

April 25, 2022

Dan Bartz and the Public Safety Committee,

As a homeowner, in the city of Watertown for almost 15 years, I know that where I selected my home to be was by choice. However, being that I have lived here long enough and have witnessed the traffic, I feel I have enough experience to ask the city to do some type of markings on the street to better control the parking. My original request was to have the ends of all curbs and driveways marked in yellow paint (i.e.: South 4th, 5th, 6th, and Dodge St). When speaking with Mr. Romlein, he mentioned that the city does not do that anymore, so I didn't think there was any reason to continue to pursue. However, when Mr. Bartz followed up with me, he mentioned that there still could be options. He called me today to inform me that I was invited to a meeting with the Public Safety Committee to discuss my concerns. However, I am leaving for vacation the morning of May 5th and asked if I could send an email in case, I wasn't able to make the meeting.

I have owned my home for almost 15 years. During that time, I have watched lots of traffic come and go from Turner Hall, the Watertown Post Office and the Apostolic Gospel Lighthouse Church. I've watched cars and trucks attempt to fit 3-4 vehicles in a spot that, realistically, should only have 2-3 cars parked in it. On weekends of big events at Turner Hall, people have left their cars parked on Dodge St and 5th St overnight and sometimes 2 days later. I've called the police department to check on the safety of the car owner in the past, and sadly they issue parking tickets, when my concern was for the person and hoping they were ok. I've backed out of my garage and on several occasions, almost been t-boned from cars coming off South 5th street, turning on to Dodge St, as they can't see me coming out of my garage because of the number of vehicles packed into this small side street. My neighbor, Kathryn Kangas owns her home on South 6th and Dodge St. Her garage is also on Dodge St and people park so close to the end of the street and her driveway that she can't see getting out of her driveway either. She has at times, parked her car in the street, to keep people from the church, post office and Turner Hall from parking too close to her driveway. Fred Soto rents the lower apartment on South 6th and Dodge St and his garage is on Dodge St, directly next to mine. His is a small garage and he doesn't park vehicles in the garage, but he does have a driveway next to the garage for him and the upstairs tenant. There are times that people have done the same, parking too close to his driveway or literally parking directly in front of his garage, which is challenging, because we share a driveway. I had one gentleman in a pickup truck that parked partially in front of my garage and directly in front of Fred's garage just to go to the post office. When I told him that my husband was leaving for work and he was parking him it, he got mad at me and refused to move his truck so that my husband could leave for work. We patiently waited for him to return so that my husband could leave for work.

What I need to point out is that even thou my house is 3 blocks off Main St, that this area should be continued part of the city business district. In times of snow conditions, the city clears the parking area in front of the post office, only. With the snow not being cleared on the side streets (i.e. 5th and Dodge st), people are parking almost in the middle of the street when going to church,

the post office and Turner Hall. Which then again, makes it more dangerous on these streets. Especially Dodge St, as the side street is not as wide as South 5th St.

I don't think people take into consideration that the amount of business that literally takes place in just this area. There is a funeral home a block north of my house and people park down South 5th St and Dodge St when attending the funeral. We have another church on South 5th St and Spring St. When the city has their holiday parade, the memorial parade, homecoming and other functions downtown, the traffic is congested, as people park on these streets for these events. The Apostolic Gospel Whitehouse Church now has a new pastor, since Pastor Greg Caldwell passed away last year, and they are having more sermons and events almost every day of the week. Not only weddings but community events are picking up at Turner Hall and so is the parking. We have a daycare between Jefferson St and Dodge St on S. 5th St. Let's think of the safety of those families and children as they come and go throughout the day. I would also like to add the parking for the post office employees Monday through Friday, and sometimes Saturday.

I would like to add a small note here about how people park in front of the post office. There is a section on the South side of Dodge St directly in front of the post office. It's a grooved area and I can tell you for certain that people don't take that as an area "not" to park, because they want to park directly in front of the post office. They will back in there at an angle and leave the front end of their vehicle in the street for other cars to drive around. If any markings are to be included, I would include the rounded edges of those grooved parking areas.

As I write this letter, I think of all the parking problems on Jefferson, Dodge and Spring St and I would like to think that I am not the only person who has these types of concerns in my community.

When speaking to Dan Bartz today, he mentioned something about putting up signs for parking. If I may, I would like to point out a few things. There are 3 driveways on Dodge St, in this small block area between South 5th and 6th Street. One handicap parking spot in front of the church on Dodge St. Not knowing what signs, you would be referring to or what they would say, I do believe that there could be more than one sign and how/where you'd place them would be of concern. We've had trees removed from the boulevard on both the North and the South side of Dodge St. and since then, the boulevard is more uneven on the South side. This makes it complicated and hazardous when mowing and maintaining the boulevard because the workers never came back to fill in the ground to level and I stepped into an uneven area and fell into the street. Thankfully, the lawn mower turned off when it toppled upside down into the street next to me. I was grateful I wasn't run over, because it was during business hours of the post office and cars were just driving around me. City workers came a few weeks ago to evaluate my lead water lines and while they were here, they hammered the water line down farther in the ground on the boulevard on South 5th St. because it was too high while mowing the boulevard. I have education degrees in Business, Accounting and Human Resources, as well as 30 years of work experience in these fields. I could see how a sign would be cost beneficial to the city. I would like to be optimistic that

the signs would work, but my pessimism still believes that there needs to be lines drawn in the streets to better control the parking.

As a homeowner in the City of Watertown, I know that my tax monies are allotted towards expenditures needed to make things better in the city. I don't deny that we need those improvements for the community. I am asking all of you to look at the area in which I own my home and inform me what you can offer to make the parking situation better not only on Dodge St between South 5th and 6th St, but also in the surrounding streets. I am not aware of what the costs would be to place white parking spot lines or to paint yellow on the edges of all driveways and corners in areas not just surrounding my house, but the community of which I live.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing how you can help.

Respectfully,

Barbara J. Schuett

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