

PARKING COMMITTEE MEETING
7:30 AM –Thursday, April 9, 2009
City Hall – Conference Room A

DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ken Smith called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Councilor Kenneth Smith, Chair
John Bohenko, City Manager
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director
Deputy Police Chief Len DiSesa
Andrew Purgiel, City Auditor
Jon Frederick, Parking Manager

Also present were Brian Slovenski, Adam Brickett and Caleb Allen of Atlantic Parking Services.

Speakers: Wesley DeVries, Jeff Sabin, George Carlisle and Ralph DeMarco.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

MOTION made by Andrew Purgiel to accept the minutes of the March 12, 2009 meeting. Seconded by Deputy Chief DiSesa. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) **Downtown Accessible Parking** – (Map attached) Jon Frederick reported that John Palriero is not present and had requested to speak regarding the addition of four accessible parking spaces to the downtown area. No clear guidelines exist regarding on-street accessible parking. In conversations with the State of New Hampshire Governor’s Commission on Disability, the City would be expected to comply with ADA guidelines for parking lots, requiring 2% of all parking spaces be handicap accessible. We exceed those standards at this time. We also allow handicap persons to utilize any City metered parking space for free without regard to time limits.

MOTION made by John Bohenko to accept and place on file. Seconded by Deputy Chief DiSesa. Motion passed.

The City Manager stated we have very good policies relating to accessible parking spaces and suggested issuing another press release stating that if you have a valid handicap placard, you can park at any of the 800+ meters in the City and can park free in the parking garage. He feels the City does far above what is required by statute and guidelines of the State.

- (B) **Tanner Court – Parking** – (e-mail dated 5/6/08, memo dated 3/3/09 attached) – Jon Frederick reported that Steve Fowle is not present, but his intention was to speak to this Committee regarding parking issues with the project at 51 Islington Street. The information regarding his concerns is in your packet.

MOTION made by John Bohenko to place on file and to continue to track this project. Requested that Steve Parkinson be present with the memo at the next TAC meeting. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

The City Manager stated there has been a lot of concern on this project relating to the parking issue. Jon Frederick reported they are currently at TAC. Steve Parkinson does not sit on TAC. The City Manager asked that either Debbie Finnigan or Steve Parkinson be present with Mr. Fowle’s memo at the next TAC meeting.

The City Manager asked that Jon Fredrick advise Mr. Fowle of the Committee’s action.

- (C) **Define Overnight Parking - Proposed Ordinance Change** – Jon Frederick reported this ordinance change originated from the Peirce Island overnight boating permit and a request made by the Peirce Island Committee and Councilor Kennedy. Our current Ordinance does not have a definition for overnight parking and felt this should be defined to properly enforce overnight permits. The definition would consist of “Overnight Parking” means the continuous parking of a vehicle from dusk to dawn, and would to be added to the definitions in Section 7.301 of the Ordinance. The Peirce Island permit has not been approved by the Recreation Board and the Peirce Island Committee. Jon Frederick recommended bringing both the definition and the overnight permit as ordinance changes to the City Council at the same time.

MOTION made by John Bohenko to submit the Ordinance addition to the City Council for their review and approval for the May 4th meeting. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGE

- (D) **Scheduling of Parking Meter Public Informational Session**

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to hold the Parking Meter Public Informational Session on May 7th at 7:00 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Valet Parking Agreement** – Atlantic Parking – Revised Proposal – Jon Frederick presented the members with three additional pieces of correspondence he received since packets were distributed.

Caleb Allen explained the proposed changes. The purchase of three spaces in front of Popovers as opposed to using loading zone full time. Designated the routes they will use throughout the City. Will be using Court St. as an alternative route during construction on State Street. Proposed the positioning for four signs, either temporary or permanent signs, can be put up beginning of every shift and take them down or leave them permanently during the season. Also looking at an A-frame sign directing people into the three spaces (valet loading zone). They are aware of the loading zone issues. Their intention is not to use the loading zone as a primary space, their primary spaces are the three spaces. Only using the loading zone if traffic is backed up and congests traffic in Market Sq. with people trying to park their cars there. They do not intend to take the loading zone away from the existing businesses but work with them. The loading zone will be a last resort. Also noted they have two other loading zones down behind Chestnut St. down the next block.

The Chair referred to the situation raised of people gathering in front of the vestibule to get out of rain, etc.

Mr. Allen responded they have also noted this. There is an alleyway between the Bank and Old Port Properties that is used very little, a dead zone and they had no problem with us using the alleyway. We proposed putting up a canopy there for people so they won't use the vestibule. The pop up canopy will only be used during inclement weather. They have been in touch with Old Port Properties, have not been in touch with the owner of the building or owners of the Condos.

Wes DeVries 18 Congress St. Condo expressed his concerns with the loading zone in front of the entry to their homes and the use of the vestibule by people waiting for their cars to be parked or to be picked up. The vestibule is a private area, the entrance to their homes. Concerned with the security of the entryway being compromised. It is owned by the condominium and would be trespassing, how would this be policed? The taking away of the three metered spaces which are valued spaces to visitors. As a resident, this is my home, would like these issues addressed before this is moved forward.

George Carlisle 19 Congress St. Condo and own Old Port Properties and is 100% in favor of this proposal. There are details to be worked out but applaud the Committee for coming up with a very innovative solution, like the idea of it, would like it altered somewhat, but if alterations can't be done would like to see it done anyway. Would also like to see the loading zone not used. Would like to investigate to see if the alleyway could be used. It is not being used now and would be a great holding place away from the vestibule. Thinks having 150 parking spaces outside your door, whether resident or business, is a good thing. There are details to be worked out, some of which we can't foresee now, but trusts the City and Atlantic and is 100% in favor of it.

Jeff Sabin, property manager for 18 Congress St. and has spoken with many of the owners who could not be present today. By far the majority of the owners feel that if done correctly, this would be a positive thing. But have concerns with minor details. Referring to the alleyway, stated there are exit ways behind the building for the main stairwell which is 5 floors and 3 store fronts that have emergency exits out the back, there needs to be some consideration to egress along those lines. The owners that he spoke with, if this is passed, have asked for some sort of a trial period so there could be a check and balance to see how things work, as this is a new business, to come back in 30, 60, 90 days and review progress for a chance to see if there needs to be some review. For the most part people like the idea, but want details to be more specific and defined for use in front of the building.

Ralph DeMarco owner of Good Vibe 16 Congress St. stated most of his concerns have been mentioned with his basic concern being the loading zone. He personally delivers merchandise to his store and needs to know that when he pulls up he is able to use the loading zone. Does not want to see people waiting for their cars hanging around doorways inside or outside making it look congested so that customers don't go in.

Atlantic Services addressed their concerns stating that he spoke with all the owners and sent e-mails to get their concerns. We will be your neighbors there and want to be as neighborly as possible, so if you need to use our metered spot for 15-20 minutes whatever it is, to do your business, we are fine with that, we are a business and your neighbors. Regarding the vestibule going into your area; the three of us are owners of this company and the three of us will be working every single shift of this valet operation and you have my word that nobody will be in your property that works for us.

Adam Brickett referred to peak times showing the area on a map he provided.

The three spots right in front of the loading zone are the spaces they would like to use and explained the operation. There will be two lots with two teams of valets, one team going to be at the loading zones at all times. The teams will be communicating by radio. There will always be a valet at the two spots. The cars in the spaces in question will always be monitored. They will also police the vestibule area as there will always be a valet at this location (pointing to map) if we are backed up and there is a vehicle in the loading zone, the valet will be there to jump into the car, pull forward to get out of the way so you can pull your truck forward so that you will be able to use the loading zone. Technically the cars are always moving.

The Chair stated this would be a 90 day trial period to see how it goes so we'll have an opportunity to see how it works, where the peaks and

valleys are. Suggesting the three spaces be shifted down the street so the last three will be in front of the unopened bank, alleyway and in front of Old Port Properties so that there isn't the opportunity for people to get into the vestibule, would this work?

Mr. Brickett responded it would work, but would be beneficial to have the three spaces after the loading zone for an easier flow of traffic.

Deputy Chief DiSesa doesn't know if that would solve the problem if they used the loading zone as a back up, you will still have cars there with people getting out of those cars. Would it be preferable to try the 90 day test using the three spaces they have and see if that creates an issue? If it does then go to the other spaces to see if that alleviates that issue. If that doesn't work, we may then have to change their location. The Police will know if this is going to be a problem, as we're the ones to be called. We will track the calls and if it becomes an issue to bring Atlantic back here. We will also monitor this during the 90 day period.

The Chair stated that Jon Frederick will have power to make adjustments on the fly and not wait a month to come back here.

Although Deputy Chief DiSesa doesn't believe this will happen, but if this becomes a safety issue, we should have the ability to take some action to alleviate that and then bring them back here. His concern is Church St. and blocking cars as they feed past the loading zone into Church and the Square from North Church. If traffic backs up your valet will ask them to drive around so that Church St. won't be blocked.

Jon Frederick stated Market Sq. is a collection point for three major entrances into the City, Exit 7 off I-95, Rte.1 South and Rte.1 North all meet there. To test this concept it would make the most sense to have a point where we have this feeder of all the major entrances into the City collect at that one point. If this becomes successful, they may entertain branching off. This is a concern of Atlantic, not the City and this was discussed with them.

Mr. DeVries asked about additional cost for police.

Deputy Chief DiSesa responded that the coverage we provide for downtown area will be adequate to police this situation. There will not be a need for a special officer or for them to hire a detail officer.

Mr. Carlisle asked the charge for valet parking?

Mr. Brickett responded they plan on \$10.00 charge between hours of operation.

Mr. Carlisle feels the heaviest use will be from 5 p.m. through the evening.

Deputy Chief DiSesa stated that this loading zone reverts to parking after 7 p.m., anybody and park there, it is not a 24 hour zone. It is open to the public for parking all day on Sundays.

The Chair stated that City Council has to approve these minutes, most likely go to City Manager with power, who will work out the details, one of which being an Agreement between yourselves and the Condo Assoc. to be able to put up some sort of covering as well as a letter of intent to keep that vestibule open.

Mr. DeVries asked that his letters be provide to the City Council.

MOTION made by Deputy Chief DiSesa to refer this to the City Council with the Parking Committee's recommendation for a 90 day period to allow them to bag three parking meters directly in front of the loading zone in Market Square; to check with the Fire Department for a temporary tent to be put up in the alleyway to make sure that it does not interfere with any egress from the side doors in the event of an emergency; to work out an arrangement with the Condo Association to advise them that this will go into effect for a 90 day period and what the parameters of your operation will be, to include your hours. At the end of the 90 day period it comes back to this Committee for review, that should there be any emergency spike within the 90 day period, the operation is subject for immediate review under the direction of Jon Frederick and/or the Parking Committee. Any signage going up needs to be reviewed by Steve Parkinson, Jon Frederick and Debbie Finnigan. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

Steve Parkinson stated he still has concerns of traffic flow through that area. You're operating in an area adjacent to a single left hand turn lane with no other accommodations for left hand turn traffic. Any blockage of that lane is going to severely impact the operation of traffic through center of town, which is my responsibility. Mr. Parkinson likes the idea but hoped to have found another location that was not directly on then main heartbeat of the City. He has serious reservations this will back up into the Square. If you are as successful, as I hope you are, the traffic will back into the Square.

Secondly, the addition of signage in the Square is going to not be permanently attached to anything the City owns. We have regulatory control signs there and additional signs will cause people confusion. Before any signage goes up it needs to be reviewed by himself, Jon Frederick and Debbie Finnigan.

The Chair stated his concern of the vestibule and the interruption of 18 Congress St. as well as traffic issues. He wants to have a good dialogue during the 90 day period.

- (B) Cornwall St.- Parking** – Report Back - Traffic & Safety referral (that portion of 3/12/09 minutes attached) – Jon Frederick stated this is a referral from Traffic & Safety Committee and referred to the map of

signage submitted by Debbie Finnigan. The recommendations from Ms. Finnigan will require no Ordinance change.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to proceed with the signage as recommended by Debbie Finnigan. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

- (C) **Residential Parking Program – MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson to table the issue until an adequate increase in the downtown parking supply is achieved to place restrictions on parking in the vicinity of the Central Business District. Seconded by Deputy Chief DiSesa. Motion passed.

Jon Frederick wanted to call attention to the letter he received from a Gate Street resident recommending that we look at the “Please Respect Resident Parking” signage.

Before adjourning Mr. DeVries wanted to clarify that Mr. Sabin represented that the majority of the Condos owners he spoke to went along with the proposal. When asking Mr. Sabin who was that and how many people were there, and he actually only spoke to 4 owners of condos, while he spoke to 6 owners of businesses.

Mr. Sabin stated that they are all condominiums and the point was the 4 residences and the 6 businesses, my perspective was that the majority of those were people who had spoken in some fashion positively, the others had concerns relating to the details.

Mr. DeVries wants the record to show that only 4 people were spoken to and there are 17 residences.

The Chair stated that he has heard the concerns and during this 90 day test will personally monitor this to make sure it works.

Deputy Chief DiSesa stated that if we find this is popular and good for the City, but also detrimental to that area, then our solution would be to keep the valet but move it to a better area.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

Respectfully submitted
Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary