

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

CITYWIDE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes—first meeting of this new committee term

February 21, 2018

Conference Room A, City Hall

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 by Acting Chairman, Cliff Lazenby.

Cliff noted that agenda and attendance sheets were available on the table.

Cliff introduced the new members of the Steering Committee to the audience. In attendance: Cliff Lazenby, Kathy Bergeron, Chase Hagaman, Kelly Weinstein, Paul Mannle, Lawrence Cataldo, Rick Becksted, Kathleen Boduch. No absentees.

There were no minutes as this is a new term.

Cliff mentioned the agenda which would include a presentation by the City of Portsmouth Parking Director Ben Fletcher and Public Works Director Peter Rice, scheduling of future meetings and events, neighborhood reports, and finally nomination and election of new officers.

Larry Cataldo MOVED TO HAVE THE NOMINATION PROCESS OCCUR BEFORE THE SCHEDULING AND NEIGHBORHOOD REPORTS. PAUL MANNLE SEDCONDED. With that being agreeable to all, THE MOTION PASSED.

Cliff introduced Mr. Rice and Mr. Fletcher, who presented a powerpoint about the Neighborhood Parking Program (NPP) as it is currently seen. (The PowerPoint is available on the city's website.)

Points at issue: timing, process, problems, possible solutions, components, policy decisions to be made.

TIMING:

pilot NPP, possibly including up to two city areas, if agreed upon, is slated to coincide with the opening of the Foundry Place garage next fall.

PROBLEM:

the city has identified the need based on low inventory of non-metered parking spaces, a 72 hour limit in some lots and areas, and excess demand by workers from both in and out of the city. Some areas, one being the South End, are overwhelmed all day and evening by parkers, whether workers or event attendees, in search of free parking.

SOLUTION:

reduce the demand, increase the inventory (with the new garage), reintroduce busing of employees from existing and to-be-identified lots (such as the CCC), and institute a NPP to protect the most highly effected areas. Those requesting a NPP sticker will have to present 2 proofs of residency. The tag will not be transferable. The permit would be in effect for a year.

COMPONENTS:

defining the neighborhood and eligible permit holders. Neighborhood petitions will be used to create and even expand the area within a neighborhood for the NPP. 75% of the residents of the area will have to sign a petition to the city for the program in their neighborhood. For consideration: Definition of who is eligible for permits: single/multiple dwellings, renters/owners, frequent guests, occasional guests, etc. Other components are staffing, type of permits, fee for permits, number of vehicles allowed, signage, vehicles for enforcers, training needs, etc.

POLICY QUESTIONS:

Who? Who will be eligible, that street/area's residents or any Portsmouth resident? Boundaries need to be defined, currently using the 2007 Neighborhood Association map. What will the charges/fines be, how many tags per family, will short-time service vehicles be included, how many visitors' passes per

person/family? Will it be self-sustainable? Will a person be able to park close to his own home or just in an area?

ASSOCIATED COSTS:

Staffing, signage, vehicle(s) for enforcement, training, cost of permits, fees for permits.

NEXT STEPS:

See if there is enabling legislation at the State level.

Consider possible neighborhoods as test areas.

Develop answers for the pressing questions.

Establish a date for a public hearing.

A person files a petition which establishes the area to be included, gets the signature of 75% of the residents, submits the request to the city.

The city then will review the petition, council will consider the request. Program will be introduced or returned for review to the neighborhood.

Peter Rice will post an online survey requesting information about the residents concerns about the NPP being started. It will also be available in a paper format. He would request that you add your own questions/concerns as well as answers to their questions.

When the issue was opened to the audiences, there was a lively questioning and comment period:

QUESTIONS:

Does it have to include the entire city if some areas don't need it?

Will every NPP area/street be treated the same: same number of passes per resident, etc.?

Will there be zone parking, meaning broader areas than a person's own neighborhood? Would they possibly still be required to park far from their doors, difficult especially for those carrying small children or older residents having to walk farther.

Will parking be based on time lines: only at night, all day, on weekends only?

How many houses actually lack parking?

Could certain streets have time restrictions and others not? (Peter Rice replied that that would be expensive for enforcement and that they are looking to be consistent.)

If a neighborhood petitions to have a NPP, may they reverse their request if they find it is not helpful?

What is the measurement of success?

How do/can we let people know where there is available parking? (The city is looking into the WayFinding website to provide routing, especially for heavy event times, and using automatic ticketing for parking in the outer areas.

How will eligible residents be identified?

If there are roommates in an apartment and only one person's name is on the lease or bills, will those residents qualify for passes?

COMMENTS:

There is plenty of parking in the city, people need to be re-educated about walking a reasonable distance to work or home.

The problem is that people are looking for FREE parking, not that there is not enough parking.

It is the out-of-towners who take up all the places.

Employers are the key to enabling workers to park and use lots instead of street parking. Many of the available city lots are not used or ever full.

The city should just create "NO PARKING" zones during special events.

A number of people asked that the NPP be implemented before fall, using the busy summer problem time as the ultimate test.

There is already "Resident Only" parking in Rye and along the beach roads.

Land-use boards have to be responsive to the new demands of the conversion of business to residential space in the city. (The new Franklin Block building as an example.) Builders have to be responsible to provide the parking for their buildings.

If the city institutes a no-ticket-just-tow-it plan, people would be more attentive to parking rules. As it is, a ticket is not enough of a deterrent.

City problems are solved by raising parking fines. That should stop.

If parking is free, more will go there. The way to manage demand is to charge for it.

This issue is a priority and it's complicated.

Downtown is a neighborhood, too, but the businesses won't buy into a NPP because they want to benefit from meter time turnover.

Employers need to internalize their employees parking costs.

Messrs. Rice and Fletcher agreed that success will be defined as Portsmouth being a city where people can park. It is important that the city and council have time to measure that it is working and suggest that any trial areas have the program for one year. It is a complex problem but we need to take care of our citizens.

The game plan: complete the online survey, compile the results, have a public hearing, discussion, nail down the nuts and bolts, implement the plan (if approved) by end of summer, hire staff, procure equipment, go! The hope is that each area's restrictions will eventually force the non-complying parkers to move to the new garage.

Some details need to be worked out and the surveys will help in that process. The city will also distribute fliers.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS:

Larry nominated Paul Mannle. Cliff nominated Kathy Bergeron. Cliff called for a paper ballot and distributed those to the committee members.

Opposition arose among the attendees on the floor, questioning the need for the paper ballot and the legitimacy of the vote by only committee members rather than members plus attendees, and about the bylaws.

Discussion followed.

Chase MOVED and Kathleen SECONDED A MOTION TO TABLE THE VOTE UNTIL THE NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.

NEIGHBORHOOD REPORTS:

Christian Shores/Creek neighborhood—all is finally good.

Islington Creek—Larry Cataldo—would like to be part of the parking pilot. Paul Mannle said there are two non-conforming buildings across the street.

SCHEDULE:

Since no elections were held, it was difficult to set up the meeting schedule. Cliff will contact committee members and set up another meeting in March once the committee has had time to review the bylaws and members find it possible to proceed.

Larry moved and Kathy seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 9:35.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Boduch
Secretary