



THE HONORABLE
Wayne New
COUNCILMAN DISTRICT 10

City and County of Denver
CITY COUNCIL

City and County Building
1437 Bannock Street, Room 451
Denver, CO 80202
p: 720.337.7710
wayne.new@denvergov.org

Chief Eric Tade
Denver Fire Department

Jose Cornejo
Executive Director
Public Works

Dear Chief Tade and Jose:

Over the past few days I have been working with members of your staff on a parking sign / meter and fire hydrant issue that has been raised by Brian Maass of Channel 4. In my conversation last Friday with Brian Maass, he expressed concerns that some Cherry Creek parking signs and meters were improperly installed too close to the fire hydrant in violation of the 10 foot parking distance from hydrants, which was causing citizens to receive parking tickets when parked legally according to the sign or meter.

Over the weekend I visited the specific areas of concern in the Cherry Creek North community – some 2 hour parking signs or a parking meter too close to the fire hydrant. The parking meter near the fire hydrant in front of Del Frisco's on 100 St. Paul is obviously causing citizens to park in front of the hydrant. The parking signs on the 200 block of Garfield were too close to the fire hydrant with one on a telephone pole – again causing parking tickets to be given out by Parking Enforcement.

Just to make sure that I understood the ten foot parking distance from a fire hydrant requirement correctly, I reviewed the ordinance with Chief Joe Gonzales, who visited the parking meter issue site and confirmed that the meter should not have been installed. It is causing cars to be parked in violation of the ordinance.

I would appreciate your consideration of the following that I discussed with the Public Works PR staff many times over the past several days and what was agreed upon to say to Brian Maass.

1. Parking Meter or Sign Location – The installation of both should be in accordance to the ordinance governing this matter – 10 feet from the fire hydrant.
2. Citizen Tickets – If a parking meter or parking sign is improperly located too close to the fire hydrant and a citizen has parked legally following the instruction of the

- meter parking space or parking sign, the citizen should not be given a fire hydrant ticket.
3. Reporting Significant Parking Meter or Sign Location Problems – Parking Enforcement should be able to use their judgement in these situations and report meter or sign location problems to Public Works for review and possible correction.
 4. Painting Fire Hydrant Curbs Red – The cost of painting a curb red as compared to placing a sign should be studied. If it is more cost effective and clear to the public where the proper distance from a fire hydrant is, then maybe it would be looked at by Public Works.
 5. Business Influence – Public Works should not be influenced to violate a safety ordinance by business organizations. It is understood that there is a strong desire to maximize the on street parking spaces in specific areas, but the installation of meters and signage in violation of the parking / fire hydrant ordinance should not be performed. If such pressure is being used by organizations on Public Works staff, the situation needs to be elevated to the proper supervisor in either Public Works or the Fire Department for handling.
 6. Dealing with the Media – Even though I was counselled many times prior my interview with Brian Maass by Public Works PR staff about previous difficulties, I found my interview with him professional and non-confrontational. The reason was that he was right – something that the PR staff was having a difficult time recognizing. If we had spent more time getting the right Public Works or Fire Department staff to investigate the situations, it would have been clear that the parking issues needed to be corrected, and we would not have had to waste all of the time that was spent on this matter. Developing immovable opinions and attitudes may color our judgement and may not enable us to focus on the right issue, which in this case was safety and giving our citizens tickets for obeying the meters and signage.

I want to close by supporting strongly our safety ordinances. In this case, if a citizen parks illegally in front of a fire hydrant, the person deserves a ticket without hesitation. Having clear, understand signage and meters will allow citizens to follow the law.

If you would like to discuss any of this, please let me know. I am especially concerned about the business influence issue.

Sincerely,



Councilman Wayne New

(SENT 3/3/16)