

PUBLIC SAFETY & WELFARE COMMITTEE

February 1, 2023

The Committee met at 5:00 p.m. in Room 2044 of the Municipal Building. Members present were Alderpersons Davis, Schmid, Licht and Smith. Also in attendance were Alderperson Bartz, Assistant Police Chief Olsen, Assistant City Engineer Beyer, and Street Division Operations Manager Stacy Winkelman. The following citizens were present: Steve & Carol Mertins.

1. **Roll Call:** All Committee members were present.
2. **Receive comments from the public:** No person wished to speak at this opportunity in the agenda, but preferred to wait until their item of interest was being considered.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes for the January 4th meeting had already been presented to the City Council without correction so those minutes were simply noted at this point in the agenda.
- 4.A **Review and take possible action: Handicap parking space at 500 S. Fifth Street.** The Seventh Day Adventist Church of Watertown, located at 500 S. Fifth Street, has requested that a temporary handicap parking space be approved to be used during church services. The Committee heard from one of the Church leaders who explained the need for such a space and how they hoped the parking space could work. The City Attorney advised the Committee that a parking space cannot change between regular parking and handicap parking based on the hour of the day. The two clearly permissible options were to designate a permanent on-street handicap parking stall adjacent to 500 S. Fifth Street or leaving the on-street parking as it is. The permanent change was not what the church wanted and the Committee thought it would be a possible solution if, instead of designating the space as handicap, it could become a loading zone site. After consultation with the City Attorney by Andrew it was learned that such a change would be permissible but that it would be a permanent change throughout the week. Andrew contacted the church pastor and explained all of the options. The church decided that they preferred to leave the space as a regular parking space, as it currently is today. Ald. Licht had made a motion, seconded by Ald. Smith, to present the "Loading Zone" option to the City Attorney. If that was legally permissible and also satisfactory to the church, an Ordinance would be presented to the Council. If that was not possible per the City Attorney, or if the Church did not find that acceptable, the Committee wished to leave the status quo in place. The motion passed unanimously. Subsequently, Andrew's contacts with the church pastor resulted in the decision to leave the status quo in place. **ACTION: None is required because the church has withdrawn its original request.**
- 4.B **Review and take possible action: Install additional one-way street signage on 200 block of S. Fourth Street.** A resident living near 200 S. Fourth Street has requested an additional one-way street sign directly across from the eastern parking area at 200 S. Fourth Street to remind patrons of the one-way status of S. Fourth Street. Occasionally, vehicles exiting that parking area turn right (the wrong direction). The cost of the sign would be minimal and is probably in stock. A temporary installation is approved until a permanent post can be installed. Ald. Davis made a motion, seconded by Ald. Schmid, to authorize the installation of this additional "One Way" sign. This motion carried unanimously. **ACTION: No Council action is required and the new sign will be installed as soon as possible.**
- 4.C **Review and take possible action: Amend Watertown Municipal Code Section 500-8, Heavy traffic routes.** The Main Street (Cole Memorial) Bridge in downtown Watertown continues to deteriorate. It is scheduled for replacement in 2025 or sooner, depending on design progress and available funding. The bridge is regularly inspected due to its condition and has recently been found to be able to safely carry vehicles only under a 20-ton weight limit. Engineering is recommending that the current Heavy traffic route status on the bridge be removed. Ald. Licht made a motion, seconded by Ald. Davis, to remove the Heavy traffic route status on Main Street between Church Street and First Street which will include the bridge. This motion carried unanimously. **ACTION: An ordinance will be presented and due to the safety factor involved, two readings of the proposed Ordinance will be requested at the next Council meeting.**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Alderperson Davis, seconded by Alderperson Licht, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Smith, Chairman