

MEETING MINUTES

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M. – May 4, 2017
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Lown called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Chairman, Brad Lown
City Manager, John Bohenko
Public Works Director, Peter Rice
Deputy Fire Chief, James Heinz
Police Captain, Frank Warchol
Member, Harold Whitehouse
Member, Ronald Cypher
Member, Shari Donnermeyer
Alternate Member, Mary Lou McElwain

City Staff Present:

Parking and Transportation Engineer, Eric Eby
Planning Director, Juliet Walker

Absent:

Member, Ted Gray

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Harold Whitehouse moved to accept the meeting minutes of April 6, 2017. Seconded by Shari Donnermeyer. **Motion passed 9-0.**

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Public Works Director Rice moved to accept the financial report dated May 2017. Seconded by Shari Donnermeyer. **Motion passed 9-0.**

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ralph Dibernardo spoke to vehicles parking on the grass strip between the curb and sidewalk, specifically on Aldrich Road, Woodbury Avenue, Edmond Avenue and Islington Street. He requested the Committee act to prevent it.

Brenna Cavanaugh spoke to implementing a residential parking program on Summer Street due to the increase of on-street parking by nonresidents. She expressed concern about motorcycle and moped noise. She requested the Committee investigate the noise issue. She thanked Public Works Director Rice and Police Captain Warchol for the snow removal program.

Patricia Bagley thanked the Committee for moving the Zagster bike corral from Market Square. She recommended changing the name of the Committee to Traffic Safety and Parking because safety is important.

Brian Birner spoke to vehicle idling on State Street when the Memorial Bridge lift span is opened [this allows boat traffic passage on the Piscataqua River]. He presented a photograph of signage used in Kittery, Maine and requested the Committee install similar signage. He suggested utilizing the City's flashing message board signs in the area and disseminating information to the public about vehicle idling.

Rick Becksted spoke to action item VIII.B. [STOP sign on Cleveland Drive and Taft Road]. He suggested installing a removable speed bump or raised speed tables as a pilot program. He requested information about the Bartlett Street and Thornton Street public meeting. Public Works Director Rice confirmed the meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 11, 2017. The meeting will be held at the New Franklin School cafeteria at 6:30 PM.

VI. PRESENTATION:

2016 Downtown Parking Utilization Survey Results. Eric Eby spoke to John Burke's 2016 parking utilization study of the downtown area. He presented a map of the data compiled by Mr. Burke. He stated the survey included both on-street parking and off-street public parking lots. The survey was conducted for a total of 6 days: a weekday and Saturday in June, August and October, from noon to 7 PM.

Mr. Eby's most substantial finding was parking continued to increase greatly over the 85% utilization rate. (Eighty-five percent is the desired utilization rate). The survey also showed that drivers were seeking less expensive parking areas because of the high parking demand in downtown. The survey results showed the free parking lots, located at Parrot Avenue, McIntyre (during public use times on Saturday, Sunday and Holidays) and Prescott Park, were all exceeding 94% occupancy.

Mr. Eby stated staff recommended no adjustment to the meter zone designations until the new parking garage opens. He noted there was one exception by Portwalk Place: a privately-owned street (it should be added to the High-Occupancy Meter (HOM) Zone).

The Committee discussed the 70% occupancy rate at the Masonic Temple lot and the Connect Community Church (CCC) lot, which was not counted in 2016, but was recorded at 25% occupancy rate in 2015. The Committee was notified that the free shuttle would be operating from the CCC lot this summer.

No action required by Committee.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Request for Valet Service license renewals for locations on State Street and Bow Street, by Atlantic Parking Services. Eric Eby stated this action item included the annual renewal of the valet parking licenses on Bow Street and 96 State Street for Atlantic Parking Services. The terms and conditions were the same as last year and staff recommended granting the renewals. The agreements would be effective on July 1, 2017.

Mary Lou McElwain spoke to previous issues, like sandwich boards obstructing sidewalks and double parking. She requested enforcement. City Manager Bohenko confirmed enforcement would be addressed and that copies of the agreements would be sent to Committee members.

Shari Donnermeyer moved to renew the two valet parking licenses. Seconded by Ron Cypher.

Vote 9-0, to renew valet parking licenses on Bow Street and 96 State Street for Atlantic Parking Services.

B. Request for Valet Service license renewal for Hanover Street, by The One Hundred Club. Eric Eby stated this action item included the annual renewal of the valet parking license for the use of the loading zone on Hanover Street. The terms and conditions were the same as last year and staff recommended granting the renewal. The agreement would be effective on July 1, 2017.

Shari Donnermeyer moved to renew the valet parking license. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse.

A copy of the proposal was not submitted in the packet. Several Committee members requested it. City Manager Bohenko stated copies of the executed agreement would be sent to the members.

The Committee also discussed the valet parking location on Pleasant Street and State Street. Mr. Eby stated the agreement with Atlantic Parking Services for this location would expire on June 30, 2017. They had expressed interest in renewing it. However, another valet service had also expressed interest in the same location. City Manager Bohenko said that it might need to go out to bid because of the competing interest. He stated more information would be forthcoming.

Vote 9-0, to renew the valet parking license on Hanover Street for The One Hundred Club.

C. Request to extend time limits on four 15-minute parking spaces on Marcy Street, by Sanders Fish Market. Eric Eby stated that Mike Sanders, owner, requested the spaces in front of the business be extended to 6PM on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The current time limit is 8 AM to 4 PM from Monday through Saturday. Mr. Sanders requested the hours be extended because his business is open 7 days a week. Parking is immediately taken once the time limits expire.

City Manager Bohenko moved to extend time limits on the four 15-minute parking spaces. Seconded by Mary Lou McElwain.

Vote 9-0, to extend time limits on four 15-minute parking spaces (8 AM to 6 PM, 7 days a week) on Marcy Street, by Sanders Fish Market.

City Manager Bohenko stated this action item would be included in the Annual Omnibus Ordinance Change.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Parrott Avenue parking lot, clarification on PTS directive from City Council – Chairman Lown spoke to this issue. He stated the action item was discussed again at the City Council meeting on May 1, 2017. They decided to schedule a future Work Session. City Manager Bohenko stated the Work Session would include, but not be limited to, the following topics: surface parking, the residential parking program, scope of services, and reviewing the Guiding Parking Principles adopted in 2012. He stated the Work Session would be scheduled in the next two or three months. It will focus on what the City Council wants staff to review based on the topics above.

Harold Whitehouse spoke to the stipulations associated with the Parrott Avenue lot and the view restrictions at the Governor John Langdon House. City Manager Bohenko stated the Parrott Avenue lot stipulations were cleared with Saint John the Divine in New York. They consented to remove the restrictions. He assured the Committee and the public that any changes would include public input and meetings.

No action required by Committee.

D. Report back on request for STOP sign on Cleveland Drive at Taft Road. Eric Eby stated that in response to a request from a resident of Taft Road for STOP signs on Cleveland Drive, he conducted traffic counts and vehicle observations at the intersection over a two-week period in April. The reasons given for requesting the STOP signs were to slow speeding vehicles and provide safer conditions when sight lines are restricted due to snow banks.

Mr. Eby stated the results of the speed measurements indicated that the average speed of vehicles was 19 mph, slightly less than the posted speed limit of 20 mph. A traffic count conducted at the intersection revealed that peak hour volumes were less than 40 vehicles per hour, with equal volumes on all four approaches. It's equivalent to less than one vehicle per minute at the intersection during the busiest time of the day. The volumes fall far below the

minimum levels for warranting an all-way stop controlled intersection. Research by the Portsmouth Police Department revealed that no accidents have occurred at this intersection over the past 5 years. Sight lines exceed minimum requirements in all directions when snow banks are not present.

Mr. Eby spoke to a citizen's suggestion to install a removable speed bump or raised speed table. He stated the effectiveness of the proposed items could not be measured because the vehicle speeds were already below the posted speed limit. Given the average vehicle speeds below the posted speed limit, the low volume of traffic, and the recent accident history, he recommended that no changes be made to the intersection. During times of limited sight lines, due to snow banks, drivers can safely creep into the intersection for better visibility: low speeds and volumes minimize the risk of an accident.

Harold Whitehouse moved to accept staff recommendation that no change be made to the intersection. Seconded by Ron Cypher.

The Committee discussed notifying the neighborhood association and providing education on STOP sign warrants.

Vote 9-0, to accept staff recommendation that no change be made to the intersection.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Rick Becksted spoke to the Middle Street project and asked for an update. He emphasized the importance of public input and requested it be allowed at the Work Session.

Patricia Bagley spoke to the stipulations/covenants matter regarding Saint John the Divine in New York.

X. INFORMATIONAL:

Seacoast Area Bicycle Riders (SABR) by Josh Pierce: Mr. Pierce provided an overview of the non-profit bicycle advocacy group. He expressed support for the City's complete streets program, specifically the Middle Street / Lafayette Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Project. He recommended that educational clinics be held to educate bicyclists on state laws. He stated he would be working with the Portsmouth Police Department on enforcement issues. Mr. Pierce thanked Mary Lou McElwain for inviting him to present and the Committee for their time.

XI. MISCELLANEOUS:

Harold Whitehouse expressed concern regarding the City's narrow streets and the construction of bike lanes and uses on them. He expressed concern regarding the Zagster bike corral location on Parrott Avenue and requested a temporary STOP sign be installed during the program. He spoke to pedestrian safety in crosswalks. He also asked about enforcement regarding vehicles

parking on the grass between the curb and sidewalk in the City. He thanked the Police Department for their enforcement work and cited two published police logs in the Portsmouth Herald.

Public Works Director Rice spoke to the issue of vehicle parking between the curb and sidewalk. He stated the issue would be addressed once a Parking Director was hired and that a possible solution may be to assign Parking Enforcement Officers to enforcement of areas outside of the downtown.

Ron Cypher spoke to a parking issue on Cottage Street. He noticed that cars are parking on the right side of Cottage Street in the travel lane. He requested staff review the situation.

Mary Lou McElwain spoke to crosswalk issues. She requested staff review crosswalk conditions at Marcy Street and Pleasant Street, 213 South Street and New Castle Avenue, and possibly install crosswalk weebles.

Shari Donnermeyer spoke in support of the crosswalk on Islington Street at White Heron. The Committee was informed that the temporary crosswalk pilot project would begin in June for the peak season.

XII. ADJOURNMENT – At 8:54 AM, **voted** to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amy Chastain
Secretary to the Committee