allowed to use alternate side parking.

Aldersperson Webb said theoretically it would be better to only have to walk a few blocks to your car parked in the street for alternate side parking than walking to your car if you had to use the open parking lot option. Mr. Volkert asked if he would get the phone calls when they complain that there is a strange vehicle parked in front of my house.

Aldersperson Webb wanted to ask a question on option five and see whether there is a benefit to going out again and plowing, salting, etc. Does it make the street safer? Mr. Kranz advised that if you plow you want to get the streets cleared on the first try. If you get another snow event on the next day then you have to try to also clear the old stuff off. Mr. Volkert added when you have crusted snow it wrecks the plows which increases maintenance costs. Mr. Volkert also added that we had a public works employee from the City of West Bend who stated West Bend went through plow blades all the time.

Aldersperson Fulop had a question regarding the cost to the City to clear the streets as the numbers to him don't add up. Mr. Volkert asked which options he was looking at and Mr. Fulop stated the analysis of current policy and statements made to characterize on page one of the Executive Summary. Mr. Kranz stated it has to do with when they plow in the middle of the night because once cars are on the road they get slowed down quite a bit. Mr. Fulop stated that the numbers show that the longer you are out there the cheaper it is and he doesn't understand that. Mr. Volkert and Mr. Kranz advised they would have to go back and look that over.

Aldersperson Webb had a question on option one – alternate parking on the streets, subtract \$13,000 for tickets issued which would be all the tickets. His assumption would be that there will still be tickets with alternate side parking as well for those parked on the wrong side. Mr. Volkert stated that in his conversations with West Bend they saw more tickets because people would forget which side to park on. Aldersperson Webb wanted to confirm the \$61,000 number is high. Mr. Volkert stated the other thing rationalized was right now we know every car on the street is illegal between 3am-6am whereas now there would be an issue of parking on the wrong side of the street.

Aldersperson Fulop wanted to confirm that doing nothing will cost \$236,514 which Mr. Volkert confirmed. Mr. Fulop asked if option one was to keep the same policy and do nothing to which Aldersperson Webb corrected him and advised that option one is free parking on the street.

Mr. Volkert stated that because of the additional hours of work, fuel, salt, etc. due to alternate side parking the City would be looking at a \$61,000.00 budget increase.

Aldersperson Fulop wanted to confirm that there were eleven individuals who had concerns on this. Mr. Volkert stated he gets about 12 people complaining that escalate to his level and about 500 people are calling the police department. It is presumed that about 450 are making it work so about 1000 households are impacted. Aldersperson Fulop likes option three and thinks the cost perspective looks good but he wanted to listed to the concerns about option three. Mr. Volkert advised that the biggest issue with this option is cars parked all over lawns and how that will affect the appearance of the neighborhoods. Last year the City cracked down on people parking on lawns due to the amount of complaints.

Aldersperson Garza likes the option where you purchase a permit to park in the street because you won't have everyone parking on the street and you also will not have anyone parking on the grass. He thought the price per permit of \$130 may be a lot to which Mr. Volkert advised that is a break even amount so taxes won't go up. Aldersperson Webb asked if that amount is subject to change and Mr. Volkert advised that the amount is a best guess. Aldersperson Garza wants to see how this option would go the first year and then review it again in the next year. He reiterated that this is the best option to him. Aldersperson Webb stated that we look at numbers again and try to get that dollar amount down to the lowest amount possible as the \$130 seems high. Mr. Volkert stated that the concept is to look at all of the expenses, do the math and then divide by the amount of permits.

Aldersperson Carroll wanted to know what the issue would be if you would buy a permit. Mr. Volkert stated you would get a permit that would be placed in the window so when an officer drives by he would see the permit and be able to keep going.

Aldersperson Webb stated he is for any option where you don't have to park on a lawn and we give residents more options to park and if that means charging those who want a permit a fee so the taxes aren't raised for everyone then so be it.

Aldersperson Garza suggested the permits in addition to some free parking spaces in lots. Mr. Kranz stated that those free parking spaces would require the vehicle be moved every day so it can be plowed if needed.

Aldersperson Fulop asked about a note on the bottom of the paperwork where we keep the existing policy but don't enforce it and wanted to know the downside. Mr. Volkert explained it would lighten the police department's load if it was a nice day out then they wouldn't enforce the policy. The problem is there is no way to communicate with everyone to move their cars asap if needed. Aldersperson Webb advised that he doesn't like the idea of having a policy and then not enforcing it. Mr. Volkert stated he is trying to find every option possible to address this issue.

MOTION by Aldersperson Garza, seconded by Aldersperson Webb to move forward with consideration of opening additional parking lots and streets with the ability for people to purchase a permit to park on alternate streets.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Adjournment:

Motion by Aldersperson Carroll, seconded by Aldersperson Garza for adjournment at 6:59 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Shanna Kreilkamp, City Clerk