

SAM  
ZURIER

October 3, 2011

Dear Fellow East Siders:

In this year's budget, the administration resolved to raise \$1 million in revenue through the introduction of a city-wide overnight parking permit program. As you may know, a number of Providence neighborhoods introduced overnight parking permits on a trial basis. As you may also know, Providence is one of the few cities of its size nationally without overnight parking, providing a basis for the administration's initiative.

Before changing the existing law to authorize the program, the Finance Committee asked the administration to present an implementation plan, which the administration did last week. As proposed by the administration, the program will allow two permits per residence for a fee of \$100 each. Applicants must have a Rhode Island motor vehicle registration, but a Providence registration is not required. The administration has engaged an outside vendor to permit online application for permits (subject to verification) and enforcement based on recognition of the permit holder's license plate number. The vendor has trucks that can scan the license plates automatically, and the vendor has stated that two trucks are sufficient to cover the entire City at night. In addition, police and parking enforcement officers can enter the car's license plate into their own computers with a wireless connection and determine whether the car parking overnight has permission to do so. Overnight parking will be subject to the same limitations as parking during the daytime; for example, an overnight parking permit does not permit one to park overnight in front of a fire hydrant.

The Finance Committee asked a number of questions concerning the implementation plan. Several of them addressed the vendor contract, which will cost \$18 per permit. For that money, the vendor will provide the online sign-up system and the license plate recognition technology, in contrast to the current sticker-permit system. The online sign-up program has value, as it will generate a database of telephone numbers and email addresses to provide rapid notice in the event of a snow emergency, scheduled street sweeping or other event requiring that people move their cars. On the other hand, the benefits of the license-plate recognition technology over simple permit stickers is not clear. I asked whether we can require Providence registrations as a condition for receiving a permit, as that will enhance our collection of motor vehicle taxes from out-of-state residents (such as students) who currently are exempt from the State's registration rules. The City's public safety offices will review the implementation plan before it is finalized. They have indicated that they believe the general concept is workable. The administration will consider these comments and propose revisions to the plan at another hearing in the near future.

In other news, the School Department informed parents this past Thursday evening that school today (October 3) will be postponed for two hours to accommodate anticipated traffic issues generated by the Get Motivated business seminar taking place downtown. Several parents expressed concerns about the loss of two valuable hours of class time. In response, I wrote a letter to Public Safety Commissioner Pare stating my view that the City should have considered other scheduling options before writing off two valuable hours of school. You can read a copy of my letter at this link:

<http://www.samzurier.com/images/stories/articles/sept.%2030%20school%20delay.pdf>

Sincerely,



[www.samzurier.com](http://www.samzurier.com)