

MINUTES
PARKING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M. – Thursday, February 14, 2013
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ken Smith called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chair
John Bohenko, City Manager
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director
Chris LeClaire, Fire Chief
Ron Cypher, Member
Sheri Donnermeyer, Member
Ted Gray, Member
Harold Whitehouse, Member

Members Absent:

Police Department Representative

Staff Advisors Present:

Mark Nelson, Parking Division Director
Tom Cocchiaro, Parking Operations Supervisor

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Mr. Cypher moved to accept the minutes of the December 13, 2012 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Whitehouse and passed.

City Manager Bohenko moved to accept the minutes of the January 8, 2013 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Gray and passed.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

City Manager Bohenko moved to accept the Financial Report and place on file. Seconded by Mr. Cypher and passed.

II. PRESENTATION:

A. Bicycle Parking in Portsmouth presentation – Juliet Walker and Rick Taintor

Juliet Walker, City Planner, gave a brief presentation regarding bicycle parking specifically in the downtown area. She stated there are currently 118 bike spaces located at 20 locations. She stated the goal is to increase locations to fill gaps of the areas that aren't currently with 150' of destination spots. She stated it is hard to quantify how much is needed as it is unknown how many private bicycle spaces are being provided. She

stated there could be a threshold added to our zoning ordinance to provide certain amount of bicycle parking such as we do for parking spaces. She stated that maintenance and enforcement of the bicycle spaces are important issues that gain the trust of people to use the spaces. She continued that our current bicycle ordinance doesn't address abandoned bicycles, nor bicycles on sidewalks. She concluded with slides showing the various types bicycle parking in other cities in the world and the larger degree of usage in those cities as well. She stated that the recommendation is to revise the current bicycle parking policies.

Mr. Gray asked who will enforce these policies if they are implemented. City Manager Bohenko stated the parking enforcement officers. Mr. Gray asked about licensing of bicycles. City Manager Bohenko stated that licensing of bicycles is required but is not currently enforced.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) Request from Atlantic Parking Services – Daytime Valet Parking Service @ 40 Hanover Street

Brian Slovenski of Atlantic Parking Services explained they are requesting permission to operate a Valet Parking Service every day during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the loading zone at 40 Hanover Street for members of the 100 Club. He stated they are also requesting the leasing or renting of 10 adjacent spaces in the High-Hanover Parking garage and the option to place 2 A-frame signs in the loading zone as well.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to DENY the request, seconded by Chief LeClaire.

Public Works Director Parkinson stated he has 2 major issues with this request; the first is that valet parking has been approved for evening hours only as the loading zones are not used during this time. He stated the loading zones are used by all of the surrounding businesses not just the one specified. Secondly, he stated that there have never been designated spaces in the parking garage as it impacts the bonds.

City Manager Bohenko stated that is correct, the only dedicated spaces are handicapped parking and electric cars but that is not for a specific company or person.

Motion to deny passed unanimously.

Mr. Slovenski attempted to explain that they work with delivery truck and taxi drivers for use of the loading zone spaces.

City Manager Bohenko stated that the vote has been taken and then called for the vote to be taken again.

Motion to deny passed unanimously.

(B) Discussion of Woodbury Avenue 4-way stops Request - DPW item

Public Works Director Parkinson stated that this issue is addressed in the RSG report with the conclusion that current intersection configuration is appropriate and no multi-way stop control be pursued.

Mr. Gray moved to accept the RSG report and recommendations as presented, seconded by Mr. Whitehouse.

Mr. Whitehouse asked to digress and discuss his concern with the triangle intersection of Woodbury Avenue and Maplewood Avenue stating that there needs to be a Yield sign or paint because people often speed in that location and it is difficult to determine who has the right of way.

City Manager Bohenko stated that a roundabout was proposed for that area several years ago which would have resolved the issue but the neighbors came out in force against it.

Public Works Director Parkinson stated that this would need to meet the warrant and also stated he was not aware that this was a high accident location, but he will check with the Police Department.

Motion passed.

(C) Discussion on proposed 89-space parking lot adjacent to Vaughan Street – City Manager item

Public Works Director Parkinson stated that this is for informational purposes and has already been before the City Council. He stated this lot will be gated and similar to the Portwalk spaces that were previously utilized by the city.

Mr. Whitehouse asked how the property will be taxed once the building has been demolished. City Manager Bohenko stated that he would clarify with the Assessor but believes that it is taxed based on what is on the lot as of April 1st of each year. He stated once the building is removed it would not be taxed until it is redeveloped.

City Manager Bohenko moved to accept the report, seconded by Mr. Whitehouse. Motion passed.

(D) Citizen Request for “No Trucks and/or Local Traffic Only” signage – Greenleaf Extension

Public Works Director Parkinson stated this is a citizen request resulting from the aftermath of the preparation work for the upcoming road reconstruction near Bowl-o-Rama and the need to have some control of the rerouting of traffic as things progress.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to refer to the Public Works Department to come back with a recommendation in late Spring/early Summer, seconded by Mr. Whitehouse. Motion passed.

- (E) Discussion on changing the “informal” free parking policy for telephone, cable TV, electric company and other privately owned utility company vehicles using city parking spaces - DPW item

Parking Operations Supervisor Cocchiaro reported that this informal policy has been a part of the parking enforcement officers training and in the manual as such, but is not an ordinance. He stated that it is his feeling that if it is not in the ordinance the current parking policy for commercial vehicles should be enforced and he would recommend that the utility companies and media outlets be notified that they will be required to pay for parking.

Mr. Gray asked if they can still use “cones”. Public Works Director Parkinson stated that they can procure permits or meter bags.

Chairman Smith asked if the legal department had advised on this issue. Parking Operations Supervisor Cocchiaro stated yes, City Attorney Sullivan concurs that there are no provisions for free parking for utility vehicles etc. and that the ordinance covering commercial vehicles should be enforced.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to refer to the Parking Division to notify all affected companies that enforcement of parking rules will begin April 1st, seconded by Ms. Donnermeyer. Motion passed.

- (F) Discussion on Adding a line to the City’s parking violation list for “Taking Up Multiple Spaces”. – DPW item

Parking Operations Supervisor Cocchiaro stated that there are no provisions in the ordinance regarding taking up multiple spaces and feels that this is something that needs to be addressed.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to add “taking Up Multiple Spaces” to the Violations section of the Parking Ordinance, seconded by Mr. Gray.

Discussion ensued regarding the varying degrees of multiple space parking and what should be enforced i.e., motor homes, vehicles with trailers, etc. versus someone parking over a line inadvertently and how notification will be addressed. The consensus was that people usually use common sense in understanding that if they take up 2 spaces they will need to pay for both spaces and that proper signage would be added.

Motion passed.

- (G) Discussion on Adding language to the ordinance governing taxi stand use to specify that drivers must be in their vehicles at all times when using designated taxi stands and that unattended taxis parked in these spaces will be ticketed – Chairman Smith item

City Manager Bohenko moved to add language to the Taxi Ordinance to specify that drivers must be in their vehicles at all times when using designated taxi stands and that unattended taxis parked in these spaces will be ticketed, seconded by Public Works Director Parkinson. Motion passed.

- (H) Discussion on Changing the current use of the taxi stand on Pleasant Street adjacent to RiRa to a handicapped space – Chairman Smith item

City Manager Bohenko moved to place item on the table for discussion, seconded by Mr. Whitehouse.

Discussion ensued regarding the necessity of a taxi stand at that location versus the appropriate location of handicap parking.

City Manager moved to table the item for further review, seconded by Chief LeClaire.

Mr. Whitehouse stated he supports tabling because he was on the Taxi Commission when this taxi stand location was created and it was added because it was needed.

Motion to table passed.

- (I) Proposal to implement a shuttle bus service to transport people from outlying parking areas into downtown Portsmouth – City Manager item

City Manager Bohenko stated that a Councilor has requested a shuttle service be provided to transport people from outlying parking areas into downtown Portsmouth. He stated there are challenges to this request if it is going to be effective. He stated he will talk with COAST bus service, and stated that there would need to be a 10 minute turnaround time and it will be expensive.

NO VOTE NEEDED

- (J) Discussion to designate one space in front of the incoming Newbury 5-Cent Savings Bank (formerly Marple and James Real Estate building at State and Pleasant Streets) for 15-minute parking – Chairman Smith item

City Manager Bohenko moved to accept the recommendation to designate one space as 15 minute parking as requested, seconded by Public Works Director Parkinson. Motion passed.

(K) Request to restrict parking on Sherburne Avenue to one side of the street –
Chairman Smith item

City Manager Bohenko moved to refer to the Recreation Board for a report back, seconded by Public Works Director Parkinson.

City Manager Bohenko stated that Recreation Director Rus Wilson is already working with the Mavericks who want to be good neighbors and work together to make this arrangement work. Chief LeClaire asked if that street is wide enough for 2 sided parking anyway. City Manager Bohenko stated that is a legitimate point.

Motion passed.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Maplewood Avenue Parking Meters – follow up action from October 13, 2011 Parking Committee Meeting

City Manager Bohenko referred to the map outlining the parking all of which is currently free of charge with the exception of the 10 metered spaces in front of 111 Maplewood Avenue. He stated that this area needs a lot of attention and needs to be consistent.

Discussion ensued regarding the users of the spaces probably being people who work in the downtown and the effect of removing the free parking may push those currently parking there into outlying neighborhoods thereby creating other issues. Discussion also ensued regarding the creation of the parking lot (Item C on this agenda) at 75 cents per space in relation to this area of parking.

Ms. Donnermeyer moved to remove the metered spaces, seconded by Mr. Whitehouse.

Public Works Director Parkinson offered a friendly amendment to create 2 15-minute non-metered spaces. Ms. Donnermeyer did not accept the amendment.

Discussion ensued regarding enforcement of these 15-minute spaces.

City Manager Bohenko moved to amend by adding 2 15-minute non-metered spaces, seconded by Public Works Director Parkinson. Motion to amend passed.

Main motion as amended “Remove the metered spaces entirely and add two 15-minute non metered spaces” passed.

Chief LeClaire asked if this area was a part of the larger parking study and feels it doesn't make sense to have this free parking in the same area where they are going to charge 75 cents an hour in an adjacent parking lot.

City Manager Bohenko stated we are dealing with a private owner in relation to the parking lot and we will need to see how it will be utilized. He stated this lot may only be available for a couple of years and it is the same situation as the Parrott Avenue Lot with metered spaces next to free spaces. He stated it comes down to a policy issue for the City.

VIII. REFERRALS

- A. Repost commercial loading zones on Penhallow and Market Streets (near to the Commercial Alley passage) to add Sunday hours and add language to the ordinance to specify that only vehicle owners “actively loading or unloading” may use the spaces – Chairman Smith item

Chairman Smith stated that recently Sunday hours were added to the Loading Zone on Bow Street and there are other zones that are active on Sunday mornings as well.

Chief LeClaire clarified that this will revert back to regular parking after that specified time.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to amend the commercial loading zones on Penhallow and Market Streets (near the Commercial Alley passage) to add Sunday hours and add language to the ordinance to specify that only vehicle owners “actively loading or unloading” may use the spaces, seconded by Mr. Gray.

Chief LeClaire asked if would make sense to change all loading zones to include Sunday hours so there is no confusion.

Public Works Director Parkinson stated it is only the restaurants that need this exception and it will be adequately marked for the enforcement which begins at noon on Sundays.

Motion passed.

- IX. PUBLIC COMMENT** - There were no speakers.

X. INFORMATIONAL

- A. Update on status of downtown employee parking lot at the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company – DPW item

Parking Operations Supervisor Cocchiaro stated that an agreement has been reached with the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company and it has now gone to the Port Authority for their review and approval as it is on their property. He stated that the City will mark and plow the lot and employees of downtown businesses will be able to purchase permits at \$25.00 per month from November – April. He stated they will need to present paystubs to verify their employment.

B. Temporary Valet spaces on Deer Street for Residence Inn through February 14th – DPW item

Chairman Smith stated that there was an issue with construction of Phase III on Portwalk resulting in a street closure so City Manager Bohenko gave temporary permission to relocate the valet spaces for Residence Inn on Deer Street which concluded today (02/14/13). He stated this brought up the issue that a valet service was actually being run out of Port Walk Way which has not gone through the appropriate process.

C. Valet licensing on Port Walk Way – DPW item

Tim Levine of Port Walk Way was in attendance and stated he will be coming forward with the appropriate request for their valet licensing.

Chairman Smith stated they will need to meet with the Legal Department to draft an agreement and come back to the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee for approval.

City Manager Bohenko stated this needs to be done as soon as possible.

OTHER:

Mr. Whitehouse inquired of Chairman Smith if he had set a date for the informal discussion to be held on a Saturday. Chairman Smith stated he had not yet secured a location.

Chairman Smith then stated he would like to set a date for the next work session to discuss the parking garage issue.

The Work Session was scheduled for Thursday, February 28, 2013 at 8:00 a.m. in the City Council Chambers.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Whitehouse moved to adjourn at 9:30 a.m., seconded by Ms. Donnermeyer. Motion passed.