

Background on Kahnawake Parking Situation

By Arnold Lazare

If the questions were asked “Is it important that emergency vehicles, ambulances, fire trucks or Peacekeepers have quick access to any location?” or, “Is it important for the local school busses and town vehicles to safely pass?” it is presumed that the answer would be a resounding Yes! If the question was, “Would you allow your actions to be limited or affected by a third party?” the response would more likely be No.

While our culture talks about the responsibility to the collective, many choose to act based on the right of the individual. Unfortunately, the result more often than not is a confrontation. When talking about issues, how many times has it been heard that one person will say, “I can do what I want,” while others will ask, “Why doesn’t someone stop them?” or, “Who is looking out for us?”

In our attempt to resolve a potentially dangerous situation concerning parking (already a contentious issue), here is the background and rationale for some of the decisions that have been made. It is hoped that community members will understand, accept and respect the proposed restrictions for the good of all.

In 2007, fourteen (14) areas were identified where there were serious problems caused by uncontrolled parking that limited the accessibility of emergency vehicles. The areas were identified based on complaints received from community members and the operators of emergency and heavy/large vehicles. At one point, in an effort to demonstrate the potential consequences, the Fire Brigade’s old ladder truck was driven down the highway and could not safely pass or turn at several places.

In the best interest of community safety, the Kahnawake Safety Committee developed a parking policy which was developed to manage parking and traffic in the identified areas. A common sense approach took into consideration the width of the road, measured against the space required for emergency and large vehicles to pass safely.

Before the policy was developed the following general conditions were used to assist in the process:

- The safe passage of people, service and emergency vehicles is always the most important goal.
- The recommendations should be made so they are globally applicable (i.e. meet the needs) for future developments.
- Having a general guideline will eliminate the possibility of unfair influence or the “politics factor”.
- The measures should facilitate snow removal.
- When signs are posted to indicate restrictions, a grace period should be allowed (i.e., no tickets issued for a certain amount of time).
- Parking restrictions could be lifted for certain events or various conditions if necessary, as long as they are approved and the community is informed.

Here are some of the measurements that used at the time:

Vehicle Type	Width
Average Car	6'10"
Pickup Truck	8'3" Mirror to mirror
Fire Truck	10'6"
Milk Truck	9'6"
Ambulance	10'2"
Snowplow	17'6" (Plow 14'0" & Wing 13')

As a result the following Global recommendations were made:

- Any street more than 40 feet wide: parking will be permitted on both sides.
- Any street between 23-40 feet wide: parking will be permitted only on one side.
- Any street less than 23 feet wide would have no parking permitted on either side of the street.
- Where a street has a sidewalk, no parking should be allowed on the side where the sidewalk is located. This is to reduce the possibility of community members stepping off the sidewalk between parked cars.
- A minimum distance of 5 feet from any corner will be a no parking zone.
- There are areas where parking on either side could cause problems (horseshoe corners).

Last summer the policy was put in effect on the highway and altered to accommodate a few businesses on a trial basis of one year.

The next areas identified are: the road from the old Rabaska Restaurant to the Hospital and the road from Johnson's beach to the residence of Ritchie "RJ" Jacobs. Based on the width of the road, a vehicle can safely park on one side of the street. The intention is to begin limiting parking in this area in a few weeks.

For Rabaska Road, parking would only be allowed on the East side (across from the sidewalk). For the New River Road, parking would only be allowed on the North Side on the street (on the same side as the walking path). There is a section (the Hemlock to Phillips residences) where no parking will be allowed.

Most of the residents and businesses in the area have been notified and are in agreement.

During the next month, it is being requested that community members respect the proposed actions so traffic can be monitored. After the signs are posted there will also be a grace period when no tickets will be issued.

Once again the approach being taken is to try and focus on education, cooperation and the use of common sense. Feedback is greatly appreciated. All questions or comments can be directed to the attention of the Director of Community Protection Unit (450) 632-0635.

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