

Parking and Traffic Commission

Minutes of October 27, 2004

COMMISSIONERS

Lynette Lewis, Chairperson
Willie Wilson, District 1
Richard Kaufman, District 2
Jose De La Torre, District 4

STAFF MEMBERS

Chang Chen, Transportation Engineer
William Barnett, Transportation Planner
Pearlie A. White, Secretary

I. Chairperson Lynette Lewis called the meeting to order.

a. Roll Call: The above Commissioners were in attendance.

b. Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Wilson moved that the minutes of September 22, 2004, be approved. Commissioner Kaufman seconded it. The motion was approved with a 4-0 vote.

II. Referrals from City Council or City Departments: None

III. Public Hearing:

Request for Permit Parking on 10th and 11th Avenues

Senior Transportation Planner William Barnett stated this hearing is for a request for permit parking on 10th and 11th Avenues between 99th Street and Arbor Vita Street. He explained that public streets are maintained by the City with public taxes, which means that all members of the public have equal rights to use a public street either for parking or driving or everyone is equally restricted from using the street. He said the one exception is when there is a large commercial neighbor or possibly a school or hospital that generates so much parking demand on local streets that it effectively prevents the public from using those streets. In that situation if the residents feel there is such impact, they may request permit parking to restrict these outsiders from coming into the neighborhood. Mr. Burnett said this is initiated by petition of 10 signatures, and the City received such a petition from some residents on 10th and 11th Avenues. In response, Mr. Barnett stated that staff has monitored the parking situation on the streets on various days and various times of the day, weekends and after dark. He said staff regularly found no evidence of any parking impact by any such commercial parking, so it is recommended that the Commission find that permit parking is not warranted in this neighborhood and deny the request.

Chairperson Lewis opened the public hearing.

1. James Evans, 9812 11th Avenue. He identified himself as president of his block club. He said there are people who park on these streets that leave trash and filth, and the residents must constantly call to have cars towed away. He stated these blocks are located near a commercial and entertainment area, and he feels the residents are seeking these parking permits as a necessity. Mr. Evans then handed the Commissioners copies of photos purportedly taken of illegal parking in the neighborhood.
2. Bernard Lomax, 9807 11th Avenue. Mr. Lomax stated staff's survey was done when the cars are gone. He stated two weeks after the survey was done, there were 12 to 16 vehicles on the street, and he stated he has descriptions of vehicles and license plates. Mr. Lomax says he finds nowhere to park, the neighborhood is being used as a lover's lane area, and someone tried to get in his truck one time.
3. Yolanda Anderson, resident of 11th Avenue. She said windows are being broken out of cars and oil left on the streets, and she supports those who want permits on their block.
4. Nadine Smith, resident of 11th Avenue. She stated she lives near Darby Park, which has a lot of activity so cars are being parked on her street. She showed pictures she had taken of cars parked on the curb and stated staff picked times when there was no activity going on.
5. Kevin Smith, resident of 11th Avenue. He said the neighborhood is impacted by traffic being surrounded on three sides with a park and commercial-residential areas. He said 99th Street is a cul-de-sac street and there is no reason to be on that particular street unless you know someone.
6. Janice Gray-Lowe, 3200 West 99th Street, Apt 12. She stated she has listened to the issues the homeowners are addressing, and she is representing tenants living on 99th Street. She stated they have assigned parking in their building, but that does not include enough parking for family members and guests and, because there is limited parking on 99th Street, they sometimes have to park on 10th Avenue or 11th Avenue. She said both homeowners and apartment dwellers pay taxes, and if they restrict the little parking tenants have, it is as though they are saying we tenants do not have a right to live where we live. She stated she understands the concerns of illegal activity, as she was robbed at gunpoint in front of her building, but permit parking would not rectify problems for everyone.

7. Marjorie Williams, resident on 99th Street. She stated she understands the problems the homeowners have addressed but 99th Street residents were not aware of this meeting and did not have time to prepare photos. Ms. Williams expressed her concern about the community not being informed and not being divided. She said she does not want friction between apartment dwellers and homeowners, and tenants do have some parking but just not enough. She said a fire hydrant was recently added, which took 3 or 4 more spaces from parking, and that tenants pay taxes as well and are hardworking just as homeowners. She does not believe tenants should be penalized and said perhaps tenants and homeowners can work together to keep other outsiders from parking on these streets.
8. Yvonne Jones, a resident at 99th Street and 10th Avenue. She stated she gets a lot of trash and people parking in her driveway and some even park in front of the fire hydrant and the red zone. Taxpayers should have the right to park in front of their houses but 99th Street on both sides is always filled with old cars and cars with no license plates.
9. Lawrence Oghene Kohwo, resident of 11th Avenue. He stated there is plenty of parking behind the apartments. He said he received notice from City asking why he is leaving trash on the sidewalk when it is from the cars and not the residents living there. He said it is very inconvenient and difficult for homeowners on 10th and 11th Avenues for parking.
10. Mary Beale, 9301 10th Avenue. She agreed with what her neighbors have said about the parking problem. She stated there was a man at her end of the street living in a camper, and also a van with a "for sale" sign is parked on the street that is only moved to the other side of the street. She thinks it belongs to someone in Darby Park as she has seen it over there.
11. Mr. Barnett read a letter from Loretta L. Van Puten, at 9706 10th Avenue who was not able to attend this hearing. She objected to permit parking for the following reasons: The Municipal Code criteria are not met. There is no severe or large scale on street parking. There is no traffic congestion in the immediate area by any facility that impacts our street. Streets are public property. The residents in the 99th Street apartments are decent and hardworking people who need places to park when their street is full. There are only a few of these residents parking on the south ends of 10th and 11th Avenues; Overflow parking from Darby Park occurs on Arbor Vitae Street and north 10th and north 11th Avenues only when there are special events

at the Park. She sympathizes with those who cannot park in front of their homes because their driveways are blocked.

In response to comments made by Kevin Smith regarding commercial-residential, Mr. Barnett stated that the code specifically states that this permit parking is in response to parking demands created by employees or patrons. There is deliberately no reference to residents.

Commissioner Wilson stated as far as the violations being committed, like the oil on the street caused by people working on their cars, that's caused by a lack of code enforcement or residents not calling code enforcement. He said there doesn't appear to be an appreciation of what this request will do to the tenants in the apartments. Commissioner Wilson said the Commissioners need to look carefully at the impact on these apartment dwellers on 99th Street. He stated he could not give them a solution tonight, and he would not feel good about telling apartment dwellers they could not park on a street.

Commissioner Kaufman agreed with Commissioner Wilson and did not see how they could justify taking away public parking.

Commissioner De La Torre stated he and his family have been living in another neighborhood and all have some problems in the City about parking blocking driveways. Residents can ask for more traffic officials to patrol the neighborhood, but judging from the photos submitted by staff, there is no need for permit parking in this situation.

Chairperson Lewis agreed with the resident from the apartment complex on 99th Street. Ms. Lewis stated she has driven on that street several times but did not see a need for permit parking. However, Ms. Lewis was impressed with the suggestion by the tenant that perhaps apartment dwellers and homeowners together could better handle the situation with a community meeting and work together on how best to handle it and recommended that they do so.

Mr. Barnett stated the City paints curbs red on each side of driveways at no charge which might help alleviate the blocked driveway problem. He asked that anyone wishing this, please call the Public Works Department's transportation section.

Commissioner Kaufman made a motion that the Commissioners act on staff's recommendation to deny the request for permit parking. Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a 3-1 vote, with Commissioner De La Torre abstaining.

IV. Other Business:

Residential Parking Regulation in Inglewood

Mr. Barnett discussed a report on the lack of available on-street parking and how it is an increasing concern throughout Inglewood. He described possible measures for this problem such as city-wide permits and permits near commercial streets. He also spoke about the legal and logistical issues and the need to enforce codes.

Commissioner Wilson commented on the loss of tenant parking. He said if the landlord is violating the code, tenants should contact Code Enforcement. In response to a question by Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Barnett discussed a similar situation in Santa Ana that was presented in the Los Angeles Times.

Commissioner Kaufman requested staff to continue this study.

Commissioner De La Torre agreed that this is a problem for the entire City, and that he does not see a solution and recommended that staff continue to look for any solution between apartment dwellers and homeowners.

Commissioner Wilson made a motion for staff to go forward with the study, and Commissioner Kaufman seconded it. Motion was approved with a 4-0 vote.

C. Parking Fines in Inglewood and Other Cities

Mr. Barnett said this is a matter Mr. Benbow requested at an earlier meeting about large trucks parking on residential streets. He said the Commissioners asked staff to research other violations to see if fines could be increased. He explained how cities should have the same fines. Rather having a prepared resolution tonight, Mr. Barnett suggested the Commissioners look at the fines of other cities and then determine what should be recommended. The Commissioners then discussed specific violations and fines.

Commissioner Wilson suggested fines for violations should be at the maximum to prevent people from violating them.

Commissioner Kaufman also stated fines should be at the maximum.

Commissioner De La Torre said he believes blocking the crosswalk should be one of the highest fines. He asked if fines could be increased for the second, third and further offenses.

Chairperson Lewis agreed with Commissioner De La Torre that fines should be increased for those who continue to be fined over and over again.

Commissioner Wilson said he thinks some of the proposed fines might be too high.

Mr. Barnett stated he would be concerned if the City's fines were too out-of-line with the other cities. Mr. Barnett will take the Commissioners' suggestions to Tanya Perry in Parking Enforcement and to the City Attorney's office, and at the next meeting, staff should have some specific answers back for the Commission.

The Commissioners directed staff to continue researching for this report and return with answers in January 2005.

V. Public Comments

Ms. Williams, who spoke at the public hearing, thanked the Commissioners for the privilege to speak at this meeting. She wanted to know about the notification for these meetings. Mr. Barnett stated by law they are required to inform property owners only.

Mr. Evans thanked the Commissioners for their consideration and said he would pursue this matter.

VI Commissioner Initiatives

Mr. Kaufman asked about the status of his request for a banquet for the Police Department for the outstanding job they performed during July 4, 2004. Mr. Barnett suggested this request be made to the City Administrator or to his Councilwoman.

Commissioner De La Torre said the motor home is still parked on blocks across the street from Morningside High School on Yukon Avenue. Mr. Barnett stated he reported this to Code Enforcement, but they did not find it. Mr. Barnett asked if Commissioner De La Torre could give staff a license number which would make it easier to find. Commissioner De La Torre stated he would provide the license number to staff. Mr. Barnett said he would then call Ms. Tanya Perry and ask her to follow up on this request.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.