



# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*

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## Parking Committee

November 26, 2018

5:00PM

### **Attendees:**

City Councilor Byron Champlin, Chair  
Mayor Jim Bouley  
City Councilor Mark Coen  
City Councilor Linda Kenison  
City Councilor Brent Todd

### **Guests:**

Roy Schweiker, Chapel Street Resident  
Shirley Colby, Waverly Street Resident

### **Staff:**

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, & Special Projects  
David Florence, Parking Supervisor  
Rob Mack, Traffic Engineer

The meeting began at 5:04PM.

1. **Overview of Agenda:** Councilor Champlin provided an overview of the meeting agenda.
2. **Adoption of Minutes:** Councilor Kenison moved to adopt the minutes of August 27, 2018 and October 22, 2018 as presented. Councilor Coen seconded. The minutes were adopted on a unanimous voice vote.
3. **Referrals to Parking Committee – Debbi Roy Downtown Resident Parking Permits:** Staff explained that Ms. Roy is requesting that the City consider the establishment of a resident parking permit for the Storrs Street Parking Garage. Ms. Roy is a resident of the Endicott Hotel. In an email to the Parking Committee, Ms. Roy explained that availability of parking can be challenging for downtown residents when multiple events are occurring simultaneously during evening hours. Specifically, Ms. Roy is recommending that a section of the garage be exclusively reserved for these types of permits. She also suggested that the permit be valid 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

The Parking Committee reviewed this request. It was noted that the Storrs Street garage contains 516 parking spaces; all of which are open to the public for free parking after 7PM, Monday through Friday, as well as all day on Saturday and Sunday.

Staff reminded the Committee that the Storrs Street Garage is encumbered by several long-term leases, which were negotiated to support several development projects, including the Hotel Concord, Smile, and Love Your Neighbor buildings. It was noted that the Strategic Parking Plan, adopted by the City Council in December 2017, recommends that the City negotiate out of these agreements in order to implement a permit system similar to those currently being operated in the State Street Public Parking Garage.

Mr. Walsh noted that the City is attempting to greatly reduce, if not eliminate, exclusive use of parking spaces in order to improve availability of parking to the general public, as well as improve the City's ability to maintain the facility.

It was also noted that the City currently offers 4 types of permits, and that it is likely that one of these products would satisfy the need of most residents within the Downtown Central Business District. It was also noted there are private parking lots in Downtown that might be a viable option for residents seeking exclusive parking spaces.

After additional discussion, it was the consensus of the Parking Committee to provide Ms. Roy a letter in response to her suggestion, as well as update her about the City's strategy relative to parking permits for the Storrs Street Garage.

4. **Narrow Streets:** The Parking Committee held a discussion regarding the ongoing narrow streets project and community forum held on October 22, 2018 at the UNH School of Law. Members of the Committee felt the forum and presentation were very successful.

The Committee discussed public input gathered during the forum, which included the following themes:

- The need for improved neighborhood parking enforcement, including during evenings and weekends.
- Resident complaints about on-street parking inhibiting access to driveways, and the need for improved pavement markings or signage to help enforce driveway regulations.
- Resident frustrations with backing out of driveways when vehicles are parked on the opposite side of the road from their driveways.
- Discussion of the resident permit program, and whether to curtail the program, or possibly extend it to other areas of the community (such as to address concerns of June Latti on Court Street). Ms. Latti does not have off-street parking at her residence and is the only property on Court Street with this circumstance. Some members of the Committee expressed interest in expanding the on-street resident permit program to other areas of the City,

while others suggested terminating on-street resident permit parking altogether. It was noted that the fee for the permit has to support the cost of enforcement. Currently the fee is \$5 / vehicle / year, and this amount is not sufficient to support enforcement.

- The impacts of UNH Law Parking on the neighborhood, and use of public parking by faculty and staff, although the School has its own private lots which the public cannot use. It was suggested that UNH should allow public access to their lots.
- Safety issues on very narrow streets, i.e. those streets well under 20' in width such as Chapel Street (16'+/-), Perry Street (16'+/-), Rowell (16'+/-), Academy Street (17.5'+/-) and others.
- Issues with snow removal during winter months for those roads which do not have year round parking concerns.
- That there might not be a universal solution for all streets.
- There was discussion about allowing public parking at White Park and associated deed restrictions about "public use".

Roy Schweiker, Chapel Street resident, commented on the October 22<sup>nd</sup> neighborhood forum. He stated that he felt most residents in attendance wanted to ban parking on most streets entirely. He indicated that was not his preferred approach, and suggested that the City ban parking on narrow streets during the height of the winter (say January and February) when snow banks are most likely to be present, rather than November 1 to April 1.

Discussion ensued regarding next steps. After additional discussion, it was the consensus of the Parking Committee to proceed as follows:

- 1) A subcommittee was formed comprising the Mayor, Brent Todd, and Matt Walsh to review potential recommendations for narrow streets located in the UNH Law / White Park Neighborhood (Zone #3). The Committee plans to meet prior to the Parking Committee's December meeting.
- 2) City Administration will hold a follow-up meeting with UNH Law to discuss neighborhood parking dynamics. Byron Champlin will attend the meeting if available.
- 3) Staff shall identify dates in January to hold a neighborhood forum for Zone #2 of the study area (Centre Street to Wall Street). A snow date will also be identified. Notices will be mailed to all property owners once the date is confirmed.

**5. Strategic Parking Plan Update:** A brief update was provided regarding implementation of the Strategic Parking Plan, including the following:

- a. Financials (July 1, 2018 – October 31, 2018): Revenues are performing well and actuals were at 45% YTD versus 33% YTD for budget. Metered parking is running ahead of budget by approximately \$25,000 / month and could finish more than \$300,000 better than budget if the trend continues. Citation revenues are slightly lagging behind budget due in part to staff vacancies and a high number of warnings issued during the summer to ease the public into

new hours of enforcement. Actual expenses are running at 43% YTD versus 33% budgeted. This is largely associated with the timing of certain debt service payments which occurred early in the fiscal year. Save overtime, personnel costs are running under budget due to staff vacancies.

- b. Online Payment Option for Parking Tickets: This began in September. Some back office issues remain outstanding. Nevertheless, the option will start to be promoted to the general public.
- c. Smart Meters and Kiosks: Mr. Walsh reminded the Committee that two finalists had been selected for the project. The finalists are Flowbird and IPS. Each vendor will provide 30 smart meters, 4 pay by space kiosks, and 4 pay and display kiosks for a 9 month trial period at no cost to the City.

The trial period began on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Flowbird was very responsive and their units were deployed in October. There have been multiple issues with their smart meters; however, the company has been responsive and provided good customer service to address concerns. IPS has not been responsive and their infrastructure has not yet been deployed. Staff continues to work with IPS to get their units deployed soon. It is likely that IPS equipment will not be fully deployed until mid-late December (2 months into the trial period).

Once all test meters and kiosks are in place, signage will be installed to inform parkers about the test and to direct them to a web survey to provide feedback.

Discussion ensued about meters and kiosks. Several members of the Parking Committee commented about the user friendliness and reliability of the existing kiosks. Discussion also occurred about the \$1 minimum for on-street kiosk transactions. Specifically, there has been some confusion with users purchasing more parking than desired, as the machines automatically give parkers 1 hour of parking whenever a credit card is inserted into the kiosks. The Parking Committee expressed concern about this and asked staff to remove the minimum for on-street kiosk payments in order to improve customer service. Staff stated that this could be accommodated on street; however, the 2 hour minimum would need to be maintained in the parking garages due to high credit card transaction fees and discounted hourly parking rate of \$0.50 / hour in the public garages.

It was also noted that kiosks do experience increased mechanical failures as they age; however, user error is also a major source of issues with the kiosks. The Parking Committee was in agreement with this observation.

- d. Meter Expansion: Staff reported that Phase I meter expansion was completed in October. Meters were installed on South Main Street (Wentworth to Perley) and Concord Street (Main to State). Anecdotally, it appears that meter usage has been light during daytime hours, as parkers have moved to other free options such as the south end of Storrs Street, Christ the King Church parking lot, and South State Street.

A brief discussion of Phase II meter expansion occurred. Phase II is scheduled to be implemented in FY2020 (October 2019). A map was distributed to the Parking Committee depicting the Phase II meter expansion area. It was noted that, should the Parking Fund continue to perform well, the City might be able to revisit the extent of Phase II meter expansion. However, only 4 months into the 2019 Fiscal Year, it is too early to predict how the Fund might perform this year. It was also noted that meters are being installed to help manage parking near activity centers, as well as to expand revenues.

**6. Other Business:**

a. Capital Projects Update:

- i. School Street Garage: Elevator replacement is underway and is scheduled for completion in mid-December. Once the elevator is completed, crews will begin replacement of the South Stair Tower.
- ii. Storrs Street Garage: Reconstruction of the Red River Theatre vestibule is complete; however, a minor leak has been detected. Crews are working to resolve and all water damage will be repaired. Also, the City will be moving forward with \$40,000 of additional work to repair damaged precast concrete, as well as sheetrock in all 3 stair towers. This work will likely be completed next spring.

- b. Winter Parking Bans: The Parking Committee reviewed a hand out related to winter parking bans. Winter arrived early, and the City has called two bans to date. Discussion ensued about the cost of the citation, the process for the owner to collect a towed vehicle, and communications with the public.

Members of the Committee briefly noted that the City has been calling parking bans for approximately 10 years. Recognizing that vehicles were towed because the owner did not abide by City Ordinances, the Parking Committee asked staff for ideas on how to improve customer service within the context of enforcement.

Staff offered some initial feedback and reported that the General Services Department recently mailed postcards to 2,000 addresses in the Downtown core regarding how to sign up for snow ban notifications.

Regarding public relations, staff also offered other suggestions, including:

- i. Installation of banners during November 2019 on Main Street displaying information on how to sign up for snow ban notifications;

- ii. Sandwich board signs in Downtown near kiosk pay stations advertising sign up information for snow ban notifications;
- iii. Reworking the Parking Division's phone greeting so it offers details on how to retrieve a towed vehicle, among other customer service improvements; and
- iv. Updating information on the City's website and snow ban notices on how to retrieve a towed vehicle.

7. **Nonpublic Session:** Nonpublic Session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II, d, for discussion of parking leases, was entered into at 6:36PM. The Nonpublic Session adjourned and the public portion of the meeting resumed at 6:50PM.

Councilor Kenison moved to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session. Councilor Coen seconded. The motioned carried unanimously.

Councilor Todd moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Kenison seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:51PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew R. Walsh  
Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects