

Date: September 26, 2017
To: Members of the Board of Aldermen
From: Suzanne Rinfret, Director of Traffic and Parking
Re: Responding to order #204236 - That the Director of Traffic and Parking explain to this Board in writing by September 26, 2017 why residential parking permits are not issued with a renewal date of one year from the last day of the month it was purchased, and appear before this Board on September 28, 2017 to discuss the matter.

Honorable members of the Board of Aldermen,

In response to your question regarding residential parking permits, I have outlined below the reasoning behind Somerville's districting system:

1. Efficiency - The city is divided into eight areas to reduce waiting lines and bureaucratic congestion for issuing new permits and renewals. Many residents move in during August/September and move out during May/June, making these months the busiest time of year for the Traffic and Parking Department, with staff at the windows issuing new resident permits and moving permits, and educating each applicant about the requirements of the permits at the time they are issued. This requires a considerable amount of time with each resident. Renewing parking permits one year from the issuance date would add a large volume of renewal applications during an already busy time of the year.
2. Enforceability - The district system makes the parking permits easier to enforce on a daily basis for parking control officers (PCOs). If the permits lasted one year from the issuance date, PCOs would need to individually read every permit sticker on every car to determine if it has expired. With the district system, the permit for each district is a specific color and has the renewal month displayed in large print. This enables the PCOs to cover more ground because they can easily see which permits are expired.
3. Communication - The district system allows the Traffic and Parking Department to remind residents in each district when their permit is about to expire. Because everyone in a defined geographic area has the same renewal date, the Department is able to mail out yearly reminders about permit renewals to residents. This would be considerably more difficult to execute if each individual resident had a different renewal date that could change each year (if a permit is not renewed on time at the end of the year).

4. Equity - Visitor parking permits may only be used within the vicinity of the home they are visiting. The district system is required to enable PCOs to easily verify that the visitor permits are being used in the correct location. This process ensures that each neighborhood only bears the burden of visitors from their immediate area parking on surrounding streets.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you.

Suzanne