

# MEETING MINUTES

## **PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

8:00 A.M. – March 5, 2020  
City Hall – Conference Room A

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### **I. CALL TO ORDER:**

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

### **II. ATTENDANCE:**

#### Members Present:

City Councilor/Chairman, Peter Whelan  
Public Works Director, Peter Rice  
Planning Director, Juliet Walker  
Fire Chief, Todd Germain  
Police Captain, Mark Newport  
Member, Mary Lou McElwain  
Member, Jonathan Sandberg  
Member, Harold Whitehouse  
Alt. Member, Erica Wygonik

#### Absent:

Member, Steve Pesci

#### City Staff Present:

Parking and Transportation Engineer, Eric Eby  
Parking Director, Ben Fletcher

### **III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:**

The February 6, 2020 meeting minutes were approved by the Committee on February 20, 2020 and the City Council on March 2, 2020. No action was required today.

### **IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Harold Whitehouse requested an update on the Foundry Garage figures. Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that the transient usage has gone above the projections. The pass holders are matching the projections. Overall, the parking revenue is tracking where it should be, and there is no concern. Parking Director Ben Fletcher added that after the first year's budget, they had a better idea of what to expect. There have been initiatives to increase transient and monthly pass holder customers.

Harold Whitehouse proposed the idea of leasing the top floor of the garage for events. Parking Director Ben Fletcher said there would be many factors involved and could not speak to all of them today.

Chairman Peter Whelan said that when he parked at the Foundry Garage it was pretty full, which was good to see. Parking Director Ben Fletcher said that the increase was a result of the \$3.00 per day employee initiative.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to accept the financial report dated January 31, 2020, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. **Motion passed 9-0.**

## V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kelly Weinstein, a business owner in the Malthouse Exchange Plaza, said that there has been a lot of construction in that area, but there has not been adequate signage to redirect traffic into the plaza. Ms. Weinstein also owns The Consignment Company (Co.Co.) on Albany Street. There are about 5 spaces in front for customer parking. The Islington Street project creates a parking ban in that area. Ms. Weinstein asked where they should tell their customers to park. Eric Eby responded that they reached out to the owners of the Weekender House. There are a couple of spaces in the public right-of-way that can be used as public parking. Parking is also allowed on other streets in the neighborhood.

Molly Wilson, resident, commented that she was concerned about speeding on South Street, Middle Road, and around the Lafayette Park Playground area. There are two bus stops in that area, and it is a huge safety concern. There needs to be some traffic calming measures in that area.

Rebecca McBeath, resident, echoed the same concerns as Molly Wilson about speeding and the bus stops. A lower speed limit should be extended to the ball fields. Ms. McBeath also noted that a lot of business owners parked on Islington Street and suggested an alternative program for them because they park there all day.

Marc Batchelder, resident, commented on the parking concerns on Albany Street and Brewery Lane. The snow is not always cleared on the sidewalks in that area and it impacts the accessibility to the sidewalks. The snow banks cause pedestrians to walk out into the street to get around them. The agenda item proposes restricting parking for the detour period. The Committee should look at restricting parking permanently in that area.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS:

**A. 55 Aldrich Road, request for Driveway Permit, by Anne Landau Bellaud.**  
Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to suspend the rules and allow for public comment, seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Motion passed 9-0.**

Contractor Matt Silva said that the primary reason for the application was because of the new garage addition. The new design includes a turnaround area so cars will not back out onto Aldrich Road. The curb and sidewalk will be fixed to City standards. Drainage and utilities should not be impacted.

Harold Whitehouse commented that he was concerned about cars backing in and out because it was a very narrow area. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that the driveway has a turnaround, so cars will not be backing out onto the street.

Harold Whitehouse questioned if they considered putting the driveway on Aldrich Court. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that they did, but there was concern about cars sticking out and blocking the narrow road.

Erica Wygonik was concerned about adding trips on Aldrich Road vs. Aldrich Court. There is plenty of on-street parking in that area. Also, the space that will be created by closing up the existing driveway may be too small to really be used as an on-street parking space.

Harold Whitehouse commented that he would support the motion with reservation.

Chairman Peter Whelan noted that they received an email from an abutter that requested the curb cut size remain 12 feet, which they are doing.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to approve driveway permit application with a stipulation that the curb cut size is no greater than 12 feet, seconded by Jonathan Sandberg. **Motion passed 9-0.**

Harold Whitehouse supported the motion with reservation.

**B. Proposed parking fine increases, by Parking Director Ben Fletcher.**

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that this agenda item has not been revisited since 2013. The number one comment about downtown is that people can't find a parking space. There is a three-hour time limit on most of the parking. People are staying longer than that because the fine is only \$15. Increasing the fine amount should help deter that behavior. It will encourage people to move within the time limit posted and may result in the issuance of fewer tickets. The increase would apply to the top four tickets that are written today. A schedule was provided on page 7 in the packet detailing the parking fine increases. See table below for a summary.

Description	Last Updated	Current Fine	After 30 Days	Recommended Fine	After 30 Days
Time Expired: 15 & 30 minute; 1 - 4 hour Citations	1/1/2013	\$15.00	\$30.00	\$25.00	\$40.00
Parked in No Parking Area	1/1/2013	\$20.00	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$65.00
Emergency Snow Ban	1/1/2013	\$25.00	\$35.00	\$50.00	\$100.00
Commercial Loading Zone	1/1/2013	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$100.00

Chairman Peter Whelan questioned if they were writing more tickets every year. Parking Director Ben Fletcher responded that in 2019 they wrote around 50,000 tickets.

Harold Whitehouse asked about resident only parking listed on the report. Parking Director Ben Fletcher responded that there was resident only parking in the West End in the Hill Street area. The program failed because it considered anyone with a New Hampshire plate as a resident, so it was too hard to enforce.

Mary Lou McElwain clarified that 100% of the fines went to the City and no percentage went to the State. Parking Director Ben Fletcher confirmed that was correct. Mary Lou McElwain supported the increase and thought they were reasonable.

Planning Director Juliet Walker moved to recommend adoption and send to City Council for request for first reading, seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Motion passed 9-0.**

**VII. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Islington Street, request for crosswalk at Mobil station, by Terry LeBlanc.**

Eric Eby commented that he observed pedestrian crossings in the area. There is quite a bit of pedestrian traffic in the area. Today pedestrians are crossing whenever they

can. The spot on the corner of Brewster Street at the Mobil station would allow for an ADA compliant crosswalk and has good sightlines. There are two proposed crosswalks included in the Islington Street improvement project, which is still a few years out.

Erica Wygonik clarified that this crosswalk would be in place until the other ones were constructed. Eric Eby confirmed that was correct.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to approve a temporary crosswalk at the intersection of Islington Street and Brewster Street until the Islington Street corridor project is completed, seconded by Police Captain Mark Newport. **Motion passed 9-0.**

**B. Middle Road, report back on speeds and speed limit in the area of Spinney Road and South Street.**

Eric Eby commented that speed data has been collected in multiple places in the area. Speeds are slightly above the posted 30 mph, but not high enough to warrant physical traffic calming measures. A speed radar sign could be installed to alert drivers. The long-range plan to redo the intersection would be the best way to address speeding in the area.

Planning Director Juliet Walker added that there was an existing project in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), but funding was a few years out.

Chairman Peter Whelan supported the speed radar sign. Mary Lou McElwain agreed that the signs were effective and important.

Jonathan Sandberg commented that he was not comfortable using the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile as a form of measurement. He stated it was from the perspective of the drivers, but the concerns are not coming from the drivers they are coming from the residents. There should be something else done to help narrow the roadway. Eric Eby said that a resident who spoke during public comment talked about parking her car in the street to slow traffic speeds. That is one of the most effective measures the neighborhood can do to help narrow the road and slow traffic.

Erica Wygonik requested more information about the project in the CIP. Planning Director Juliet Walker responded that it has to go through the design process. The funding has been slotted for fiscal year 2025. There is a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. The City works with residents to try to implement interim measures. They can continue to talk to the neighborhood about interim measures. There is always a question of funding, and they try to ensure there is neighborhood consensus for the proposed project.

Chairman Peter Whelan suggested discussing more options at the next meeting. Erica Wygonik suggested the speed radar sign be installed now.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they could talk to the City Council about moving this item forward and work on conceptual designs to create a more neighborhood feel.

Chairman Peter Whelan moved to table until the next meeting, seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Motion passed 9-0.**

## **VIII. INFORMATIONAL:**

### **A. Report back on a three-car accident on South Street on January 21, 2020 by Police Captain Mark Newport.**

Police Captain Mark Newport commented that it was a relatively minor accident. Two cars were stopped waiting to turn and the third car rear-ended the middle car, which rear-ended the first car. No one was hurt and there was minor damage to the vehicles.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that she was concerned because it happened during school time. She was concerned about unsafe intersections and kids crossing the street to get to school.

Mary Lou McElwain requested that the quarterly accident report include the accident locations. Police Captain Mark Newport confirmed that could be included.

### **B. Islington Street construction traffic plan.**

Eric Eby stated the second year of construction on Islington Street would begin in April. Two sections of roadway will be under construction. The first is between Spinney Road and Aldrich Road. The second is between Bartlett Street and Cass Street. There will be a lot of deep trenching so traffic will need to be one-way in sections. Bartlett Street will remain two-way. Traffic leaving Plaza 800 can turn on Aldrich Road or Jewel Court. Vehicles will be able to access Bartlett Street from Islington Street. Parking will be removed on Brewery Lane for the length of the detour. A few spaces on Cass Street may need to be restricted to accommodate truck turning movements. The detour will be in place for the length of construction, which is expected to last through September.

Public Works Director Peter Rice requested clarification on the stop bar adjustment in the left turn lane. Eric Eby responded that the stop bar will be moved back to Jewell Court.

Police Captain Mark Newport questioned if there was concern about traffic cutting through the parking lot on Jewel Court. Eric Eby responded that the one-way exit out to Brewery Lane would remain. Public Works Director Peter Rice said that detours are established based on current information. The detours are monitored and adjusted as needed.

Jonathan Sandberg commented that there should be a sign on Route 33 warning drivers of the detour. Planning Director Juliet Walker agreed there should be a sign informing drivers that the best route to downtown is Middle Road.

Mary Lou McElwain was concerned about the head in parking on Jewel Court. If traffic increased it could make backing out of those spaces unsafe. Eric Eby responded that Jewel Court will become one-way from Islington Street to Brewery Lane.

### **C. Albany Street, parking restrictions during Islington Street detour.**

Eric Eby spoke to the map provided in the packet. Currently there is no parking on Brewery Lane between Albany Street and Jewell Court. The proposal is to remove the rest of the parking on Albany Street. The street is narrow and it would be challenging to get around parked cars during construction.

Public Works Director Peter Rice questioned if the indented parking spaces in front of The Consignment Company (Co.Co.) were going to stay. Eric Eby responded that they needed to be restricted because they will block the sidewalk otherwise. There is public parking in front of the Weekender House that will remain. The spaces can be striped to make it clear that they are public parking spaces.

Planning Director Juliet Walker commented that parking is challenging in this area because public parking is limited. There aren't a lot of options to try to help alleviate impact in this area during construction because there's just not a lot of public parking. Chairman Peter Whelan commented that the parking in Plaza 800 was private, however, there may be an option for business owners and employees to park in the lot in order to free up parking for customers.

**D. Middle Street bike lane public meetings.**

Planning Director Juliet Walker stated there is a public meeting scheduled for March 12, 2020 and a City Council work session on March 23, 2020.

**E. Maplewood Avenue traffic signal changes project status update.**

Eric Eby commented that they are in the process of awarding the bid to Electric Light Company. They will be updating the signal controllers along Maplewood Avenue and changing the pedestrian phasing. Today, all traffic stops while pedestrians cross the street. The change will allow pedestrians to cross with parallel vehicle traffic. Vehicles must yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk and then they may turn. The new signals will give pedestrians a few seconds head start before parallel traffic is allowed to go.

Jonathan Sandberg was concerned about pedestrians crossing concurrently with traffic on Islington Street because they must make a left or right turn. Eric Eby responded that pedestrians would be crossing with the right-hand turns only. If this doesn't work, then it can easily be changed back. It should reduce delays for traffic and pedestrians.

**F. Borthwick Avenue at Greenland Road, change from 2-way stop to all-way stop. Planning Board condition of approval of Borthwick Forest.**

Eric Eby commented that the intersection has been a 2-way stop for a long time. This change will make it an all-way stop to reduce confusion. This was a condition of approval for the new medical building being constructed on Borthwick Avenue. It will also create a safer and shorter pedestrian crossing, and new sidewalks will be constructed.

**G. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project for Greenleaf Avenue at Lafayette Road.**

Eric Eby commented that this was a conceptual plan. This intersection has always been a concern because of sightlines and traffic volumes. One idea is to create a one-way street by allowing right turning traffic from Lafayette Road onto Greenleaf Avenue. Traffic on the Route 1 Bypass would not be able to access that portion of Greenleaf Avenue at the traffic light.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that a citizen request was made many years ago about the area.

Eric Eby commented that Tuscan Market did a traffic study as part of their approval process and the study supported this idea.

Jonathan Sandberg requested clarification about where it would become one-way. Eric Eby responded that it would begin at Hillside Drive.

Police Captain Mark Newport commented that there should be signage at the Bypass to let people know about the changes. Eric Eby confirmed there would be.

Mary Lou McElwain asked about the project timeline. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that it was part of the citywide intersection improvements program. A design study would need to be completed and consensus would need to be reached. Then there would be a cost assessment. If funding is available, it could be completed.

Erica Wygonik questioned if the Hillside Drive neighborhood had been notified about the potential project. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that the neighborhood had requested it.

H. PTS Open Action Items. No Committee discussion.

#### **IX. MISCELLANEOUS:**

Harold Whitehouse stated he believed that there was a public/private agreement between the City and a developer to build workforce housing adjacent to the Foundry Garage. Now the use has been changed to a hotel. Planning Director Juliet Walker responded that the approved projects had no commitment to build affordable housing. There was discussion about building housing on lot 5 at the intersection of Maplewood Avenue and Deer Street. However, that project has not gone through any land use approval yet. The hotel was approved for lot 3. Harold Whitehouse was concerned about increased traffic in the area. Planning Director Juliet Walker responded that traffic analysis was part of the approval process.

Harold Whitehouse requested information on the bad accident on the corner of Dennett Street and Woodbury Avenue. Police Captain Mark Newport responded that it involved three vehicles. One teenager is still hospitalized. The other drivers did not receive significant injuries. At this time, it is still under investigation, but speed was a factor. Harold Whitehouse commented that taking a left off of Dennett Street onto Woodbury Avenue was very hard because it's so busy and has bad sightlines. Harold Whitehouse stated a traffic signal would be ideal in that area. Police Captain Mark Newport agreed that the intersection could be difficult at certain times of the day, but there was no preventative measure they could have taken to prevent the accident.

Chairman Peter Whelan commented that he got a phone call and letter from a resident about the "No Trucks Allowed" zone on Bartlett Street. Police Captain Mark Newport responded that they were familiar with the truck traffic complaints and they are addressing it.

Chairman Peter Whelan got a phone call with concerns about speeding and safe pedestrian crossing on South Street and Sagamore Avenue in the mornings.

**X. ADJOURNMENT:**

Harold Whitehouse moved to adjourn at 9:26 a.m., seconded by Jonathan Sandberg.

**Motion passed 9-0.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Becky Frey  
PTS Recording Secretary