

**THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION OF THE FORTY-FIRST COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN  
WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:30 PM ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025 BY MAYOR DEAN**

**PRESENT:** Councilmember Steve Baker  
Councilmember Clarence Black  
Councilmember Gary Elrod (arrived at 5:31 PM)  
Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin  
Councilmember Dennis Hennen  
Councilmember Gregory Patterson  
Mayor Bridget Dean

**OTHER STAFF PRESENT:**

City Manager Crystal VanVleck  
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell  
Deputy City Manager of Public Services Shawn Young  
Public Safety Director Matt Koehn  
Public Safety Lieutenant Jordan Kobernick  
Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski  
Communications Director Caitlin Flora

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve the Agenda  
Seconded by Councilmember Baker  
Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Elrod, Baker and Dean  
Nays: None  
Absent: Elrod  
Motion Approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Rodney Dent, Berkley, spoke regarding parking on both sides of the street.

Mike Kerby, Berkley, spoke regarding parking in his neighborhood.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**DISCUSSION:** Discussion of the Parking/Sign Project.

Discussion was held regarding the parking/sign project.

City Manager VanVleck said that she inherited this. This has been looked at for quite some time.

**What is the Sign Project:**

- Inventory of all regulatory signs in the City
- It is not about way-finding signage

**Initial Phase:**

- Identify signs for replacement
- Compare signs with hundreds of old TCOs
- Recommendations for on-street parking zones adjacent to schools
- Develop a standard for no-parking locations based on fire safety needs

#### Established Standards

- Clear roadway width less than 20 feet
- Clear roadway width of 20 feet to 25 feet
- Clear roadway width greater than 25 feet

City Manager VanVleck said that they are not getting into how we got here and that it is also important to note that 25 feet are the average of where we are.

#### Main takeaways

- Decisions should be Public safety driven
- Avoid chain reactions

Ms. VanVleck said that they are really trying to look at a standard rooted in science.

Chief Koehn provided history of TCOs and stated it did not look like decisions of the past decades (70s) were rooted in science. He said they would like to defer to the experts.

Ms. VanVleck said TCOs are generally not a policy decision that council votes on, but rather should be based on expert knowledge and a science-based factual basis.

Chief Koehn said they are discussing permanent TCOs, not temporary TCOs. He said they are constantly looking at TCOs and policies.

#### Where we left off

- 90 percent completion of parking signage – all paused (paused in 2024)
  - Signage updated around all schools
  - No parking signage placed or removed based on established standard
  - Worn out signage replacement began

#### Final Recommendation

- Continue implementing initial recommendations
- Public Safety Exemption
  - Deviations from the standards as determined by Public Safety
    - Emergency vehicle access
    - Traffic Flow and Dangerous conditions
    - Schools (emergency vehicle access)
    - Temporary Restrictions for special events and construction
- Major Street
  - Keep as they are – changing signage will not bring us into compliance with Major Street standards and no issues have been experienced.
- No Parking signage 30 feet from intersection
  - Along the major corridors and problem areas
- Continue replacing signage
  - Public parking signs
  - All worn out signage throughout the City

Reviewed by Spalding DeDecker – they agree with the recommendations to complete this phase of the project. They looked at everything HRC did; Spalding DeDecker said to go forward with the remaining 10 percent.

Chief Koehn said they had a photograph of every sign in the city.

### Communications Plan

- Postcard to all homes on streets that are seeing a change
- Robust information on the parking webpage
- QR Codes on parking signs throughout the City

Communications Director Flora said the goal is that everyone understands why the changes are being made. All streets that will receive a change will receive a postcard before the change. Basically, more of a communication plan rather than making the change and then explaining; be proactive and make sure no one is blindsided. QR Code with parking codes. Full contact information will also be provided.

### What's Left

- No Parking signage installation needed
- Ferris – one side no parking signs
- Russell – both sides no parking signs
- Cumberland (12-Edwards) – one side no parking signs
- Kipling (12 to Morrison) – one side no parking signs

### No parking signage removal

- Around Vinsetta – temp TCOs before lots built
  - Eaton (Fulford-Woodward) – remove no parking on one side
  - Stanford (Oxford to Eaton) – remove no parking on one side
  - Oxford (Stanford-Woodward) – remove no parking on one side
- Gardner (Catalpa – Wiltshire) – remove no parking on one side

### Final Recommendations

- Continue implementing initial recommendations – 90 percent complete
- Public Safety Exemption – Deviations from the standards as determined by Public Safety
- Major Streets
  - Keep as they are – changing signage will not bring us into compliance with Major Street standards and no issues have been experienced
- No Parking signage 30 feet from intersection – along the major corridors and problem areas
- Continue replacing signage
  - Public Parking signs – replace with updated municipal parking signs – potential partnership with DDA
  - All worn out signage throughout the City

Chief Koehn said Public Safety does review questionable placement.

Mayor Dean said it is not cookie-cutter and during the pause Public Safety looked at this hard. She said staff does look at it in a real-life scenario.

Ms. VanVleck said the slippery slope is in public perception. She said having a standard should eliminate subjectivity.

Councilmember Patterson asked what has changed in the past nine months with major streets.

Deputy City Manager of Public Services Shawn Young said you need to be over 28 feet for parking on one side, and 35 feet for parking on both sides.

Ms. VanVleck said there are 14 and all but one needs signage. She said these are residential streets.

Community Development Director Kapelanski said we have to work with what we have and can't focus just on worst-case scenarios and need to look at the situation more holistically.

Lieutenant Kobernick said this is one of the better things he has worked on as far as a collaborative effort between departments. He said there has to be a mechanism. He said there will be more problems. There will be more successful messages. He said it is headed in the right direction. Lt. Kobernick said the complaints aren't that plentiful.

Councilmember Black said we are triaging the scenario the best we can. We can't please everyone. He said it is a communications issue.

Mayor Dean said she knows communications will be better.

Councilmember Baker asked how this is an administrative process and not council.

Ms. VanVleck said no parking signs originated from TCOs. A lot of times there isn't a reasoning behind. She said it is not a decision made by the public body, it's usually Public Safety with engineering. She said this has been a long-standing issue.

Mayor Dean said what came before Council was hiring HRC to do this study. She said she was under the impression that it would be a sign inventory. This would not have come back to them; they weren't apprised of funding.

Councilmember Hennen said picking an objective of safety is good, but he would like to look at higher standard of living. He said it seems the easiest thing to administer is parking one side. He said the majority of people he speaks to don't have an issue with that. He said that this could be an answer to issues real or perceived. He asked if there is any instance where making parking on one side would be an issue.

Chief Koehn said he highly recommends not doing a poll. He wants it scientific. Chief said crossing the street makes it less safe to an extent. Chief said they are here to make the decisions and some are harder than others and this is a hard one.

Lt. Kobernick said we have a vehicle problem and not a parking problem. He said his concern would be taking away more inventory of available parking by making the entire city parking on one side of the street.

Ms. VanVleck said her biggest concern is that they don't know that they need it until after they have it; she said she doesn't agree with polling unless it is scientific.

Ms. Kapelanski said did the parking in 2022. One benefit is we have a lot of on-street parking, municipal parking. She said if we went to parking on only one side, she said that would be a deterrent to the downtown because the City would be losing municipal parking.

Councilmember Elrod said employees of businesses take up a lot of one side of parking.

Ms. Kapelanski said but the tradeoff is then you could walk downtown.

Councilmember Baker said we just said this isn't a Council decision so we can't discuss user parking decisions.

Mayor Dean said there was a lot of strife at Vinsetta Garage. They spent hours and hours. Mayor Dean said that she started carrying around a tape measure and a level. She said she doesn't agree with the statement Councilmember Hennen said. She said that was a multi-faceted thing. She said she believes they came up with the best decision that they could under the circumstances.

Councilmember Hennen suggested doing parking on one-side as a pilot in a small section.

Chief Koehn said if there is a legitimate safety issue, they will look at it. Chief talked about signage on Gardner on game nights. That was a legitimate issue. He said we have to do what is best overall. He said they have spent tons of time going through all the streets and have made modifications for safety issues. He said the goal was public safety and then number two it is a vehicle problem. He said that they are trying to give them legal ways to park safely.

Councilmember Hennen said a silver lining is more cars on the street slow traffic down. It is a traffic calming method.

Councilmember Patterson said it stops traffic. He said delivery drivers blocking the roadway is very maddening. He asked that communication goes out to all residents.

Ms. Flora said she will communicate with all residents. The postcards will be specific to those impacted.

Mayor Dean asked staff if they have heard enough and have enough direction.

Chief said they worked with HRC and TIA; he said having a different engineering firm look at it will enable us to see if there are any safety issues.

Ms. VanVleck said it is good to have the new engineering firm.

Councilmember Baker asked when we would unpause.

Ms. VanVleck said in the spring, roughly March-April for postcards and general communications could go out sooner.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Seconded by Councilmember Baker

Ayes: Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker, Black and Dean

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Approved.

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Bridget Dean, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

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Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk