

CALL TO ORDER

On Thursday August 6, 2020 at 7:06pm, Chair Conway called the Traffic Commission meeting to order via TEAMS. Traffic Commission recorder Stephanie Werner was in The Beaverton Building Council Chambers, 12725 SW Millikan Way, Beaverton, Oregon 97076.

ROLL CALL

Traffic Commissioners present: Paul Cohen, Vice-Chair Bradford McClean, Henryk Urbanski, Douglas Henderson, Melissa Bobadilla and Chair Ernie Conway. Mark Brown was absent and excused due to technical difficulties.

City staff present: City Transportation Engineer Jabra Khasho, Police Sergeant Steve Schaer and CDD development project manager Megan Braunsten.

VISITOR COMMENTS:

No visitor comments.

STAFF COMMENTS:

No staff comments.

Consent Items:

Chair Conway reviewed the consent agenda comprised of the draft meeting minutes from June 4, 2020.

Chair Conway MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Henderson to approve the draft meeting minutes.

Commissioners Cohen, Urbanski, Henderson, Bobadilla, Vice Chair McClean and Chair Conway voted AYE. The MOTION CARRIED (6:0).

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Chairman Conway read the opening statement on the conduct of the public hearings for TC 807 and TC 808. No conflict of interest was declared.

Issue TC 807: Parking Revisions on SW Hall Boulevard at the Library:

Staff Report:

Presented by City Transportation Engineer, Jabra Khasho.

Background Information

The City Main Library is starting a curbside pickup service during the COVID-19 pandemic as City buildings are closed to the public. Library staff requested reserving the parking on the east side of SW Hall Boulevard south of 3rd Street by the library building.

The service will be offered much like the grocery and take-out food services that have been in place during the pandemic, library patrons make an appointment for a 15-30 minute window of time in which to pick up library materials that have been checked out to them by prior arrangement. When they come for their appointment, they will pull up to the curb on Hall Blvd just outside the library building and staff will take items to the car or patrons will get out and take their materials off a table(s) set up at curbside. Patrons will also be able to walk or bike up to the curb area for their appointment.

This location was chosen for the service instead of the parking lot, since there is a large conference room with a door to Hall Boulevard that can be used for staging library material for pickup and just a few steps from the curbside parking on SW Hall Boulevard. The short distance between the library and the service area will provide efficient and safe service.

During several field visits to the site during weekdays and the weekend, staff observed that the demand for on-street parking is low on weekdays and moderate on Saturdays. This is due to the pandemic, the closure of the City Park. The moderate demand on Saturdays is due to the Beaverton Farmers Market.

It was also observed that with the posting of the temporary "No Parking" signs, there were several parking spaces available on the east and west side of the street.

Staff is proposing to restrict parking except for library curbside pickup on the east side of SW Hall Boulevard south of 3rd Street for approximately 125 feet until the end of December 2020 as shown on the attached drawing. This will allow for efficient and safe library curbside pickup service.

Recommendation:

- Restrict parking except for library curbside pickup for approximately 125 feet, on the east side of SW Hall Boulevard south of 3rd Street by the library building through December 2020.

-END REPORT-

Discussion:

Commissioner Henderson wanted to know if the signs will be permanent or temporary?

Mr Khasho stated they will be permanent and will state: No Parking Except for Library Curbside Pickup.

Commissioner Urbanski asked how many cars can there at one time? Will it cause congestion further up on Hall Boulevard?

Mr Khasho stated he discussed it with library staff, and therefore they made the pickup appointments 15-30 minutes apart. Up to 4 cars will be allowed at any one time and he has personally observed how the process works and did not observe any traffic blockage or queues. He also reiterated this would only be in effect until the end of December 2020.

Final Staff Comments:

Chair Conway MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Henderson to approve as written the request and final written order of TC 807.

Commissioners Conway, Henderson, Cohen, McClean, Bobadilla and Urbanski voted AYE. The MOTION CARRIED (6:0).

ISSUE NO. TC 808: Temporary Street Closure on SW 1st Street between Washington Avenue and Watson Avenue

Staff Report:

Presented by City Transportation Engineer, Jabra Khasho.

Background Information

In June 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 4660, A Temporary Program for Business use of Rights of Way and Parking Lots During the COVID-19 Emergency. Through this resolution, the City Council adopted the Open Air Beaverton Recovery Program. The program would allow eating/drinking establishments, recreational, personal services and retail businesses to temporarily expand into private parking lots and the parking lanes of city streets with approval from the City of Beaverton. The expansion into the right of way would assist businesses to accommodate their regular number of customers while maintain the required social distancing measures to mitigate the risk associated with COVID-19.

The program also calls for the closure of SW 1st Street between Washington Avenue and Watson Avenue to traffic to allow business expansion into the street if most businesses in the area approves of the closure. The Central Beaverton Neighborhood Association Committee and the Beaverton Downtown Association supports the closure of 1st Street (see attached support letters). Other jurisdictions throughout the country have adopted similar programs and have been successful.

The request is to close 1st Street between Washington Avenue and Watson Avenue through October 31, 2020, the sunset date of the Open Air Beaverton Recovery Program. The street closure will last more than 30 days which exceeds the authority of the City Traffic Engineer to approve temporary traffic changes. Therefore, formal approval is requested through the Traffic Commission process.

During the street closure the City will provide and install the required traffic control and detour signing. Unobstructed space will be maintained on one side of the street to allow access for emergency vehicle to pass through.

If the program to be extended past October 2020, the issue will be brought back to the Traffic Commission for an extension.

Recommendation:

- Approve the request for temporary closure of SW 1st Street between Washington Avenue and Watson Avenue through October 31, 2020.

-END REPORT-

Public Testimony:

Paul Thornton, Thornton Family Coffee Roasters

Thank you for considering my letter, as a local business owner in the downtown Beaverton community with many friends in the local area who are also business owners. I was previously excited and supportive of this initiative. Because it can offer an amazing experience for local businesses and consumers of the area. Because this street has been closed for some time now, as a public space, one I have used for personal and business purposes, offering the community a sense of how the street closure may be like. And myself and many others have had a chance to experience this space as a closed street. I am supportive of the City revisiting the Engineers Reports mentions that the program move forward if most businesses in the area approve the closure.

My concern is not a traffic issues, but rather, an execution issue that's lead to alienating local businesses against each other and the City of Beaverton.

To Mr Drane's point in his support letter, a key element in his support "for" is intended to minimize a "threat to the small business community". And to Mr Teaters letter of a support "for" states "...offering our support in soliciting and providing community feedback to the City staff and leaders throughout this program...". Lastly, the Traffic Engineers report in paragraph 2, states ..."if most businesses in the area approves of this closure.....".

Myself and other local businesses have realized threats to the community through the execution of the current space's closure; do not feel feedback is working its way up to City Staff and leaders, and have brought to question local businesses actual approval.

I am "against" the closure of first street if most businesses in the area disapprove, supporting the Traffic Engineers report. There has apparently already been an approval from local businesses. But, the lack of transparency surrounding which businesses were qualified to approve, if a non-response was considered an "approval" or a "disapproval", and the results of the vote are not shared to local businesses who are qualified to vote in a transparent way, has created consternation in the community. And further, has damaged some neighboring business relationships between each other. I was told by at least two business owners the original result was a majority non approval. But then the street closed. As a local business owner whose friends are also local business owners, I can't ignore them when they ask for my support. I was also told funding to support maintenance of this space was not offered to everyone asked. I am against closing First Street if it involves a potential disenfranchisement of theoretical BDA members opportunity to vote and not offering all businesses the same funding opportunity to support this space from a maintenance point of view.

I am "for" the closure of First Street if most businesses approve, but only if the process to realize most businesses in the area are defined (because the Engineers report does not clarify who the businesses in the area are), that an approval/diss-approval process of these businesses is re-

done, and if funding is offered for maintenance, that all businesses are offered the same arrangement. And avoiding potential disenfranchisement.

Lauren Reese, Lion Heart Coffee

Chair Conway, Vice Chair McClean, and members of the Beaverton Traffic Commission, thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony **in support of the temporary street closure at 1st and Watson** in downtown Beaverton. My name is Lauren Reese. I own Lionheart Coffee Company with my husband, Ben Reese with two locations in Beaverton; one of which being at 1st and Watson in downtown Beaverton. We couldn't be prouder to live, work, and play in Beaverton.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the City of Beaverton for their innovative and practical support of businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 12, the City held a call with Beaverton restaurant owners to gather information on what help and support was needed for restaurants to survive during COVID-19 restrictions and closures. Outdoor dining was a main topic of discussion, including the potential of street closures to accommodate expanded outdoor seating. At that time, the City stated that they would love to explore a seat closure, but needed a local business partner to administrate the program. Lionheart Coffee Company immediately stepped up as a partner because (1) we wanted to help provide a space for ourselves and our neighbors to safely serve our customers; (2) logistically it made sense for us to be the partner because we have the longest operating hours on the street; and (3) Our location on the corner of 1st and Watson is ideal to monitor the space. Soon after that call, the City initiated the Open Air Beaverton Recovery program that allowed the restaurant community to apply to expand their outdoor dining opportunities into the public right-of-way. At the same time, Lionheart alongside partners at the City of Beaverton, Beaverton Downtown Association, as well as the Central Beaverton Neighborhood Association Committee got to work on the logistics of closing 1st Street between Washington and Watson. After many hours of hard work, the 1st Street Dining Commons opened in early July.

As with everything during COVID – there is no one-size-fits-all solution to help restaurants weather this storm. Patrons have differing levels of risk acceptance, restaurants have varying operational constraints, and then there is always the ever-changing restrictions and guidance for keeping our community space. The multi-pronged approach of having restaurants with individual expanded outdoor dining areas as well as a public common area is a great approach to be able to serve our community in several ways that accommodates the varying needs during this time. For example, some people are comfortable with table service outdoors at their favorite restaurant; while others are more comfortable getting take-out and bringing it to an open air area with less contact – the Open Air Beaverton strategy accommodates both perfectly.

The 1st Street Dining Commons is a thriving plaza. I love walking out on a Thursday night and seeing families sitting together enjoying food from Big's Chicken, Ex Novo, and Afuri – all at the same table. I love watching people discover Top Burmese for the first time; and recommending it to people passing by. I love the information sharing that is happening between our restaurant neighbors as far as menu items that are working/aren't working for takeout to the 1st Street Dining Commons. The area is new, and will only get better. This is a vital resource for the restaurant community in downtown.

As this is the Traffic Commission, I would like to address the traffic pattern differences and our observations. To date, we haven't gotten any complaints about parking – which is rare in downtown Beaverton! While this may be due to the decrease in general patron traffic to downtown, we were worried about eliminating the street parking spaces and to date it doesn't

seem to have caused a major issue from our observations. However, we are aware that there may be complaints about parking that we aren't hearing – so we are being sure to highlight the great public parking options available a couple blocks away. Also – with the elimination of parking on the west side of Watson, as well as eliminating the left turn onto first, we have noticed a huge decrease in horn honking and general traffic issues at that intersection. We also very much appreciate the increased signage pointing to the public parking opportunities – many of our customers have been taking advantage of that.

This street closure and the continuation of the 1st Street Dining Commons is essential to the survival of restaurants in downtown Beaverton. Lionheart is proud to partner with the City to provide this open air dining opportunity through the closure of the street. We want to see the closure extended to October 31, so we can continue this vital program.

Discussion:

Chair Conway asked what the difference in business was since before the open air dining option and currently. He also asked as business begins to increase and things begin to open, will there be an issue with businesses not needing the open area or what if the saturation point is reached?

MS Reese stated it depends on the day. Her business has been down from 40%-60% since COVID happened. She also explained one of the byproducts of the parking signs being posted was people realized there was a public parking lot a reasonable distance to downtown. She currently is not worried about safety or traffic issues. From her perspective, even at her busiest times, she doesn't see huge lines or crowds and she relates that to traffic being down so far. In her opinion if this was normal times with normal traffic flow and pedestrian traffic, this open air dining option would not be feasible. She has also not heard delivery drivers complaining about not being able to find available parking.

David Anderson, Syndicate Wine Bar

My name is David Anderson. My wife, Angela and I co-own and manage Syndicate Wine Bar. We are located across from "1st Street Commons", and have a front-row seat to the goings-on there.

Having witnessed numerous alcohol-related infractions at "1st Street Commons", we communicated our concerns to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (also known as the OLCC). We were informed of the following:

- 1) On July 16, 2020, OLCC met with the owners of Lionheart Coffee to discuss responsibilities and obligations pertaining to "1st Street Commons". Following that meeting, Lionheart Coffee voluntarily withdrew its liquor license for the extension into "1st Street Commons".
- 2) Since that time, responsibilities for alcohol consumption occurring at "1st Street Commons" have become the sole responsibility of the City of Beaverton.

I notified the City of this information, but have received no further clarification. I am therefore asking now:

- 1) Why is the City permitting consumption of alcohol in an unregulated public space?
- 2) Why is the City exposing itself to liabilities and lawsuits that might arise as a result of alcohol-related infractions occurring there?
- 3) Why does the City feel it appropriate to subject adjacent alcohol licensees to unnecessary risks stemming from unregulated and unmonitored consumption of alcohol at "1st Street Commons"?

We seek a safe, compliant, and responsible downtown for the benefit of all. Until "1st Street Commons" is again monitored and managed by an alcohol licensee, we ask that the City declare it an alcohol-free zone.

Neil Fernando

Mr Fernando is a long-time resident of Beaverton and a business owner and is in full support of TC 808. It has given him a place to bring clients and his family where they can grab a cup of coffee or a meal while outside and the space allows for social distancing. He can't think of any other place he can do that, especially during the day if he wants to have an in-person business meeting. Mr Fernando also asked Mr Khasho if there was a possibility to bring the barricade on Washington in about 30ft in? He feels maybe 5 parking spaces could be created.

Discussion:

Chair Conway confirmed Mr Fernando is a business owner in the City of Beaverton but not in the open air common and he was not asked by the city to make a comment either way. Mr Fernando came before the commission on his own accord.

Final Staff Comments:

Mr Khasho explained again that 1st street was chosen for the program because it doesn't carry that much traffic. He answered the question about parking on Washington and explained the barricade and the street closure sign must be visible and that area is the emergency vehicle entrance. Mr Khasho took a minute to remind the Commissioners that they need to focus on the traffic issues and street closure and not get sidetracked by the testimony regarding the OLCC findings. He has been monitoring the situation and from an Engineering standpoint there have been no issues. As traffic begins to pick up, he will suggest an increase in enforcement if there begins to be a problem. But now, there seem to be no issues. He also reminded the commission because City Council adopted the resolution creating this temporary open air recovery program, this closure will last until October 31st no matter what else is going on in the State. An extension could be proposed after October 31st.

Chair Conway requested information from Sergeant Schaer about complaints or public questions and comments about the parking or queuing.

Sergeant Schaer said from the police department perspective they have received no complaints, but if they were to receive them the department would step up the education and enforcement.

Commissioner Cohen stated for the record that he is the Vice-Chair for the Beaverton Downtown Association, but he did not participate in the creation of the letter they submitted.

Commissioner Urbanski asked Mr Khasho how the program will be evaluated and when and if it could be extended to other streets and restaurants.

Staff Megan Braunsten answered that any other streets can apply to be part of the Open Air Beaverton program but this is the only one so far. She also stated she has already heard multiple requests for the program to continue past the current end date. An extension would need to go back before City Council and the Traffic Commission before it could be approved.

Vice Chair McClean is strongly in favor of the program because it doesn't affect traffic and there is ample parking nearby.

Commissioner Bobadilla asked MS Braunsten how the application process works-is it the business who applies or the city who chooses?

Ms Braunsten explained that a business needs to apply. In this situation Lionheart Coffee holds the Open Air Beaverton permit for that street.

Vice Chair McClean MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Henderson to approve the request and final written order of TC 808.

Commissioners Conway, Henderson, Cohen, McClean, Bobadilla and Urbanski voted AYE. The MOTION CARRIED (6:0).

Old Business:

Mr Khasho stated the crosswalk and flashing beacon was installed on 173rd north of Walker Road and he has received many compliments. The residents like it and it is working fine.

New Business:

Chair Conway asked Mr Khasho if traffic is increasing since our part of the state is currently in Phase 1 of reopening? Chair Conway has personally seen drive thru businesses that have ques out into the street.

Mr Khasho said it is a challenging time and there really isn't anything to be done. Monitoring and education. If there is an uptick in crashes, then the police can be asked to enforce and educate.

Sergeant Schaer said there have been a few issues, but it is hard to be tough because of the situation and they are focusing mostly on education and assistance.

No September 2020 meeting.

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Stephanie Werner, Traffic Commission Recorder