


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 7, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY CODE TO ASSIGN TOUR BUS PARKING PERMITS AND ASSOCIATED FINES FOR VEHICLES VIOLATING THE CODE

ISSUE: Consideration of an ordinance to amend and reordain City Code Section 9-12-162 and 9-12-164 concerning the use of designated spaces by buses.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council pass the proposed ordinance (Attachment) on first reading and schedule it for public hearing, second reading and final passage on Saturday, April 17.

DISCUSSION: The proposed ordinance would modify the language of City Code Section 9-12-162 and 164 to reflect recent action by the Traffic and Parking Board which on November 23, 2009, voted unanimously to recommend that the City require motorcoaches, tour buses and school buses to register in advance for certain short-term parking spaces in Old Town.

The proposed ordinance would clarify the section of code pertaining to motorcoach parking to ensure certain spaces are available for use by permit holders only and assign a fine to violators. Buses will not be required to register to use loading or unloading spaces, and the City will maintain free, unreserved (“first-come, first-served”) parking spaces for tour bus operators in other locations.

The development of an on-line registration system is consistent with the approval by City Council in March 2009 of a series of short-term recommendations intended to improve motorcoach management. One recommendation called for staff to develop a voluntary motorcoach registration system that would include fees and daily limitations on certain types of trips for implementation by spring. That system is now in place.

At its meeting on November 2, 2009, staff presented a proposal for a parking registration system to the Motorcoach Task Force. The Task Force subsequently voted 7-1-1 to recommend to the Traffic and Parking Board that the registration system should focus on parking and that the City should require motorcoaches to register in advance to use existing on-street parking spaces in the 500 block of North Union Street and the 900 block of North St. Asaph Street.

Parking will be free in 2010 and spaces will be \$10 in 2011. The parking permits will be available for up to four hours per vehicle daily between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. The purpose of this fee is to better enable the City to anticipate the number of buses coming into the City at any particular time and to better manage motorcoach parking availability and demand.

The fee is not intended to create a financial disincentive to visit or to fund, in whole or in part, a specific improvement or program. Accordingly, the fee is set relatively low to encourage participation and compliance.

Currently, the City has a total of six on-street parking spaces on North Union and North St. Asaph streets for motorcoach and tour bus use. The spaces are currently free, first-come and first-served and signed for short-term (3-hour) parking. There are an additional 25 spaces available for short-term and overnight motorcoach parking on the Masonic Memorial's property. Short-term parking permits are \$10 each and overnight permits are \$35 each for parking at the Masonic Memorial.

The City also has an additional five spaces available for free, unreserved short-term motorcoach parking at 3540 Wheeler Avenue and recently added an additional seven spaces on the 400 block of Swann Avenue.

As noted above, loading and unloading will remain unreserved and free for tour buses and motorcoaches. There are currently seven locations (15 total spaces) in Old Town on Washington Street and east of Washington Street where motorcoaches may actively load and unload; parking is not allowed at these spaces.

The Alexandria Police Department has been involved in development of the parking registration system and will use parking officers to enforce motorcoach parking restrictions, particularly in the peak season of March through June. According to City Code §9-12-162, tour and sightseeing motorcoaches may not park in any location other than in designated parking spaces. Coaches that park illegally in spaces designated for advance permit parking may be subject to a \$100 fine.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Department of Transportation & Environmental Services estimates that approximately 30 buses per day visit Old Town between the months of March and June. It is not possible to estimate how many buses will violate the new permit system.

ATTACHMENT: Proposed Ordinance.

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
Richard J. Baier, P.E., LEED AP, Director, T&ES
Earl L. Cook, Chief, Alexandria Police Department
Christopher Spera, Deputy City Attorney

1 Introduction and first reading: 4/13/10
2 Public hearing: 4/17/10
3 Second reading and enactment: 4/17/10
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6 INFORMATION ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE
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8 Title
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10 AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Division 2 (SIGHT-SEEING BUSES), Article B (BUSES),
11 Chapter 12 (TAXICABS AND OTHER VEHICLES FOR HIRE), Title 9 (LICENSING AND
12 REGULATION) of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.
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14 Summary
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16 The proposed ordinance amends City Code to require sight-seeing buses to display permits
17 obtained pursuant to procedures to be developed by the Director of T&ES when parking in
18 designated sight-seeing bus spaces in the public right of way. This proposed change would
19 implement a recommendation of the Motor Coach Task Force.
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21 Sponsor
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25 Staff
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27 Richard Baier, Director, T&ES
28 Yon Lambert, T&ES
29 Christopher P. Spera, Deputy City Attorney
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31 Authority
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33 §2.04(d), Alexandria City Charter
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35 Estimated Costs of Implementation
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37 None
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39 Attachments in Addition to Proposed Ordinance and its Attachments (if any)
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ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Division 2 (SIGHT-SEEING BUSES), Article B (BUSES), Chapter 12 (TAXICABS AND OTHER VEHICLES FOR HIRE), Title 9 (LICENSING AND REGULATION) of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That Division 2, Article B, Chapter 12 of Title 9 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same hereby is, amended and reordained by the amendment of Sections 9-12-162 and -164 to read as follows:

(New language is underscored)

Sec. 9-12-162 Use of locations other than designated parking spaces by sight-seeing buses.

It shall be unlawful for the driver of a sight-seeing bus to place such a bus in any parking space or otherwise adjacent to the curb of any street in the city, except 1) in a space designated pursuant to this division or when loading or unloading passengers; and 2) while displaying a valid permit for sight-seeing bus parking issued by the director pursuant to such procedures as the director may develop.

Sec. 9-12-164 Use of designated spaces by sight-seeing buses.

No sight-seeing bus may park in a space designated pursuant to this article without a permit issued by the director pursuant to Section 9-12-162 or for longer than a time specified by the director. Such times shall be stated on a sign posted immediately adjacent to the space. The driver of any sight-seeing bus parked in a designated sight-seeing bus space shall, throughout the period the bus is parked in the space, remain within the vehicle or within 30 feet of it. In addition, the driver of such a parked bus shall turn off the vehicle's motor for the period the vehicle is parked in the designated space.

Section 2. That this ordinance shall become effective upon the date and at the time of its final passage.

WILLIAM D. EUILLE
Mayor

- Introduction: 4/13/10
- First Reading: 4/13/10
- Publication:
- Public Hearing:
- Second Reading:
- Final Passage: