

MEETING MINUTES

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

8:00 A.M. – May 3, 2018
City Hall – Conference Room A

I. CALL TO ORDER:

At 8:00 a.m., Chairman Roberts called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Chairman, Doug Roberts
Deputy City Manager, Nancy Colbert Puff
Public Works Director, Peter Rice
Police Captain, Frank Warchol
Deputy Fire Chief, James Heinz
Member, Harold Whitehouse
Member, Ronald Cypher
Member, Shari Donnermeyer
Member, Mary Lou McElwain
Alternate Member, Ralph DiBernardo

Staff Advisors Present:

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

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Harold Whitehouse moved to accept the meeting minutes from the April 5, 2018 meeting.

Seconded by Ronald Cypher.

Motion passed 9-0.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mary Lou McElwain moved to accept the financial report dated March 31, 2018.

Seconded by Harold Whitehouse.

Motion passed 9-0.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Elizabeth Moreau encouraged the Committee to hold a public meeting about the proposed changes on Brewster and Langdon regarding a one-way street and parking. She requested the meeting to allow neighbors to comment on the proposed changes.

Tim Ackerman, owner of Seacoast Mazda, opposed Farm Lane becoming a one-way street. Mr. Ackerman's business is at the end of the street, and they use both lanes of traffic now to move cars back and forth. They would like to keep it that way.

Mike Richardson, from New England Marine and Industrial, echoed the comments made by Mr. Ackerman. He stated that if it becomes inconvenient for customers to come to his store, he believes he will lose business. He wants the street to remain intact. Mr. Richardson asked the Committee to take his comments into consideration when they vote on the issue.

Jonathan Blakeslee spoke in support of the proposed bump out and crosswalk in front of White Heron Tea and Coffee on Islington Street and Albany Street.

Jennifer Fecteau, an employee from Port City Nissan, opposed the proposed change on Farm Lane. She stated it would be a huge detriment to their business. Other options were discussed, such as adding speed bumps. Ms. Fecteau wondered why those options weren't still on the table.

Chuck McMahon spoke in support of the changes proposed for Echo Avenue and Farm Lane. He is a resident and supports the proposed changes whole-heartedly.

Jamie Byron talked about safety concerns regarding increased traffic on Bartlett Street. She relayed several incidents that had occurred regarding pedestrian safety. She met with City staff a few weeks ago to talk about the issues. She stated residents are eager to help and asked the Committee for assistance in finding a solution.

David Palumbo has lived at 181 Echo Avenue since 1971. Mr. Palumbo stated traffic has increased considerably in the last five years. He expressed concern for pedestrian safety due to increased traffic. He spoke in support of closing Echo Avenue and making it a dead end. He believes it will protect the children, neighbors and handicapped residents in the area.

Chairman Roberts noted that three late emails were received. Kelly Hurd and Tom Hudson from 30 Brewster Street supported proposed changes. Anne Poubeau sent an email regarding traffic and pedestrian safety on Bartlett Street. Chairman Roberts also received a message on his answering machine about traffic on Bartlett Street.

Eric Eby received an email from Representative Peter Somssich in support of the Echo Avenue proposal.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Request for a loading zone between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., 7 days a week, on Vaughan Street at 3S Artspace, by Martin Holbrook. Eric Eby stated he did not have a recommendation at this time. 3S Artspace requested the last three spaces on Vaughn St. be designated a loading zone between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., 7 days a week. The spaces would be turned over to regular parking after 5 p.m. Eric Eby's recommendation was to refer it back to staff for further study and information gathering.

Harold Whitehouse stated that he would make the recommended motion, but wanted staff to report back by the next meeting. He stated he understood that staff had a large workload, but hoped that this could be addressed at the next meeting.

Public Works Director Rice noted that he would second the motion, but wanted to make an additional comment. He appreciated the next meeting caveat on the motion; however, Eric Eby is managing many different projects and is the lead staff assigned to PTS.

Public Works Director Rice spoke to the concerns he has heard regarding lack of parking in the area due to on-going construction. He said it might be something the Committee would want to defer until construction is completed in the area.

Harold Whitehouse questioned if the loading zone had to be 7 days a week. He encouraged Eric Eby to leave Sunday open for parking. Eric Eby responded that options were open and no decision had been made.

Mary Lou McElwain supported additional research and study before the Committee voted on any aspect of a loading zone due to traffic and parking restrictions in the area.

Public Works Director Rice noted that there was a study completed for the Maplewood Corridor from Congress Street to the bridge. It included the Raynes Street and Vaughn Street loop. Planning Director Walker confirmed that the report would be online that day. Public Works Director Rice requested the Construction Management and Mitigation Plan (CMMP) be posted to the City website. It would show the evaluation of the temporary one-way to accommodate the construction activity.

Shari Donnermeyer commented that it may make sense to meter the parking spaces and rent the spaces to 3S Artspace. She stated it was discussed at the site visit on Tuesday. Currently, the spaces are not metered and a vehicle can park up to 72 hours.

Harold Whitehouse moved to refer to staff for report back at the next meeting, if possible. Seconded by Public Works Director Rice. **Vote 9-0, to refer to staff for report back at the next meeting, if possible.**

Public Works Director Rice moved to allow public comment, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. The motion passed unanimously.

Martin Holbrook, Director of Operations at 3S Artspace, and Maggie Osborn, owner of the new restaurant that will be opening in June, were present. Mr. Holbrook stated they thought the one-way designation had already been approved in combination with some jersey barriers. Public Works Director Rice responded that they were still working out the final details. Mr. Holbrook noted that if the one-way was approved and the jersey barriers were installed, they would hinder deliveries. He stated the whole road would be blocked if a delivery truck had to stop near the jersey barriers.

Ms. Osborn agreed with Mr. Holbrook's comments. She spoke to the all day parking by hotel employees in the spaces. She also requested the loading zone be designated 7 days a week so deliveries can be made on Sundays.

Chairman Roberts noted that there had been a discussion about metering the area. Public Works Director Rice responded that metering the area would definitely provide turnover and the topic was planned for a future meeting. He stated if there was a desire for the Committee to address it sooner, then it could be done. Ms. Osborn commented that it was time sensitive due to the restaurant opening the first week of June. Parking is her biggest concern as a new business owner.

The Committee discussed construction vehicles parking in City parking spots, the increase in the number of requests made by businesses for loading zone parking and how the new garage will change the parking inventory.

B. Request to lower speed limit to 20 mph on Dodge Avenue, by Harold Sullivan.

Chairman Roberts noted that a site visit was conducted on Tuesday. Eric Eby stated the request came from residents of Dodge Avenue who are frustrated by people in the neighborhood driving faster than they consider reasonable. Eric Eby completed a preliminary investigation and noted most cars travel at 20 mph. He stated there were a few in the 25-30 mph range. By default the roadway is 30 mph although there are no signs posted.

Harold Whitehouse questioned if they could make this decision today without collecting additional data. Eric Eby responded that they had some speed data already that showed the average speeds were 20 mph. The Committee discussed posting a 25 mph speed limit sign.

Harold Whitehouse moved to put up a sign for 25 mph on Dodge Ave., seconded by Ronald Cypher.

Public Works Director Rice spoke to the motion. He did not support the motion, unless Eric Eby could support the evaluation with a warrant. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff completely agreed with Public Works Director Rice. There was no reason for the Committee to forgo having a full evaluation done of the road, when there is time to complete it. Harold Whitehouse recognized more discussion was needed on this issue, and withdrew his motion.

Chairman Roberts agreed with the comments, but pointed out that the City has a traffic plan and this was designated a neighborhood street. Chairman Roberts agreed with tabling this issue for further discussion. He noted that if it saved time in the future to lower the speed limit on a similar situation without using City resources for further study, then the Committee could do that.

Ralph DiBernardo clarified that the City could not enforce a speed limit of 20 mph in the state of NH without citing a specific safety issue or a school zone. Police Captain Warchol confirmed that was correct. There needed to be a reason for the 20 mph. He also agreed with Public Works Director Rice's statements.

Harold Whitehouse moved to have staff collect data and report back at the next meeting if possible, seconded by Shari Donnermeyer. **Vote 9-0, to have staff collect data and report back at the next meeting, if possible.**

C. Request to expand No Parking area on Highland Street near Middle Street, by Jane Nilles. Chairman Roberts noted a site visit was conducted on Tuesday. He asked if there was discussion needed or if a motion could be made. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff moved to have staff collect data and report back, seconded by Shari Donnermeyer. **Vote 9-0, to have staff collect data and report back.**

D. Electric vehicle charging station parking space regulations. Harold Whitehouse questioned if this issue should come before the Committee, or should staff decide this issue. Eric Eby clarified that it was a matter of deciding the time limits on the spaces, and enforcement. These items are part of the City Code of Ordinances, which the Committee votes on.

The Committee discussed the reasons why the second charging station was installed at Junkins Avenue and South Street and the costs associated with it. Parking Director Fletcher stated the cost for the two head unit was approximately \$7,500.

Chairman Roberts added that City Council wants to encourage the use of electric vehicles. This action would limit cars from staying in the parking spot for more than 4 hours.

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff moved to approve parking regulations for electric vehicles, seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Vote 9-0, to approve proposed parking space regulations for electric vehicles.**

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Report back: Request to restrict parking along both sides of Thaxter Road within 150 feet of Islington Street, by Jesse Choquette. Eric Eby collected data with a traffic camera and watched how many people were parking and how long the queue was on Thaxter Road. Based on the data, Eric Eby's recommendation was to limit parking an additional 40 feet. Parking would be restricted 60 feet from the intersection of Islington Street on Thaxter Road. Chairman Roberts clarified that it was a half measure from what was requested. Eric Eby confirmed that was correct.

Ms. Donnermeyer questioned how many parking spaces would be taken away. Eric Eby responded that it would be taking away 2 spaces on one side and 1 space on the other side.

Public Works Director Rice moved to limit the No Parking area on both sides of Thaxter Road to within 60 feet of Islington Street, seconded by Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff.
Vote 9-0, to limit No Parking area on both sides of Thaxter Road to within 60 feet of Islington Street.

B. Report back: Frank Jones Neighborhood Turnpike connections. Mary Lou McElwain questioned if it was possible to separate the Echo Avenue closure and the Farm Lane change. Chairman Roberts confirmed that they could, but noted they should hear Eric Eby's report first.

Eric Eby noted that the report contained a recommendation to close Echo Avenue at the Turnpike. He stated it could not be done further up at the Ford Dealership driveway because there is a house there that still needs to get out to the road without going through the dealership. This would allow vehicles to travel down from Woodbury Avenue and get to that house. Eric Eby understood that if Echo Avenue is closed it could divert traffic to Farm Lane. That is why there is another recommendation to make Farm Lane a one-way. Eric Eby proposed to try this for a six-month period to see how it worked. It would be monitored and evaluated. It would be something that could easily be removed if there were any problems. Eric Eby would work with the DOT on what type of treatment they would like to see in that location.

Mary Lou McElwain noted that the reason she asked to split the two was because today they had heard from several businesses that had been established 30-40 years ago. In the past they had heard from neighbors only. Mary Lou McElwain wanted to separate Echo Avenue, which was the neighborhood issue from Farm Lane, which seemed to be the businesses issue.

Chairman Roberts requested a motion to separate the voting. Mary Lou McElwain moved to separate the voting of Echo Avenue from Farm Lane, seconded by Shari Donnermeyer.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz clarified whether or not the Committee voted to close Echo Avenue for six months, and noted that there were insufficient details about how that would be done. Public Works Director Rice responded that the original motion when it was combined with Farm Lane was to close it. Mary Lou McElwain pointed out that they should be considered separately because there are business considerations. There was agreement that it was acceptable, so it was separated.

Eric Eby noted the roadway would probably be closed with jersey barriers because it's temporary and signs would be covered to close the exit. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz noted that it affects the Fire Department, and how it is closed matters to them. The Committee

discussed separating the action items. Mary Lou McElwain moved to split the two decisions, seconded by Public Works Director Rice. **Vote 9-0, to separate the action item into two separate motions.**

Mary Lou McElwain moved to close Echo Avenue for a 6-month period, seconded by Public Works Director Rice.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz questioned what that closure would look like. Eric Eby responded that it would be based on a discussion with DOT because it is their roadway. The closure needs to comply with their standards and safety rules. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz requested to be involved in the closure discussions. Chairman Roberts commented that Deputy Fire Chief Heinz said at the hearing they were comfortable going in from the Woodbury Avenue side. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz responded that was correct, but also noted that the concerns of the Fire Department needed to be on the record. Public Works Director Rice clarified that the study was to measure the impact of the closure, not whether or not they would close it. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz confirmed that was correct. Public Works Director Rice noted that as they move forward with the details of the closure and what DOT accepts, they would work closely with Fire and Police as well.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz asked Ms. Walker if there was anything in best practices that talked about long dead end streets being a good process or is a best practice more of a grid layout? Ms. Walker responded in general you try not to have long dead end streets.

Public Works Director Rice moved to suspend the rules to allow for public comment on Echo Avenue, seconded by Harold Whitehouse. The motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer McCafferty supported the pilot project. Ms. McCafferty advised that summer was coming and the GPS sends more traffic through the neighborhood. It would be good to see something in place in a timely manner.

Steve Mower wanted to reinforce that this was an off-ramp from a highway. This change would be creating a long dead end road. It would also prevent traffic from coming in at a high speed into a residential neighborhood.

Bruce Osborn thought the road should be made a dead end before construction began on the Woodbury Avenue Bridge. He stated the road cannot handle all the traffic.

Cathy Cosgrove lives at the intersection of Woodlawn Circle and Echo Ave. Ms. Cosgrove appreciated the Committee's consideration and looked forward to the trial. Ms. Cosgrove echoed Ms. McCafferty's comments that they were hopeful something could happen before summer starts.

Chuck McMahon asked Planning Director Walker for feedback on best practices regarding exiting from a turnpike into a residential neighborhood. Mr. McMahon acknowledged that this was a trial closure, but encouraged the Committee to consider this closure to be long-term.

Vote 9-0, to fully close Echo Avenue at the Turnpike as a pilot project for six months.

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff moved to postpone action on Farm Lane until the results of the pilot project were completed and evaluated, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain.

Police Chief Warchol clarified that they would be monitoring Farm Lane during the six-month study, but wanted to make one thing clear and go on record. If this becomes a major issue before the 6 months were up, then they need to reconvene as a Committee and discuss the issue. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff agreed. Public Works Director Rice added that during the trial, Eric Eby would be looking at other treatment options for the area as well.

The Committee discussed the closure of the Woodbury Avenue Bridge and the official detour route. Eric Eby stated he would be working with DOT regarding increased traffic and traffic calming measures. Chairman Roberts added that he was in favor of interim measures to help slow traffic in that area. Eric Eby commented that DPW would be putting edge lines in next week on Bartlett Street to make the roadway feel narrower.

Vote 9-0, to postpone action on Farm Lane until the pilot project on Echo Avenue is completed and results are evaluated.

C. Report back: Islington Street at Albany Street crosswalk and bump-out. Harold Whitehouse moved to include the crosswalk and bump-out as part of the Islington Street corridor reconstruction project, seconded by Ronald Cypher.

Chairman Roberts questioned when that project was going to start, and if it would be feasible to do this for the summer on a temporary basis? Eric Eby responded that the Islington Street project would not start for several months. A schedule would be determined once a contractor had been chosen. He did not anticipate any construction starting this summer. Chairman Roberts questioned what the expense would be to put it in temporarily. Eric Eby responded that it would involve staff time and approximately \$1,000.00 in materials. Chairman Roberts amended the motion to do it on an interim basis for the summer.

Mary Lou McElwain questioned how extensive the bump out would be, and noted concern for cyclists going around it. Eric Eby explained how the temporary bump-out would be installed. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff noted that it was her understanding that DPW perceives this as a relatively small solution that can be implemented in a timely manner, and seconded Chairman Roberts' amendment.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz clarified that they were voting on the bump-out and crosswalk just in front of White Heron Tea and Coffee. Eric Eby confirmed that was correct. **Vote 9-0, to include crosswalk and bump-out as part of the Islington Street corridor**

reconstruction project and construct a temporary crosswalk and bump-out on an interim basis beginning this summer.

D. Report back: Langdon Street and Brewster Street parking and traffic flow. Eric Eby noted that they were following up on recommendations that the Committee made about parking on Langdon St. He performed more traffic counts and looked at the traffic flow on Brewster and Langdon. Residents have also complained that parking is happening on both sides of Langdon and Brewster and blocking traffic. He stated there are no parking restrictions on either side in the ordinances. He stated this is a matter of clearing up the parking and making recommendations based on the traffic flow. Brewster is very narrow with parking on one side. He stated the parking needed to be addressed immediately and it wouldn't have an effect on the two-way or one-way flow. There could be a public meeting to discuss the traffic flow changes.

Public Works Director Rice moved to allow public comment, seconded by Chairman Roberts. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul Winkley has worked for Regan Electric for 26 years and has a good understanding of the traffic flow in and out of the company. A camera was put up to study the traffic in the area. The flow in and out of the company is up Langdon. The recommendation for no parking stops at 91 Langdon St. The two parking spaces outside of 91 Langdon St. is the real issue for getting in and out of Regan Electric with the large bucket trucks and trucks with trailers. Mr. Winkley asked that the no parking be extended to north of 81 Langdon St. to allow them to facilitate getting large vehicles in and out of the property. Eric Eby responded that they didn't have any video evidence on the camera footage of Mr. Winkley's observations but his request made sense.

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff noted that the sample motion was to have a public meeting, and that request came from a member of the public. Before the Committee makes any decisions they should afford the public the ability to weigh in on all of these issues.

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff moved to schedule a public meeting on the proposed changes, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain.

Harold Whitehouse requested to have the public hearing in Conference Room A so it could be televised. Chairman Roberts clarified that it would take place at the next PTS meeting.

Vote 9-0, to schedule a public discussion on proposed changes at the next meeting.

E. Report back: Intersection of Middle Street and State Street. Eric Eby commented that this was part of the request to remove metered parking spaces on State Street earlier this year. They also looked at the intersection of State Street and Middle Street to see if

there was anything they could do to help slow traffic making the right turn from Middle Street onto State Street. That corner is a tight radius and there is not a lot of volume coming around it. There is no way to tighten it up any more and still allow vehicles to make that turn. Eric Eby recommended no changes to that corner at this point.

Mary Lou McElwain moved to follow Eric Eby's suggestion, seconded by Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff. **Voted 9-0, to approve staff recommendation to make no changes.**

F. Report back: Chairman Robert's parking space suggestions. Chairman Roberts stated this action item was important because it added parking where it did not previously exist and each metered space downtown generates about \$3,000 a year. He stated being able to add more parking in a safe manner is a positive thing to do.

Eric Eby looked at each suggestion and addressed them in his report back. The first is on Fleet St. in between State St. and Court St. There is no parking on either side now, but if the centerline was moved, parking could be installed on the TD Bank parking lot side of the street. Approximately 5 spaces could be added. The issue is that across State St. on the other section of Fleet St., there is already parking on the other side of the street. The parking would be switching from one side to the other side as you go through the intersection. It would also be creating an offset centerline, so if cars don't shift to the right they could have a potential head-on collision. However, the distance is wide enough and speeds are low enough it would not be a primary concern. It would work from that standpoint, but there are other issues. The street is a major connection for fire trucks to get through from the station. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz commented that this was a non-starter for the Fire Department. Every event action plan produced by Fire and Police exercises Fleet St. as a way to get from Fire Station 1 to Congress St. and to Hanover St. Harold Whitehouse agreed with the Deputy Chief. Safety is an important issue.

Public Works Director Rice questioned what the clear space was between the parking stalls and the curb. Eric Eby responded that its 22 feet from the spaces to the other curb. Chairman Roberts noted that there was already parking on Fleet St. after Congress St. He stated it would not be narrowing the street because there is parking there. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz agreed but noted that this has been designated a City core slow street. He stated every action plan we have now leaves Fleet St. open for emergency vehicles to get to the other side of the city. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz suspected that the snowplows, trash trucks and delivery vehicles would have similar issues.

Chairman Roberts clarified that when a fire truck came out of the station onto Fleet St. they would be in the left lane. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz confirmed that was correct and noted that it was already hard for them to maneuver. Chairman Roberts noted that the proposed parking would be on the right lane. If they were in the left lane they wouldn't be near the right curb. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz responded that he's been driving fire trucks around the city for 29 years and does not support the change. Police Captain Warchol added that the area on Fleet St. has a lot of traffic that comes off of State St. on to Fleet St. Considering that traffic, fire trucks turning left would be greatly impacted if parking was on the road. Chairman Roberts questioned if some spaces could be added on the

Deer St./Hanover St. side of Fleet St. on the second block. Fleet St. is already narrowed by other spaces. He stated if the Fire and Police Staff were concerned about the first block then it could be moved to the second block. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz responded that they would have concerns for the second block. There is a large reconstruction project on the Franklin block. He stated the State St. fire had ladder trucks set up on all 4 corners. There was one on Church St. because there just wasn't enough room on the street.

Harold Whitehouse proposed delaying discussion until next month. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz acknowledged Chairman Roberts suggestion for compromise and asked if it was possible to reduce the spots from 5 to 2. Public Works Director Rice clarified Deputy Fire Chief Heinz was talking about the first two spots. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz responded that he was thinking about the spots in the middle. They need room for cars to get out of the way. He suggested two spaces mid-block as a compromise. Chairman Roberts clarified that the question would be what's easiest for traffic flow and the Fire Department. Eric Eby responded that the further they are pulled away from the intersection the better.

Public Works Director Rice moved to revisit this proposal and come back next month with a recommendation, seconded by Ronald Cypher. **Vote 9-0, to postpone action item until next month's meeting.**

VIII. INFORMATIONAL:

A. Parking revenue report line item explanation, and tax rate offset, by Parking Director Ben Fletcher. Chairman Roberts noted that the explanation of the parking revenue was in the packet. Public Works Director Rice suggested that Mary Lou McElwain address questions offline with Parking Director Fletcher. No action was required by the Committee.

B. Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) installation at Miller Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. No action was required by the Committee.

C. Zagster bike share 2018 update, by Planning Director Juliet Walker. This was postponed to next month's meeting.

D. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, by Planning Director Juliet Walker. This was postponed to next month's meeting.

E. Parking meters on Vaughan Street, Raynes Avenue, Islington Street, State Street, and Parrott Avenue. This was postponed to next month's meeting.

F. Emails regarding Bartlett Street and Cate Street area. This was postponed to next month's meeting.

G. PTS open action items. No action was required by the Committee.

Harold Whitehouse commented that action items have increased in volume and more people are attending the meetings. He questioned if PTS meetings should be held twice a month. He also mentioned that the public often suggests adding speed bumps, which aren't allowed at the state level unless it's a privately operated road.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – at 9:35 a.m., VOTED to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Becky Frey
PTS Recording Secretary