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City of Providence, Rhode Island

November 14, 2011

Mr. Leo Perrotta
Parking Administrator
City of Providence, Department of Public Works
60 Ernest Street
Providence, RI 02905

Re: Parking Enforcement Policy

Dear Mr. Perrotta:

I have received constituent inquiries concerning the City's parking enforcement policy as it relates to metered parking and/or parking restrictions that are time-sensitive (for example, when there is no parking between the hours of 10:00 and 5:00, but parking is allowed before and after that time). I have been informed that the City's parking enforcement officers enforce these laws quite strictly, and there are times when a car will receive a ticket at 10:01 when the parking restriction begins at 10:00. Similarly, I have been informed that people occasionally find a ticket issued for an expired parking meter within 1 or 2 minutes of the actual expiration time.

It is correct to say that people in these situations are eligible to receive a ticket, and a rigorous enforcement policy such as the one we apparently have will encourage people to plan ahead to ensure the proper amount of rotation of users in parking spots. With that said, there may be value in allowing parkers at expired meters and/or whose cars are parked past the permitted time restriction on a sign to have a "grace period" of 5 minutes before a ticket is issued. It could be that the parker in question has a wrist watch (or clock on his or her telephone) that is off by a few minutes. (Conversely, it may be that the parking enforcement officer's watch is one or two minutes fast.) It could be that the parker was distracted, or on the telephone, or had difficulty finding another quarter, or any number of other reasons that would amount to good faith error. If such a person finds a ticket on their car after, despite his or her efforts, he or she made it back to the car four minutes late, that person could become upset even though their failure to comply with the rules was quite minor.

For these reasons, I ask you please to consider the value of instructing parking enforcement officers not to issue tickets on expired meters or time-based restrictions until the violation has lasted for 5 minutes. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sam D Zurier", is written over a horizontal line.