

**City of Northampton, MA**  
**Transportation and Parking Commission**

March 16, 2021

**MEETING MINUTES**

Submitted by: Beth A. Kaplowitt

1. DPW Director Donna LaScaleia called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and announced that there would be audio/video recording of this virtual meeting.

**Members present and absent/introductions:**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director, Chair	X	
Jody Kasper, Chief of Police, Vice Chair	X	
Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability	X	
Nanci Forrestall, Parking Enforcement Administrator	X	
Jim Nash, City Council Vice President	X	
Karen Foster, Ward 2 City Councilor	X	
Debin Bruce, Citizen	X	
Gary Hartwell, Citizen	Absent	
Adam Novitt, Citizen	X	
Jami Albro-Fisher, Citizen	Absent	
<b>Advisor</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Maggie Chan, DPW Traffic Engineer	X	
<b>Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Time if arriving late or leaving early</b>
Cyndi Quinn, DPW Administration Manager	X	
Beth A. Kaplowitt, DPW Clerk	X	

**2. Public comment**

- Heather Bell & Alan Schneider of Main Street in Leeds sent an email to Director LaScaleia with their comments. It is included as an attachment to the minutes;
- Jesse Ladner of Leeds sent an email to Director LaScaleia with their comments. It is included as an attachment to the minutes;
- Karyn Nelson of 110 Florence Street in Leeds (although she is a DPW employee, she is commenting as a City resident) said that she fully supports all four of the proposed Ordinance that are on the Agenda tonight;
- Pennington Geis who lives at the intersection of Front Street & Grove Street said that she is thankful for what seems to be the reasonable and thoughtful approach that has been taken with regard to the parking situation in Leeds. She feels that the proposed Ordinances reflect the differing viewpoints that she has heard;

- Norma Adler of 71 Chestnut Avenue in Leeds asked why seasonal bans/zones have been proposed rather than year round ones. She appreciates the no parking on Front Street proposal, as she feels that parking should never have been allowed there;
- Deb Jacobs of 82 Grove Avenue in Leeds is bothered by the fact that the City has created public resource areas but not given ways for the public to access them. She understands the need for emergency vehicle access, but thinks that parking on one side of the street would be OK and that otherwise the proposal would be counterproductive.

### 3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting (s): February 16, 2021

- A motion was proposed and seconded and a roll call vote was taken. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To approve the minutes from the February 16, 2021 meeting.	Jody Kasper	Jim Nash	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 1

### 4. Reports from departments and subcommittees/announcements/presentations

- Department of Public Works (DPW) - Director Donna LaScaleia
  - **Damon Road reconstruction** activity will be increasing as the weather improves. MassDOT has contracted with Gagliarducci Construction Inc. to reconstruct Damon Road from the bike path to just beyond the intersection with King Street, North King Street, and Bridge Road. This project is scheduled to be completed by June 2023. The project involves the area from the bike path to the intersection of King Street, North King Street and Damon Road.

### 5. Matters before the Commission

- Director LaScaleia gave an overview of how the DPW got here:
  - ❖ An increasing seasonal influx of vehicular traffic on certain roads in Leeds led to congestion, unsafe conditions and no access for emergency vehicles;
  - ❖ This led to the DPW posting temporary parking/no parking signs while decisions were being made on how best to proceed;
  - ❖ This is the third time that this topic has been on the TPC's Agenda;
  - ❖ A great deal of outreach has been done;
  - ❖ The proposed changes on tonight's Agenda are an attempt to provide relief;
  - ❖ These four Ordinances must be moved forward today because time is of the essence;
- Jason Johnson of the Leeds Civic Association said that the group did outreach by putting out a survey to gather comments from members, posting information on the Yankee Hill list serve and by posting notices around the neighborhoods. After collecting comments for three weeks, they submitted the comments as well as a summary to the TPC. The Leeds Civic Association is very much in support of the four proposed Ordinances;
- Councilor Maiore thanked Director LaScaleia for her work making what she knows were tough decisions, while explaining all the relevant safety and convenience issues involved and addressing them in as best a way as possible.
  - a) Proposed Ordinance for Florence Street No Parking Zone
    - Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
    - A motion for a positive recommendation was proposed and seconded;

- Director LaScaleia said that the DPW looked at the areas with the most congestion, especially the area in front of the Leeds Elementary School. The signage in the field there does not match the current Ordinance. Across the street, when vehicles park on both sides of the crosswalk it creates sightline problems for people in the crosswalk. She had discussions with both the School Superintendent and the Principal and they are both on board with adding an additional 55 feet of parking restrictions to alleviate this;
- There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Florence Street to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Jody Kasper	Debin Bruce	Yes, 8 No, 0 Abstain, 0

b) Proposed Ordinance for Front Street No Parking Zone

- Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
- A motion for a positive recommendation was proposed and seconded;
- Director LaScaleia said that there are currently no parking restrictions on this street. There is a curve and a hill and the road is 22' wide and 1,500' long, so it is inappropriate to park on either side of the road.
- There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Front Street to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Karen Foster	Jim Nash	Yes, 8 No, 0 Abstain, 0

c) Proposed Ordinance for Grove Avenue No Parking Zone and Seasonal Parking Zone

- Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
- A motion for a positive recommendation was proposed and seconded;
- Director LaScaleia said that for many summers Grove Avenue has had the most problems with congestion and lack of access. The road is 20' wide and 1,200' long. There are currently no parking regulations on this street. This section of the street is extremely narrow even for one car, much less emergency vehicles. Therefore, no parking on the street is really the only solution they could come up with. So, from May 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> (seasonally) the proposal is for no parking on a 700' stretch of the street. If the area continues to be too congested, we can look at a more extensive parking ban at that time;
- Councilor Nash says that he feels for the people on Grove Avenue who will lose parking in front of their homes, but it is a trade-off. Previous recommendations to address the problem have been voted down. He fully supports this proposed Ordinance, and it will at least enable residents to get their cars in and out of their driveways. He also likes the seasonal aspect of the Ordinance, and feels that it will also address the problem that people have accessing the bike path who now have to turn around in residents' driveways. Director LaScaleia said that it would also prevent people from parking on the bike path, which has also been a problem;
- Director LaScaleia said that there will be custom signs printed and installed if this proposed Ordinance passes at City Council and becomes an Ordinance;

- A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Grove Avenue to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Jody Kasper	Debin Bruce	Yes, 8 No, 0 Abstain, 0

d) Proposed Ordinance for Main Street Leeds No Parking Zone and Seasonal Parking Zone

- Director LaScaleia read the proposed Ordinance into the record;
- A motion for a positive recommendation was proposed and seconded;
- Director LaScaleia said that this was by far the most complicated part of their analysis. Main Street is 3,000' long and varies in width from 20' – 38", and there are currently several different parking restrictions on the street. In addition, there are two bridges, and by Ordinance one cannot park on a bridge. Many people don't even recognize when they are on these bridges. Due to the narrowness of the street and the two bridges, it is not conducive to allow parking. The rest of the street has high congestion with vehicle, pedestrian and bike traffic. The DPW looked carefully at both sides of the street and decided that the best solution would be seasonal parking restrictions on the sidewalk side of the street from May 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>. By doing it this way rather than on the other side of the street the DPW estimates that 10 additional parking spaces are preserved (a total of 36 versus 26);
- Councilor Foster said that she hopes that everyone involved feels that this is a good compromise, since it is clear that a great deal of thought and input from residents regarding all of the access and safety issues has gone into the proposal;
- Director LaScaleia said that the restrictions are being proposed as seasonal because they are being mindful about not burdening residents during the times of year when the issues are not problematic;
- A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 21.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Main Street (Leeds) to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Jody Kasper	Debin Bruce	Yes, 8 No, 0 Abstain, 0

**6. New Business**

- None.

**7. Adjourned at 4:48 p.m.**

- A motion was proposed and seconded and a roll call vote was taken. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
Adjourn.	Adam Novitt	Jody Kasper	Yes, 8 No, 0 Abstain, 0

**Attachment #1:**

**Subject:**proposed parking restrictions in Leeds center

**Date:**Mon, 15 Mar 2021 11:29:06 -0400

**From:**Heather Bell <[heatherbell226@gmail.com](mailto:heatherbell226@gmail.com)>

**To:**[dlascaleia@northamptonma.gov](mailto:dlascaleia@northamptonma.gov)

**CC:**Rachel Maiore <[rmaiore@northamptonma.gov](mailto:rmaiore@northamptonma.gov)>, Schneider

Alan <[schneiderstimme@gmail.com](mailto:schneiderstimme@gmail.com)>

Good morning, Director LaScaleia,

We are writing in support of the proposed parking restrictions in Leeds center. Our family has lived on Main Street for the last 18 years, and we welcome the recommendation for seasonal parking restrictions. We tremendously appreciate all of the diligent work you and your team have put toward this proposal -- from measuring the street to community engagement. It is well thought out and a logical next step.

Unfortunately, we are unable to attend the March 16th meeting, so please consider this our public comment.

Thank you,  
Heather Bell and Alan Schneider  
231 & 233 Main Street  
Leeds, MA

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Heather Bell  
Proofreading, Copy, and Stylistic Editing Services.  
[Linked In](#)  
413.695.5035

**Attachment #2:**

**Subject:**leeds parking bans

**Date:**Sun, 14 Mar 2021 15:31:11 -0400

**From:**Jesse Ladner <[jjesseladner@gmail.com](mailto:jjesseladner@gmail.com)>

**To:**[dlascaleia@northamptonma.gov](mailto:dlascaleia@northamptonma.gov), [rmairore@northampton.gov](mailto:rmairore@northampton.gov)

Director LaScaleia,

I'm writing as a resident of Leeds, on behalf of a family of four, to say that we strongly oppose any parking bans which would have the effect of limiting non-resident access to local natural resources. Proposed parking ordinances under any pretense run a great danger of reinforcing structural racism and inequities. While there are real challenges that must be addressed, it is important that more just and thoughtful solutions be found.

I leave you with this [excerpt from an article written by Betsy Hodges \(former Mayor of Minneapolis\)](#):

***"For generations, white people have been trading genuine connectedness in the human family for the poor substitute of property values and perceived superiority. Some may think we have a lot to lose. But racial equity wouldn't be a loss for us. It would be a reclamation of our humanity.***

***White people, we are capable of accepting the invitation this moment has given us. If we find ways to make our actions match our beliefs this time around, the country will be far better off, and so will we.***

Take care,  
Jesse Ladner