

# Clemson approves revised gameday parking protocol

BY GREG OLIVER  
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — Clemson City Council recently gave unanimous approval to a temporary ordinance for its gameday parking program COVID-19 protocol for the upcoming football season, with the only amendment allowing parking up to four and a half hours prior to each home game, rather than

the originally proposed three hours.

The amendment passed 4-3, while the parking protocol itself was unanimously approved.

“By going to four and a half hours, that allows people to get in town in time to go downtown and dine or go anywhere in town and dine,” Mayor J.C. Cook said. “We’re

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still trying to follow the university guidelines as close as we can, but also we’ve got a little different perspective than the university does in that we’ve got to look out for our businesses as well. They’ve suffered enough with this COVID stuff already, and if we can give them a little business in town to help them out, that’s what we wanted to do.”

While Clemson University parking guidelines are allowing people to park on university property for only three hours prior to the game and leave no later than 90 minutes after, the city allows parking spaces to be reserved in the downtown parking deck. In addition, some city residents have permits to allow parking in their yards.

Cook said that although people who park on private property will have an extra hour and a half to do so, the city will still

abide by the university’s 90-minute rule for vehicles to leave after the game.

The parking protocol also states that all people present on the parking property, including parking operators, attendants and employees, comply with city ordinances, including the city face coverings ordinance. In addition, the number of vehicles parked on a participating property should be reduced to 50 percent of capacity and alternately spaced so that no vehicles are parked within a vehicle’s width of another vehicle.

The protocol also disallows large gatherings, especially tailgating, and emphasizes keeping parking properties’ restroom facilities cleaned and disinfected with protocols compliant with CDC guidelines.

Under the existing gameday parking ordinance, city attorney Mary McCormac said people were allowed to leave their cars in rented spaces

until 9 a.m. the following day.

“I felt like council didn’t want to encourage people to hang out and party, so that’s why we made the closing (90 minutes after the game) mandatory,” McCormac said. “(Interim city administrator Andy Blondeau) is giving each gameday parking participant a copy of these rules so they can look at them, along with the mask ordinance and a box of masks so they can understand what our desires were in controlling the virus.”

Councilman Fran McGuire expressed concern for changing the time prior to the game.

“I think there’s benefit to mimic what the university is doing so there’s no difference in our rules and the university’s,” McGuire said. “I think the benefit of having the same rules is that it would avoid confusion from people hearing two different things. We’re moving before we’re ready to move and amending the ordinance

without having data.”

Mayor pro tem John Ducworth, who made the motion to amend the ordinance, said any problems that might occur from people ignoring it and keeping cars parked past the allotted time can be addressed prior to the next home game.

“The university is trying to control public health, and we’re trying to control public health while looking out for our businesses as well,” Ducworth said.

Councilman Robert Halfacre said he feels there will be plenty of time to assess how things go based on the Tigers’ first home game, set for Sept. 19 against the Citadel.

“We’re going to look at this two days later at a city council meeting (Sept. 21),” Halfacre said. “It does give us an opportunity to review, assess what went well, what worked well and what didn’t work well.”

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