

PARKING COMMITTEE MINUTES
Thursday, January 16, 2003
City Hall – Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Parking Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Alex Hanson at approximately 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: City Councilor Alex Hanson, Chairman
John P. Bohenko, City Manager
John Burke, Parking & Transportation Director
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director
Deputy Police Chief Dave Young
Andrew Purgiel, City Auditor

II. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Motion made by Steve Parkinson to accept the November 21, 2002 minutes of the Parking Committee. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) **Request for License Agreement to Operate Valet Parking** – Alex Hanson stated that it was his understanding that the 100 Club wants to use the loading zone on Hanover Street after 6 p.m. After the Committee decides on a recommendation, the 100 Club would be submitting a letter to the Mayor and City Council.

City Manager John Bohenko stated that in the event the valet parking was allowed, it could not be subleased or subcontracted to other restaurants. John Bohenko stated that he would restrict the license specifically to the 100 Club as there are approximately 4 or 5 restaurants in the immediate area who may want to utilize the public way.

David Hamilton of 100 Market Street Development was present and stated that as a representative of the building, we are supporting the 100 Club exclusively to apply for the licensing agreement. Mr. Bohenko stated the provisions would be put into a license agreement.

City Manager John Bohenko stated that only the City could tow from a public space. The License Agreement would not give the authority for anybody to tow off a City street. The City Manager stated that ultimately he would like to do a pilot program with 6-month duration because we may get every restaurant in the City asking for a valet spot. Mr. Bohenko stated

that we should only consider loading zones for valet – when they are not in effect.

Chairman Hanson suggested using a License Agreement and then setting up a structured system with approval from the City Council.

John Burke stated that currently, all truck-loading zones are in effect and posted from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturdays. They revert back to public parking from 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The City Manager stated that at the end of the 6-month pilot program we would evaluate the program and report back.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to recommend a 6-month pilot program for valet parking subject to approval by the City Council. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Dave Young. Motion Passed.

Mr. Hamilton asked what the timing of approvals would be from the City Council on the 6-month pilot program. The City Manager stated that the next City Council meeting is January 27th.

- (B) Downtown Parking Validation Program** – John Burke reported that at the last Downtown Merchants Meeting, it was suggested that the City allow merchants to validate parking or pay for their customer’s parking. It was suggested as a way to change the perception that there is very little available parking in downtown Portsmouth.

City Manager John Bohenko stated that he was present at the Downtown Merchants Meeting and there was a feeling that people would like to see this and I would at least like to have the authority to explore it as an option. John Burke explained that most programs have validation of offstreet parking. It is much more difficult to administer validation programs at parking meters. For instance, many City’s will use sticker programs where participating merchant’s buy packets of parking stickers up front from the City in hourly increments. The merchant would post a sticker sign in their window advertising that they participate in the City’s Validation Program. They simply affix the parking stickers on the back of the customer’s parking garage ticket and the cost is deducted from their parking fee at the cashier’s booth in the garage. This program could be implemented at no cost to the City since the merchant’s could purchase parking stickers at the hourly rate - \$0.50/hour.

Chairman Hanson stated that the City tried parking validation at the meters in the 80’s using tokens and it was a flop. He was concerned that the program not impact revenues. John Burke stated that the program would not be proposed for meters but for the parking garage.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

- (A) **New Taxi Stands on Market Street** – The two new taxi stands were installed in December. The owner of Breaking New Grounds addressed the Committee. He stated that the new parking stands were located directly in front of his store. He was dismayed by the fact that two prime parking spaces in downtown have been lost to taxi stands that are not being used regularly. He added that this amounts to a waste of space. The taxis are hardly ever using these two prime spaces and when they are there they double park so that they can talk to one another. Chairman Alex Hanson stated that this is an enforcement matter, which would be referred to the Police Department. He noted that Councilor Whitehouse, who chairs the Taxi Commission, is present and suggested he relay the information to the Taxi Commission.

The owner of Breaking New Grounds stated that everyone going into his store is complaining about the loss of these spaces. The City Manager stated that this is a pilot program, which will be up for review in the spring. It was suggested that the owner attend the next Taxi Commission meeting on February 18th at 9:00 am in Council Room A.

- (B) **Report on Monthly Parking Passes** – John Burke stated that he wanted to provide clarification of an article that appeared in Foster’s Daily Democrat, which correctly stated that monthly parking passes had dropped from 670 in March, 2002 down to 360 in September, 2002 after Bottomline moved to the Tradeport. It did not state that the number of monthly passes has increased every month since September and is p to 440 as of January 1st, 2003. John was asked if the garage had filled on numerous occasions as was also reported. He stated that the facility only filled a couple of times in December for short durations during the holiday shopping period – otherwise, the top deck is usually available.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary