

PARKING COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, February 19, 2004
City Hall – Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Parking Committee meeting was called to order by Alex Hanson, Chairman at approximately 8:40 a.m.

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

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Motion made by Steve Parkinson to accept the November 20, 2003 minutes of the Parking Committee. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE: None

V. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Downtown Parking Validation Program** – Monthly Update - Andrew Purgiel provided the members with a printout of revenue generated from the program between June 24, 2003 through January 31, 2004. The number of businesses participating in the program has leveled off at 37. The program is revenue positive and quite popular with retailers and customers.
- (B) **HHPF Proximity Card/Reader Installation** – Installation scheduled for March 1st. John Burke informed the Committee that there are approximately 470 passholders who will be turning in their magnetic stripe passes for proximity cards. The installation of the new cards will eliminate jams and reduce delays at the entrances.
- (C) **Web-based Parking Payments** – Progress report – City Manager Bohenko stated that web-based parking payments will be implemented as a pilot program. The program is scheduled to be implemented following an upgrade to the City's violations software due for completion in May.

- (D) **Boot & Tow Ordinance Review** – Report back - 12/12/03 Memorandum from City Attorney attached – John Burke stated that the Legal Dept.’s determination is that it is legal to tie auto registration to unpaid parking tickets. He added that several New Hampshire communities do this including Nashua. The number of delinquent parking accounts would be reduced substantially.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to request a draft Ordinance from the City Attorney for the Committee’s review. Seconded by Deputy Dave Young. Motion passed.

- (E) **Downtown Residential Parking** – Report back on programs in other communities. John Burke reported that he had checked with a number of communities and found the most common program to consist of the following:

- Communities generally require some type of petition from a neighborhood where a majority is asking for resident parking;
- It is generally followed-up by the City to conduct surveys that document that downtown employees are overtaking use of the street;
- A time restriction is then applied – usually 2-hour, to create turnover and eliminate all day employee parking;
- Residents of the street are provided a car sticker after providing proper proof of residence. They are allowed to park on the street beyond the 2-hour limit. Generally, the cost of the permit is between \$0 and \$25 annually.

Metered areas are excluded from the program. The principle behind such programs is that streets in the downtown district are for customers and residents (of those streets in the district) and not for downtown employees - who should be parking off-street in a public or private lot or facility.

Alex Hanson stated that when these requests come in again, we’ll discuss possible implementation. City Manager John Bohenko stated that this would best be done as a pilot program.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Public Library** – Request for staff parking space – 1/29/04 memo attached – The Library Director has requested a space be reserved for staff deliveries and such. It was determined that no action was needed since it does not involve a city street or metered lot. No action was needed and the Public Works will work with the Library Director for appropriate signage.

- (B) **Accessible Parking Policy** – High-Hanover Parking Facility – The current city policy at the parking garage is that disabled people park at the garage for free for 24 hours. This is in keeping with state statute. Staff checked with some other NH communities who are doing the same.
- (C) **Washington Street** – Court Street to State Street – Proposed 2-hour parking. There are approximately 5 parking spaces between State Street and Court Street, which are in the downtown district’s 2-hour zone – but not signed or metered. The Committee felt that these spaces would be better suited to turnover parking than all-day parking.

It was suggested that 2-hour meters be installed as a pilot program for inclusion into the Omnibus Ordinance should the program prove effective.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to install 2-hour parking meters at the 5 designated parking spaces on Washington Street between State Street and Court Street as a pilot program. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

VII. INFORMATIONAL:

- (A) **St. John’s Masonic Parking Lot/Public Use** – Update – The City Manager stated that the City will have use of the lot for an additional 3-year period. Steve Parkinson stated we are going to reclaim the lot, repave and restripe it, and put a protective area around the tree with curbing.

City Manager John Bohenko stated that the Association originally wanted a one-year agreement, but a 3-year commitment was attained in exchange for the parking lot repaving – costing approximately \$30,000.

- (B) **Free Holiday Parking** – see 12/19/03 Portsmouth Herald Editorial, 12/22/03 customer letter and 12/30/03 Departmental Memorandum – John Burke referred to the newspaper editorial, which implied that the program could be better promoted. He noted that the City and Chamber of Commerce had faxed notification to all downtown chamber businesses, attended DBA meetings on the subject, and finally, gone door-to-door with flyers for businesses. He noted that you could not walk downtown without seeing the flyer in a window on virtually every street block. However, he did agree that there will always be some customers that either deposit coins in the meter when they are not required to, or stay over the 2-hour limit because they did not read or hear about it – unless the meters are bagged. The Committee will revisit the issue next season.
- (C) **Worth Parking Lot Article** – See Portsmouth Herald Editorial “Worth Lot is worth hard look for parking alternatives.”

- (D) **Parking Enforcement Article** – see 1/17/04 Boston Globe Article “Parking enforcers brave cold to write tickets.”
- (E) **Parking Impact Fees** – The City Manager stated that at the request of the City Council, staff is in the process of drafting a memo on the impact fee policy.
- (F) **Proposed Sheraton Expansion/Parking** - The City Manager advised the Committee that staff is putting a memo together for the City Council to update them on the issues surrounding the proposed development.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary