Transportation and Parking Committee
Minutes
March 17, 2006

Present: Joey Albert, Mark Armstrong, John Beach (Guest), Carolyne Dudding, Patrick Donohoe, Edward Lener, Richard McCoy, Steve Mouras, Ben Myers (Guest), Hesham Rakha, Elizabeth Reed, Josh Sarfity, Wyatt Sasser

Patrick Donohoe called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

The February 10, 2006 minutes were approved.

Patrick Donohoe welcomed two new members of the committee. Mark Amstrong will be representing the Commission on University Support and Joey Albert is the designated representative for the VT Police Department. Members went around the table and introduced themselves.

Old Business:
• Patrick Donohoe let everyone know that the plans to change the makeup of the committee now have final approval of University Council and distributed a copy of the resolution.

• Steve Mouras briefly reviewed some of the problems caused by current practices regarding state vehicle parking practices, particularly those associated with driving on sidewalks. Damage to the grounds and potential safety issues of were among the major concerns. Two guests both of whom oversee large vehicle fleets were then asked to share their thoughts and concerns.

• John Beach, the Director of Physical Plant, indicated that in his position he understood both sides of the issue. From a maintenance perspective he argued it is important for vehicles to have close proximity to work areas so as to have access to tools or to be able move heavy objects. From a grounds perspective though he also deals with some of the problems and repairs that can result. John emphasized the need to have an adequate number of service vehicle spaces close to buildings. He also spoke about the use of alternative vehicles designed primarily for off-road use such as several John Deere “Gators” that the department is testing. These are quite versatile and can get to more places on campus without tearing up the lawns. However there are concerns with longevity, safety in low-light conditions, and limited carrying capacity relative to more conventional pickup trucks.

• John reminded those present that there are several other units on campus that utilize state vehicles (Note – the committee plans to try to talk to representatives from Residential and Dining Services and from Communications Network Services in future meetings.) He also spoke about concerns relating to commercial delivery vehicles such as those from Coca-Cola, UPS, Federal Express, etc. and emphasized that these can also be a source of problems on campus.
• Some other considerations that John Beach raised included adding satellite locations for Physical Plant that handle routine and preventative maintenance. This would lower the number of vehicles that need to be sent for service calls. He also indicated that the elimination of Central Receiving several years ago due to budget cuts has had an impact in increasing commercial delivery activity throughout campus.

• Ben Myers, who serves as Director of Utilities, spoke about vehicles involved in servicing electric lights, steam tunnels, and sewer and water lines around campus. Much of the equipment required is quite large and heavy so some damage may be inevitable. However crews receive special training and every attempt is made to keep this to a minimum. Ben also noted that all crews and vehicles return to their designated area at the end of the day so nothing is left scattered around overnight.

• Both John and Ben emphasized that their vehicles are marked with identifying numbers on the bumpers and that if problems are noted, especially those involving unsafe operation, that Tech students and employees should report the incident. In some cases photographs have also been helpful in documenting what has happened.

• An extensive discussion ensued on how to minimize some of the problems associated with state vehicles moving across all areas of campus without creating rules that are too unwieldy or that interfere with legitimate access needs. The committee also examined questions related to accountability. In the current environment some units are quite responsive when problems are reported while others are not. Cooperation is important because if enforcement and ticketing is to be effective it is important to first be able to correctly identify the individual vehicle operator responsible.

• The committee briefly discussed the issue of the intersection of Spring Road and Washington Street. Standard lane widths are a minimum of 12 feet. Steve Mouras will investigate further whether it is feasible to add the extra width and markings for a left-turn lane.

New Business:
• Elections for a new chair and recorder were postponed to the April meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 A.M.

Next meeting scheduled for April 21 at 8:30 in the Sterrett Center, Room 90R.

Respectfully submitted,
Edward Lener, Recorder