

MINUTES
PARKING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M. – Thursday, November 14, 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
John Boehnko, City Manager
Frank Warchol, Police Captain
Peter Rice, Public Works Director
Ronald Cypher, Member
Shari Donnermeyer, Member
Ted Gray, Member
Harold Whitehouse, Member

Members Absent:

Steve Achilles, Fire Chief

Staff Advisors Present:

Mark Nelson, Parking Division Director
Juliet Walker, Transportation Planner

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Mr. Cypher moved to accept the minutes of October 10, 2013, seconded by Mr. Gray. Motion passed.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

II. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Action Item: 111 Maplewood: – Per stipulations of approval from TAC, loading zone changes, intersection configuration (DPW)

Brian Sweeter representing Tighe and Bond stated that after meeting on 11/12/13 with the Committee members on the site walk, they have made the suggested adjustments and presented plans and drawings to illustrate the changes.

Capt. Warchol stated he was concerned with the placement of the stop signs with cars being parked there as well as trees possibly limiting the site line and creating a dangerous situation. Mr. Sweeter responded that they did test that intersection with cars parked and felt that there was plenty of site distance both ways.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if there will be a push button for pedestrians. Public Works Director Rice responded no. He stated push buttons are not typically installed unless there is a traffic light at the intersection as well. He stated we are exploring motion-activated crosswalk systems which will be discussed later on the agenda.

City Manager Bohenko explained that at the request of Mr. Whitehouse, the area near St. Catherine's Church on Woodbury Avenue will be the site for the pilot program of this crosswalk system. He stated if it works well it may be installed in other areas as well.

Ms. Donnermeyer asked if we are losing any parking spaces with this plan. Mr. Sweeter stated no, they are relocating some spaces. Another representative of Tighe and Bond stated there are 5 new spaces being added on the easterly side.

Chairman Smith clarified that there will be a net gain of 4 spaces. He then referred to the photo stating that there are 3 cars parked on the Raynes Avenue side that aren't striped so should those be counted or not. Mr. Sweeter responded that those cars are not necessarily supposed to be parked there.

Chairman Smith asked about the loading zone and since it has not been used for several years and doesn't appear to be needed for some time in the future, will this area be used for parking. Mr. Sweeter stated yes, as long as they can come back in the future to reestablish the zone if needed.

Mr. Cypher stated that years ago the 5 parking spaces on Vaughan Street were removed because of the loading zone for the Lollipop Tree and the large trucks were clipping cars because there wasn't enough room. Chairman Smith stated that currently 3-S Art Space occupies the whole building and there will not be any tractor trailers.

Mr. Gray asked if fire trucks have room to go down Maplewood Avenue under the new plan. Mr. Sweeter stated yes.

Discussion ensued regarding the width of the roadway and possible larger trucks heading down the roadway and it becoming too narrow at the island. Mr. Sweeter suggested the island be shifted over 2 feet.

Public Works Director Rice stated that this is meant to be a bridge until the other block is developed and acknowledges that more work is needed on the Cindy Cleaners side of the road. Chairman Smith stated that this will be a great improvement but feels the adjustment should be made now instead of later. Public Works Director Rice suggested a beveled edge curb instead of a slope.

City Manager Bohenko moved to accept the proposal as presented with the following stipulations:

- 1. applicant may come back at a later time to request a loading zone if it is needed; and**
- 2. install beveled curbing per Public Works Director recommendation; and**
- 3. Work with City staff on the final alignment configuration.**

Motion seconded by Ms. Donnermeyer and passed.

B. Action Item: Driveway Application – Andrew Jarvis Drive (DPW)

John Chagnon, Ambit Engineering, explained this is regarding a subdivision of land that is at 417 Andrew Jarvis Drive.

City Manager Bohenko stated it looks like the traffic would be on both sides and asked why it would be better to have the driveway enter onto Andrew Jarvis. He stated there was a similar situation in the Little Harbour School area which was denied. Mr. Chagnon replied that typically they go to the less traveled road which Andrew Jarvis would be usually. He further clarified that this property sits by itself, but 4 of the properties have joint access to Lafayette road and this property would have to cut across another property to have the same egress.

Chairman Smith stated he would like to see the High School sign be able to stay put or at least find another appropriate location along Lafayette Road. He stated he would also like an easement for the right-hand turn travel lane coming out of Andrew Jarvis Drive.

Mr. Gray moved to approve the application as presented, seconded by Mr. Whitehouse.

Chairman Smith invited Supt. of Schools Ed McDonough to speak.

Mr. McDonough thanked the Committee for inviting he and Principal Collins to attend the Site Walk and stated neither of them has any concerns with this request.

Public Works Director Rice asked the motioner and seconder to include “request the applicant to work with the city to realign a section of the roadway for a turning lane” to the main motion. Both agreed.

Mr. Whitehouse stated he is concerned with enforcement of parking on Andrew Jarvis and the possibility of this driveway being blocked during events.

Motion to accept proposal as presented and request the applicant to work with the city to realign a section of the roadway for a turning lane passed.

C. Discussion Item: Residential Permits (PTS Chairman Smith)

Chairman Smith explained this request has come from several different neighborhoods including the South End and Islington Creek Neighborhood and he would like to see a pilot program implemented in the Islington Creek Neighborhood. He stated that currently, the only enforcement is for cars with out-of-state license plates.

City Manager Bohenko stated he doesn't disagree with the idea but feels that this needs to be looked at as a city-wide policy and we need to be careful how we roll it out. He continued that there are various factors that need to be considered i.e. how many visitors are allowed per household, etc. and then when you implement permit parking on one street but not the next one over, then those cars will move to the next street to park and have a cascading affect. He stated he would like to see someone hired to look at the overall permit process who has experience with this in other cities of similar size etc. He concluded that this should be decided by the City Council as a policy decision once and for all.

Chairman Smith stated he was originally asked to bring this forward because that neighborhood was having an issue with visitor parking but for now they have the Heinemann Lot on Rock Street so he agrees with City Manager Bohenko. He asked if this could be done in-house instead of hiring an outside company.

City Manager Bohenko stated that the staff is quite busy and feels we need someone who is familiar with that particular issue and will look at the traffic patterns in the neighborhoods, enforcement issues, etc.

City Manager Bohenko moved to direct the Public Works Director to retain a firm to look at the issue of residential parking permits in the City of Portsmouth as a whole, seconded by Ms. Donnermeyer.

City Manager Bohenko clarified that this would be a study only and before any policy would be implemented there would be opportunities for public comment and it would require City Council approval.

Chairman Smith stated he would like to see a recommendation to the Council by the summer.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if there are any grants available to fund this study. City Manager Bohenko stated that we would utilize the money from the transportation fund which is specifically meant to be used for this activity and needs to be spent. Public Works Director Rice confirmed that there are funds available.

Motion passed.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Action Item: Establishing Procedure for Short-Term Valet Requests (DPW)

Parking Division Director Nelson stated that have drafted a procedure and the only thing missing at this time is the fee which they recommend to be \$100.00. He stated the fee will need to be set by the Fee Committee. He stated the application would be submitted and put on the next available Parking and Traffic Safety Committee Agenda for approval.

City Manager Bohenko stated there are instances where the request will come in for an event occurring before a PTS meeting so would like to have administrative authority to approve with ratification by the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee of the applications.

Chairman Smith agreed with companies that already have long-term agreements for long-term valet services as their insurance information etc. would already be on file.

Mr. Whitehouse stated it should be indicated where the cars will be parked and the signature of the owner of the lot should be required. City Manager Bohenko agreed that this information should be part of the application, but not necessarily the signature of the owner of the lot.

Public Works Director Rice moved to establish the procedure for short-term valet requests with the following revisions:

1. **The City Manager or designee has the authority to approve the requests with a summary presented to the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee monthly; and**
2. **The fee is recommended to be established at \$100.00 to be confirmed by the fee committee; and**
3. **Verification of agreement with parking lot owners be presented with the application.**

Motion passed.

Ms. Donnermeyer excused herself from the meeting at 8:55 a.m.

- B. Action Item: Approval of Portwalk Valet agreement. (DPW)

Parking Division Director Nelson stated the expiration date of this agreement will fall in line with the other valet parking agreements expiring June 30, 2014.

Public Works Director Rice moved to accept the license agreement as presented and to set the expiration date to June 30, 2014 with all other Valet parking agreements, seconded by Mr. Cypher. Motion passed.

- C. Action Item: Change to loading zone periods for salt trucks on Market St (Art VI, Section 7.602) (DPW)

Parking Director Nelson explained that Granite State Minerals use the loading zones early in the morning through mid afternoon Monday through Saturday and are willing to allow public parking in the off times. He stated ***this will be enacted as a temporary regulation and will be considered for inclusion in a future omnibus ordinance.***

Chairman Smith stated he would like to make sure the signage is clearly outlines the hours parking will be available.

City Manager Bohenko moved to accept the recommended changes to the loading zone periods and direct the Department of Public Works to revise the signs accordingly, seconded by Mr. Gray. Motion passed.

- D. Discussion Item: Woodbury Ave pedestrian-activated crosswalk (DPW)

Public Works Director Rice referred to the picture provided in the packet stating that this is located in Kittery Maine and explained that the pedestrian hits a button and a strobe light starts alerting vehicles that a pedestrian is about to cross. He stated the preliminary cost estimate is \$15,000.00 and it is solar powered. He stated he feels this are is a good place to try it as a pilot.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if maintenance is included. Public Works Director Rice stated it is for the equipment, installation and a warranty.

Chairman Smith stated this is a good location and wants to add Deer Street/Market Street to a list of future locations.

- E. Discussion Item: Ordinance (Section 7.103) on Parking Traffic and Safety Committee. (per request of Committee member Whitehouse.)

Mr. Whitehouse stated he asked this item to be placed on the agenda because he is concerned that next year will be very busy and he feels that there should be more members added to the committee including planning staff and alternate members.

Mr. Whitehouse moved to authorize the Chairman in the next minutes of the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee to the Council that they review the make-up of the committee or any other issue in the ordinance they find important in this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Cypher.

City Manager Bohenko stated that there will be a lot of issues coming up but clarified that the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee is an advisory committee and makes recommendations for the Council. He stated that there are already 5 staff members as well as advisory staff in the audience when needed.

Chairman Smith stated he feels that alternates would be helpful and clarified that 4 of the staff members currently are voting members and the 5th, Parking Division Director Nelson is non-voting.

Mr. Whitehouse amended his motion as follows:

Authorize the Chairman of the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee, in the minutes presented to the City Council for approval, request an amendment to the membership of the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee with the addition of 2 alternate (non-voting) members from the public, seconded by Mr. Cypher.

Motion passed.

Mr. Cypher asked Public Works Director Rice how long it takes to determine if the warrants allow a 4-way stop intersection at Hanover/Bridge Streets.

Public Works Director Rice stated that traffic counts have to be reviewed as well as accident history etc. so can take a couple of months. He stated he will report back on the warrant requirements for this intersection.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no speakers for Public Comment.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL:

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

City Manager Bohenko moved to adjourn at 9:15 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Whitehouse and voted unanimously.