

A statement by Bert Ely to the Alexandria City Council regarding proposed changes in the 72-hour parking rule

May 13, 2017

Madam Mayor and members of Council I am Bert Ely, I live at 200 South Pitt, and I am speaking only for myself about proposals to amend the 72-hour on-street parking rule.

The 72-hour rule is a misnomer – it is a 144-hour rule, if not even longer, for this reason: As a practical matter, enforcement of the rule does not commence until after a vehicle has been parked in one place for at least 72 hours; that is, the 72-hour clock for the purpose of enforcing the rule usually does not start ticking until the 73rd hour. Therefore, that vehicle will not be ticketed until the seventh day, at the earliest, keeping in mind that Saturday, Sunday, and holidays do not count toward the 72-hour limit.

With its perpetual shortage of parking spaces, the 72-hour rule is crucial to preventing Old Town streets from becoming a free, long-term parking lot for cars with the appropriate residential parking permit. But this is a citywide issue as is evident from complaint data City staff has gathered, with concentrations of complaints in Del Ray and the West End in addition to Old Town.

Vehicle owners who will be away from Alexandria for more than six days have reasonable options for avoiding a parking ticket, including arranging for a family member or neighbor to periodically move the vehicle or parking it off-street. That arrangement may mean paying a parking fee, but that is preferable to the City providing free long-term parking on city streets.

One positive effect of the 72-hour rule is that it may deter the ownership of multiple vehicles by residents without access to off-street parking. Those residents owning vehicles they seldom drive then have to find possibly costly off-street parking or they need to move the vehicle at least every six days in order to avoid a parking ticket. Some will instead find it worthwhile to sell the vehicle.

Repealing the 72-hour rule or creating exceptions to it almost certainly will increase the number of cars competing for parking spaces on the city's streets because that repeal will create a free good, that is, free long-term, on-street parking, where that good does not exist today. This will be especially troublesome in areas of the city where there already is an insufficient supply of on-street parking. As trite as this may seem, for many Alexandrians increased competition for scarce parking spaces will represent a significant deterioration in their quality of living.

Permitting residents to obtain permits to park in one place for an extended period – potentially as long as 28 days – definitely will increase the number of cars parked on city streets compared to today. That is, people who will be away for an extended period could park on a city street rather than having to arrange for off-street parking, as they now must do to avoid a ticket. This near-certainty should not be dismissed lightly.

If Council does create any exemptions to the 72-hour rule, specifically to allow parking in one place for up to 28 days, Council should provide a sunset for that provision so that there will be a mandatory reconsideration of the impact of extended on-street parking. Also, because it will cost the City money to administer the granting of permits for extended parking, the City should charge at least a few dollars a day for those permits.

Thank you for your time today – I welcome your questions.

16-6513 72 hour rule Erick Chizing 424 Queen St.

I attended two meetings of the Traffic and Parking Board regarding the 72 hour rule and have read the recommended ordinance that has been put forward to council. The proposed ordinance is a step backward. It will add bureaucratic costs and will add confusion for residents in its application. It only takes into consideration business and vacation travel and falls far short of providing relief for those, especially without off street parking, who routinely leave their cars in the same location for periods beyond 72 hours.

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Cars remain on the street for extended periods in districts such as mine, on Queen, and undoubtedly on others where household members commute to work via public transportation or otherwise use their cars infrequently because of the convenience in living in a walkable city. The revised ordinance does not address the arbitrary application of the rule via complaints and the misapplication of the rule by those who feel that they hold some priority in public parking spaces in front of, or adjoining their homes. In other words, the 72 hour "sword of Damocles" continues to hang over households, especially for those without off street parking.

From the hearings, there is a continued belief that the 72 hour rule enhances the availability of parking. This is such a false assumption that I'm surprised it continues to be put forward. Issuance of district decals are limited in area. Therefore, moving a car from one part of a district to another part of the same district does not increase the number spaces available for the residents in that district. Council should categorically reject this rationale.

The current 72 hour rule is untenable and being taken advantage of and misapplied. Originally designed to remove inoperable or abandoned cars from the city streets, it has become an arbitrarily applied rule. The recommended revision of the ordinance simply compounds the problem by layering on exemptions on a rule already being misapplied. Since Vice Mayor Wilson initiated the need to revise this rule, two years have passed. This proposed revision for one year to measure impact means another year will pass without addressing the core concern regarding the day in and day out needs of residents who do not have off street parking.

I urge the Council to reject this revision. Instead Council should engage in a better experiment that reduces bureaucratic requirements and simplifies the process. Councils should suspend the enforcement of the rule for one year and monitor the effects. Traffic and parking have a head start because their survey already identifies hot spots. Districts with validated problems with parking availability should be the subject a targeted study to gather the evidence of the source of the problem whether it is from tight fistted travelers who use city streets instead of airport parking, or city employees who use city streets because the city no longer provides for or has severely limited parking to its employees. Rules could then be tailored to meet the needs of that district.

Council could take three straight forward approaches. 1) if a car is properly decaled and registered for its district, it should be allowed to remain on the street for as long as the owner requires; 2) The 72 hour rule should be restored and limited to its original intent for the removal of abandoned and inoperable vehicles; and 3) The issue of parking availability should be addressed separately for those districts that have validated problems. The Traffic and Parking Board should then seek specific solutions to the problems inherent to that district. One size does not fit all. The first two approaches can be easily enacted. The third will require time, patience, careful thought and consideration. The city now has staff that can be dedicated to the issue.

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Jackie Henderson

From: Barbara Pringle via Call.Click.Connect.
<CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Sunday, April 02, 2017 11:58 AM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click
Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #117868: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council The
proposal to allow parking up to 14 d

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

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Request Details:

This is a "public" request. Information may be provided to anyone who requests it.

- Name: Barbara Pringle
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-519-8252
- Email: bpringle9@comcast.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: The proposal to allow parking up to 14 days 4x/year does not meet the needs of seniors/retired citizens well. We take trips to visit grandchildren or nearby parks, other birding spots, etc., in one-week to 10 day bits, and we tend to use public transportation rather than driving because long distance driving has become less safe for us. So what are we to do with this new regulation? We have owned property in Alexandria since 1968, lived here on and off since 1979 (were in the Foreign Service), continuously since retirement in 2000. We have no alternative to street parking. We have also never had a long-term parking problem, either with our cars or those of neighbors--we just leave keys with one of them in case of emergency tree work, water line repairs, etc. They do the same. We leave our cars (2) as near to in front of our own house as possible. What is the problem with that? At very least, this new proposal should apply only if someone directly involved (i.e. in front of whose house the offending car is parked) complains, and not by parking maids looking for offenders. THAT SITUATION WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR US. Even if we do drive one car on a shorter trip, the other has to be parked somewhere. Are the city garages going to offer residents free parking in that situation? In short, this proposal does not solve a problem perceived by some residents (and a non-problem for others) in a way that is equitable for all residents. We look forward to hearing from each of you how you propose to solve the problem of intermediate term (longer than 3 days, but more frequent than 4 times a year) for people like us who have no option but street parking. Robert and Barbara Pringle
- Expected Response Date: Monday, April 10

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Jackie Henderson

From: Benjamin Larrabee via Call.Click.Connect.
<CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 07, 2017 8:31 AM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click
Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #115619: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council The
February 23, 2017 issue of "Alexandr

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

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Request Details:

This is a "private" request. Information should only be provided to the original customer or those who know the full Call.Click.Connect. request number for this, which is "115619-8G63H9".

- Name: Benjamin Larrabee
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 571-331-2945
- Email: retiredgiles@gmail.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: The February 23, 2017 issue of "Alexandria Times" had an article about Alexandria's "72-hour parking rule." The article mentioned that the rule goes unenforced, unless a complaint is filed.

Those of us living in single-family houses and townhouse on Nob Hill Court are well aware the rule is unenforced. Vehicles - many with Maryland tags - sit on Nob Hill Court not only for days on end, but weeks on end. (Years ago, a car sat for six months or more. Somebody finally complained, and the car was towed away. We were eventually told it was a stolen car that had been dumped. So much for attentive parking enforcement.)

Vehicles sitting for days and weeks on end wouldn't be too bad if so much litter - actual garbage, alcohol bottles and cans, soda bottles and cans, clothes, "personal hygiene" articles, and lots of paper products - wasn't thrown out of the vehicles onto the street and sidewalks.

The City of Alexandria doesn't seem to care any more about litter than ignored parking regulations, so why don't you just repeal the relevant (or not so relevant, as it seems) ordinances?

- Expected Response Date: Tuesday, March 14

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