

MINUTES
PARKING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M. – Thursday, March 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
Dave Allen, Deputy City Manager
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director
Corey MacDonald, Deputy Police Chief
Steve Achilles, Assistant Fire Chief
Ron Cypher, Member
Ted Gray, Member
Harold Whitehouse, Member

Members Absent:

Sheri Donnermeyer, Member

Staff Advisors Present:

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

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Mr. Whitehouse moved to accept the minutes of the February 14, 2013 and February 28, 2013 meetings, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Cypher and passed. Deputy City Manager Allen abstained.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

Chairman Smith stated that the Presentation will be held once Mr. Vogt arrives.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Coast Bus Staging Issue – request to remove two parking spaces and relocate taxi stand

Parking Operations Supervisor Tom Cocchiaro reviewed the proposal to remove two parking spaces and a taxi stand from area adjacent to the parking garage to make more room for bus pick-up and drop-off. He continued that over the past several months, because of an

increase in COAST service and the need to stage buses in the area for long periods of time, there have been conflicts between COAST buses and the four-times-daily Greyhound bus service. Because of the limited space, Greyhounds have regularly been forced to double park next to the inactive COAST bus cutting off an entire lane of Hanover Street. Several times already both companies have reported breaking one another's mirrors off as a result of the tight parking. He concluded that removing two parking spaces and the taxi stand will make it possible for the buses to get completely into the space provided for the bus stop. The impact on parking, according to a parking meter analysis of the area from January 1, 2012 to January 1, 2013, showed that, on average, only three spaces in that area were being used at any one time leaving a surplus of three spaces. Moving the taxi stand back across Fleet Street to the space in front of Legends Billiards will put it closer to where much of the nighttime activity is and avoid conflict with bus traffic.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to approve the request to remove two parking spaces and relocate the taxi stand as recommended, seconded by Deputy City Manager Allen. Motion passed.

- B. Cabot/McDonough St. Parking Issue – Stripe area for parallel parking only – no head-in parking

Parking Division Director Nelson referred to a letter received from Myles Bratter regarding a parking issue which worsened after the upgrades to the roads and sewer system and installation of city sidewalks on both sides of the street. He explained that parking was supposed to be parallel parking, unless otherwise designated, but there were never any signs or stripes installed and it has caused a problem with people backing vehicles onto Bratters' property. Parking Division Director Nelson added that due to a recently installed cross-walk, only two spaces for parking by the storage facility are allowed. He concluded that a survey showed that under the current ordinance, space is available for three parking spaces On this portion of Cabot Street.

Mr. Cypher stated he reviewed the area himself and it was even worse than the photo depicted.

Mr. Whitehouse moved to suspend the rules to allow Mr. Bratter to address the committee. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief MacDonald and passed.

Mr. Bratter reiterated what was stated by Mr. Nelson regarding his parking issue at 159 McDonough Street and 342 Cabot Street at the very end of Cabot Street by the tracks. He stated he has tried various solutions including putting a large boulder in the space, but people just moved the boulder. He concluded by stating that if there were an emergency in the area, fire apparatus would not be able to get through.

Timothy Flynn of 135 McDonough Street – stated that there has always been angle parking in the area but there were no markings. He stated there is a lot of open space in the back of the building that can be used for parking.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to approve the request as submitted by the Parking Division to stripe the Cabot St spaces, seconded by Assistant Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

Mr. Flynn then discussed an issue with trash and illegally parked trailers on Mr. Bratter's property and stated he has contacted the City several times about the issue as he has lost tenants due to this problem. Chairman Smith stated this is not the proper committee to address this issue with but he would ensure that someone would follow up. Deputy City Manager Allen stated the Legal Department is aware of this issue and has been working on it and he will follow up as well.

Mr. Bratter clarified that the City gave his tenant permission to put the items on the property and stated he isn't happy with the situation either.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no speakers.

V. PRESENTATION:

A. State of New Hampshire Dept. of Transportation Bridge Presentation – Alex Vogt, Project Manager, NH DOT Highway Design

Alex Vogt, Project Manager, NH DOT Highway Design began by introducing Wendy Johnson of the Highway Design Group who will be the contact for the City once Mr. Vogt retires in April. He then reviewed the upcoming projects and the proposed traffic detours that will occur as each project goes along. He distributed a preliminary plan mapping out the 6 upcoming bridge replacement projects between now and September 2015. He stated as each bridge closed, they will coordinate with the city departments to work out traffic details.

Public Works Director Parkinson stated that this will be important as there are certain areas where even if the closure is at night, it would disrupt truck deliveries as well as fire and police routes.

Assistant Fire Chief Achilles agreed stating that the Middle Road/NH 33 Bridge is a critical route for ambulances from the south to access Portsmouth Regional Hospital.

Mr. Whitehouse asked about the reconfiguration of Maplewood Avenue intersection, specifically the left-hand turn, stating that this is a dangerous intersection and would like to see this addressed. Mr. Vogt explained that the final design has not yet been completed but feels it will be similar to the current design. Ms. Johnson stated they are discussing with the consultant various island shapes to prohibit the left hand turn at that intersection, but again, the design is not yet final.

Chairman Smith stated that this has been an ongoing issue and several different strategies have been tried with no success so he hopes that a better solution can be presented, especially at the intersection with Cutts Avenue as there have been many accidents and near misses. Deputy Police Chief MacDonald confirmed that this intersection has been a problem.

Mr. Vogt concluded by stating that he will continue to coordinate with the City as the projects progress.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL:

Parking Division Director Nelson and Parking Operations Supervisor Cocchiaro gave a brief update of the following issues with no action required or taken by the Committee at this time:

- A. Pay & Display Lighting on Order, March 14, ship date, installation to follow
- B. Starting process of scheduling HHPG elevator and stair tower work – bids are going out at present time.
- C. Closure of Wright Avenue Parking Lot for three weeks to facilitate gas/water work in area

Chairman Smith asked if the spaces are still available for overnight parking. Parking Division Director Nelson stated yes, but the cars need to be gone by 6:00 a.m.

- D. Start Duncan Meter Trial – will run for 60 days on various side streets.
- E. ISSC Downtown Employee Parking contract going in front of PDA Board with recommendation from DPA Counsel Lyn Hinchee and Port Director Marconi to approve. Will most likely start program this coming November as there will be one month availability this Spring.

Parking Operations Supervisor Cocchiaro stated that the PDA Board is acting on this today and that there were some slight changes in the language from the original proposal.

- F. Working with the Library to relocate two handicapped spaces from the side entrance around to where the main entrance is facing the larger parking lot. The side entrance is currently locked for security reasons forcing those parking in those handicapped spaces to walk around the building to the main entrance. This came from a public inquiry asking if we had the requisite number of handicapped spaces for the Library.

Parking Division Director Nelson explained that there are enough spaces as required, but they aren't well-placed. He stated he is working with the Library Director to relocate the spaces but are waiting until the snow melts to clearly evaluate the area.

- G. Coordinating with Dave Desfosses on parking operations related to the Daniel Street rehab which starts in April. As part of that process, we're looking at a mix of single space meters, and Pay and Display meters (with the possible addition of terminals with bill capability) spread around central downtown on Daniel, Pleasant and Congress Streets.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost of dollar bill capability machines and the effect the weather can sometimes have on these machines. Public Works Director Parkinson stated that this is a trial period and the technology has been improved, but if they do not work they can remove that portion of the machine.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Whitehouse moved to adjourn at 8:40 a.m., seconded and passed unanimously.