

MINUTES
PARKING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M. – Thursday, October 10, 2013
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ken Smith called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chair
Dave Allen, Deputy City Manager
Steve Achilles, Fire Chief
Corey MacDonald, Deputy Police Chief
Peter Rice, Public Works Director
Ronald Cypher, Member
Shari Donnermeyer, Member
Ted Gray, Member
Harold Whitehouse, Member

Staff Advisors Present:

Mark Nelson, Parking Division Director
Tom Cocchiaro, Parking Operations Supervisor
Juliet Walker, Transportation Planner

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Mr. Gray moved to accept the minutes of September 12, 2013, seconded by Mr. Cypher. Motion passed.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Whitehouse moved to accept the Financial Report and place on file, seconded by Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Whitehouse moved to suspend the rules to allow a speaker to address the committee. Seconded by Public Works Director Rice and passed.

Discussion Item - Portsmouth Lodge of Elks Letter Re: Portsmouth High Cross Country Track on Jones Avenue (*Not on agenda*)

John Michael Isaac, Manager of the Portsmouth Lodge of Elks, stated he is addressing an issue that was previously brought before the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee a year ago and has become a problem again this year. He explained that the Portsmouth High School Cross Country Track team uses a portion of their driveway on Jones Avenue as a part of their route and it causes a potential dangerous situation. He stated that there is no

notice of when they will be using the area and because there are 1300 members of the Elks as well as deliveries and events on weekends such as weddings, he is concerned for the safety of the students and patrons.

Chairman Smith stated that there have been internal conversations with the City Manager, Athletic Director and School Department and there will be volunteer flaggers for each of the next 3 events and a schedule will be provided to the Elks.

Public Works Director Rice stated that the Department of Public Works will also provide temporary signage to alert motorists.

A. Discussion Item: Update on NHDOT and City road & bridge projects (DOT/DPW)

Nickie Hunter of the State of New Hampshire Department of Transportation gave a brief update of ongoing and upcoming projects including Memorial Bridge, Route 1 Bypass, Greenleaf Woods Bridge removal, Middle Road Bridge replacement and the Islington Street Bridge replacement scheduled for Fall 2014/Spring 2015. She stated the Maplewood Bridge Replacement has been put out to bid and awarded, but still needs approval by the State.

Chairman Smith asked if there will be any design changes to intersections in relation to the Maplewood Bridge replacement to address illegal left-hand turns and safety concerns.

Ms. Hunter stated she is unsure what will be included with that project and that the scope of these projects were downsized to address mainly the bridges. Public Works Director Rice stated he will coordinate with her to address these concerns.

Chairman Smith asked what the time frame for the remaining 2 bridges, School and Woodbury Avenue. Ms. Hunter stated they are on the list for after the Maplewood Avenue bridge replacement in 2015.

B. Discussion Item: Loading zone periods for salt trucks (Art VI, Section 7.602)

Parking Division Director Nelson stated that this loading zone is in the ordinance as a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week zone, but in his speaking with Granite State Minerals, they do not need it 24 hours a day and are willing to discuss releasing some of the time to the public.

Chairman Smith stated that their operations usually end around 4:00 p.m. so we may be able to turn the space over to public parking in the evenings.

Mr. Whitehouse moved to send a proposal to revise the hours from a 24/7 zone to allowing public parking during certain hours to the City Manager and Department of Public Works for a report back. Seconded by Mr. Gray and passed.

C. Discussion Item: Woodbury Ave Traffic Monitoring and Stop Control Analysis

Chairman Smith stated this was a request from the neighborhood association that there be additional information provided regarding a report back on their request for a stop sign as a traffic calming measure. He stated he does not however, see anyone from the neighborhood in attendance.

Public Works Director Rice explained that a warrant evaluation was conducted and concluded that installing stop signs is not appropriate for traffic calming and does not meet the warrant criteria in accordance with State RSA and the MUTCD provisions. He stated that the neighbors were provided the findings via letter but maybe did not have enough time to review. **He suggested that the item be tabled to the next meeting.**

Chairman Smith asked about the possibility of putting flashing lights at the crosswalk at St. Catherine's Church or pedestrian crossing signs.

Public Works Director Rice stated there are costs associated with these suggestions but can do some research.

Mr. Whitehouse stated he had suggested a yield stencil, as opposed to a sign, at the triangle at Woodbury Avenue. Public Works Director Rice stated this is a reasonable request.

Chairman Smith stated he had also requested that the State put up signage at the traffic circle directing vehicles to continue north on the turnpike to access the malls to divert the traffic from Woodbury Avenue.

Parking Division Director Nelson stated the Wayfinding Committee is also looking for this type of signage.

Mr. Cypher moved to request a report back from the Department of Public Works at the November 14, 2013 meeting. Seconded by Deputy City Manager Allen and passed.

D. Discussion Item: Echo Avenue/Subaru Dealership issue

Public Works Director Rice stated that plans for this project have not been submitted to the City at this point so there are no actions that can be taken by the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee.

Chairman Smith stated that once the plans are submitted, then this would come back to the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee.

Michael Clemmey, representing Subaru of New England, gave a brief history of the Subaru of New England Company. He explained that it is important to them to work with the community when they build and that they have already reached out to the neighbors for their input.

Public Works Director Rice thanked him for his presentation but advised again that there are not actions or comments that can be offered by the committee as it has not been formally submitted to the City.

Mr. Whitehouse stated he appreciates their efforts to reach out and involve the neighbors in the process.

E. Discussion Item: Update on Parking Efforts

Parking Division Director Nelson gave an update on recent successful efforts by City staff to obtain more parking resources for the public. The sites include; Baptist Church, Isles of Shoals Steamship Company lot, 299 Vaughan Street; McIntyre Lot, Sheraton Hotel lot and Rock Street/Heineman Lot.

F. Action Item: Residence Inn short-term valet space rental request

Parking Division Director Nelson explained that Chris Moulton, General Manager of the Residence Inn, has requested use of 3 parking spaces on Deer Street during an upcoming road closure on Portwalk Place which will be closed for 2-3 weeks beginning October 19th.

Chairman Smith asked if the long-term agreement has been worked out yet. Deputy City Manager Allen explained that the City Attorney has found that Portwalk Place is being treated as a public way so there should be a valet agreement with the City. **Chairman Smith requested that the long-term agreement be brought back to the Committee for action.**

Fire Chief Achilles moved to approve the request to allow valet parking in 3 spaces on Deer Street for a period 2-3 weeks beginning October 19, 2013 while Portwalk Place is undergoing construction. Seconded by Ms. Donnermeyer and passed.

G. Action Item: Deleting Art. VI, Section 7.601 (2)(b) from ordinance (former truck loading zone at end of Daniel Street. ***(This item is enacted as a temporary regulation and will be considered for inclusion in a future omnibus ordinance)***)

Parking Division Director Nelson explained that this loading zone no longer exists so the ordinance needs to be updated accordingly and will be included in the next omnibus ordinance.

Chairman Smith asked where the loading zone is now located. Parking Division Director Nelson stated it is permanently located further up Daniel Street.

Chairman Smith asked about the parking spaces at the waters edge. Deputy City Manager Allen stated that there are some spaces dedicated to the bridge attendants and a couple for the memorial park.

Mr. Whitehouse moved to approve the change to the ordinance. Seconded by Public Works Director Rice and passed.

H. Action Item: Establishing Procedure for Short-Term Valet Requests

Parking Division Director Nelson stated this item was needed as there are requests coming in for valet parking for specific events and no guidelines or procedure are in place. He stated that an application will be developed for these requests.

Chairman Smith stated that the requirements will be similar to the long-term agreements in that we will need to know where the cars will be parked, that they not utilize city spaces, insurance requirements, etc.

Public Works Director Rice stated he agrees they need to be consistent with the long-term agreements. He stated he also feels that it would be appropriate that there be at least a 30-day advanced notice and that the requests come before the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee.

Public Works Director Rice moved to refer to the Department of Public Works to generate an application and process which will include appearing before the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee, seconded by Mr. Gray.

Chairman Smith recognized Brian Slovenski from Atlantic Parking Services to address the Committee regarding his request for permission to valet park for a specific event.

Mr. Slovenski stated he had submitted his request for inclusion on the agenda for today's meeting and is not sure why it is not on the agenda. Public Works Director Rice stated he apologizes for the confusion but believes that Mr. Slovenski was informed that it had not been submitted in time. He stated that the timing of this request was unfortunate because there is not yet a policy in place to handle the request, but that this was one of the requests that triggered the need for a policy to be created.

Mr. Slovenski stated he will accommodate this event with the use of private property. Chairman Smith suggested he contact the legal department for clarification.

Motion passed.

Mr. Whitehouse requested that a review of the membership of the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee be included on the agenda for the November 14, 2013 meeting.

VI. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Discussion Item: Clinton Street Traffic Report from Police

Deputy Police Chief MacDonald stated the traffic study found no issues and that most vehicles were actually going below the posted speed limit. He stated they will continue to monitor the area.

B. Discussion Item: Report back on residential handicapped spaces (DPW)

Parking Division Director Nelson reported there are currently seven active handicapped designated spaces and these are verified annually. He presented the policy that is in place to acquire a residential handicapped space and for Department of Public Works to manage the spaces.

Mr. Gray asked for clarification that the recently approved handicap space on Gate Street is included in the 7 spaces. Parking Division Nelson stated yes. Chairman Smith clarified that this space was approved by the Council with the approval of the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee minutes for that meeting.

Mr. Whitehouse asked about Water Street stating that there is a chain across there and it cannot be accessed. Department of Public Works Director Rice stated that this is not a street but is actually a driveway which is used by the Prescott Park Trustees during events. He stated they are revisiting how to best configure that space.

C. *Action Item: Valet Proposal Chestnut Street

Parking Division Director Nelson explained that this had been tabled from the last item but the event is not happening so is not necessary to take action on.

Chairman Smith stated that the event still may happen just at a later date. Brian Slovenski of Atlantic Parking Services stated that there is still interest and they have found another parking lot to use.

Public Works Director Rice moved to grant a 30 day extension once an agreement has been reached, with notice provided to the City to allow for staff to observe the operations. Seconded by Ms. Donnermeyer and passed.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ralph DiBernardo – stated that the upper Islington Street neighborhood residents have received abutter notices regarding the subdivision of 40 acres between Islington Street and Borthwick Avenue to connect the two roadways. He stated the Conservation Commission tabled the item at their meeting of October 9th but wonders why it isn't coming before the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee. He stated he is going to the Planning Department to see if they also will be tabling this item as it did not received a recommendation from the Conservation Commission. He stated the neighbors are concerned that it will be used as a way to get to the hospital and if so, this will create another intersection with street lights and cause more traffic congestion.

Discussion ensued regarding the steps that would be required for this project and which committees it may or may not have to appear before.

City Transportation Planner Walker stated she would accompany Mr. DiBernardo to the Planning Department to address his concerns.

Chairman Smith stated he would like to make a suggestion to the Conservation Commission to add a public comment section to their agenda.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL: Parking Director Nelson updated the committee on the following items stating that items:

- A. DPW evaluating signage needs in Maple Haven neighborhood (per citizen request)
Signage will be installed if found to be a safety issue.
- B. DPW evaluating signage needs on Echo Ave (per citizen request)
Signage will be installed if found to be a safety issue.
- C. DPW report on request for "No Outlet" signage on Pearson St
A "Dead End" sign will be installed instead of a "No Outlet" sign.
- D. DPW report on parking space change at South Playground Parking
A space blocking the entrance was removed and cross-hatched and replaced with 2 spaces in another area of the lot.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Whitehouse moved to adjourn at 9:25 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Cypher and voted unanimously.