



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

City Manager's Office

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City Manager

Parking Committee Minutes September 28, 2020

Attendees:

Byron Champlin, City Councilor, Parking Committee Chair
Linda Kenison, City Councilor
Nathan Fennessy, City Councilor
Brent Todd, City Councilor
Jim Bouley, Mayor

Staff:

Carlos Baia, Deputy City Manager - Development
Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, & Special Projects
Karen Hill, Transportation Engineer
Chip Chesley, General Services Director
Greg Taylor, Deputy Police Chief
David Florence, Parking Division Supervisor
Amanda Lombard, Fiscal Clerk Parking Division

Public:

Meredith Hatfield, City Councilor
Erle Pierce, City Councilor
Gary Evans, Owner of 6 and 8 Franklin Street

The meeting began at 5:02 PM.

Councilor Champlin read the Covid-19 public meeting procedures notice, which explained that, due to the Covid-19 "Coronavirus" Pandemic, and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, the Parking Committee is authorized to meet electronically. The City utilized the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting.

1. **Overview of Agenda:** Councilor Champlin provided an overview of the meeting agenda and welcomed members of the public.
2. **Adoption of Minutes:** Councilor Kenison moved to adopt the minutes of August, 24, 2020. Councilor Fennessy seconded. The minutes were adopted on a unanimous voice vote.

3. Requests and Referrals:

a. **Concord Street: Request from Lucy Harrington to have pavement markings installed on Concord Street (between South State and South Street) to reduce parking encroachments on driveway setbacks.**

Mr. Walsh provided an overview of Ms. Harrington's request. Specifically, Ms. Harrington has requested that the City install pavement markings on Concord Street, between South Street and South State Street, for the purpose of delineating driveway parking setbacks. Ms. Harrington reported that vehicles frequently park within the 5' setback from driveways, thus making it difficult to access and egress from her property.

Mr. Walsh reported that staff receives approximately a half dozen of these requests annually. However, the frequency of requests has been increasing. He explained that installation of pavement markings does not require an ordinance change, or action by the City Council; hence, staff has typically addressed these requests without input from the Parking Committee. However, given the increasing frequency of these requests, staff is requesting guidance from the Parking Committee on how to manage these in the future. Mr. Walsh noted that expanded pavement markings for neighborhood parking will have financial and workload implications for the General Services Department.

Discussion ensued. Some members of the Parking Committee suggested that signage be used in lieu of pavement markings. However, after additional consideration, it was noted that this would result in increased "sign clutter" in neighborhoods. It was the consensus of the Committee that expanded sign clutter would not be desirable.

Councilor Kenison stated her preference for staff to bring these requests to the Parking Committee for review, as that approach would keep the Committee informed about this issue.

It was noted that there is no formal policy on how the City handles these requests. Rather, staff has made a judgement about the severity of the parking issue and need to install pavement markings. Councilor Fennessy recommended that a formal policy be developed by staff for consideration by the Parking Committee.

Mayor Bouley stated his opinion that a formal policy is not warranted. Rather, he suggested that staff continue to handle these requests directly and install the pavement markings when requested. He stated his opinion that the cost of installing and maintaining pavement markings is not significant. He added that parking is an important quality of life issue for neighborhoods on the periphery of the Downtown Central Business District, and that the City staff should continue to install pavement markings upon request from aggrieved residents.

Councilor Fennessy moved that the Parking Committee direct staff to continue to install pavement markings upon request from aggrieved residents. Councilor Todd seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. The motion carried unanimously.

b. **Franklin Street: Request from Gary Evans to restore parking on Franklin Street (between North Main and North State Street) which was recently removed as part of the Narrow Streets study.**

Mr. Walsh provided an overview of this request. He explained that, as a result of the Narrow Streets Project, parking on the north side of Franklin Street (between North Main and North State Streets) was removed last spring. Following that action, parking on the south side of Franklin Street intensified. This resulted in complaints from a resident near the Franklin Street / North State Street roundabout, expressing concerns about vehicles parked too close to his driveway.

Upon review, Karen Hill, Transportation Engineer, researched the City's Code of Ordinances and determined that an Ordinance had been enacted approximately a decade ago, which banned parking on the south side of Franklin Street within 150' of the roundabout. However, signage for that ordinance was not installed. Therefore,

the General Services Department recently installed the missing signage. This further reduced available on-street parking. Staff was not aware of this ordinance at the time of neighborhood forums for the Narrow Streets Study in late 2019 and early 2020.

The subsequent removal of additional parking on the south side of Franklin Street prompted Gary Evans to contact the City about the lack of on-street parking for his apartment buildings located at #6 and #8 Franklin Street.

Mr. Evans addressed the Parking Committee and reiterated his concerns. He stated that the reduction in the supply of on-street parking has negatively impacted his tenants. He reported that he has limited on-site parking and stated there is no parking for visitors. He also claimed that he never received notices for the two neighborhood forums undertaken as part of the Narrow Streets Project for this neighborhood.

Karen Hill, Transportation Engineer, explained that she recently re-examined the 150' no parking ordinance on the south side of the road vis-à-vis signage recently installed by the General Services Department related thereto. She explained that the starting point for the no parking zone near the roundabout was misinterpreted by the General Services Department. Therefore, the signage can be adjusted, thus allowing the City to restore two additional parking spaces. Ms. Hill presented a design plan which detailed how this could be accomplished. If enacted, Ms. Hill's plan would provide a total of 7 spaces on the south side of Franklin Street between North Main and North State Streets.

Ms. Hill also reported that City Engineering is working with the General Services Department to re-stripe the double yellow center line in order to widen the east bound travel lane for this section of Franklin Street. Chip Chesley, General Services Director, stated that the restriping would occur in spring 2021, as the City's long-line pavement contractor has completed its work for the City for this season.

Discussion ensued. The Committee debated restoring parking on the north side of the road in lieu of the south side of the street. Members of the Committee noted that parking was removed on the north side of the street, as the majority of traffic is heading west on this section of Franklin Street. Discussion also ensued about speed concerns on this section of Franklin Street.

Councilor Fennessy moved that the Parking Committee approve Ms. Hill's plan to recodify the starting point of the 150' no parking zone on the south side of Franklin Street, to restore two parking spaces at this location, and to refer speeding concerns to the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee and Traffic Operations Committee. Councilor Kenison seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. The motion carried unanimously.

c. **Westbourne Road: Request from Concord School District to designate public parking on Westbourne Road for Concord High School Regional Tech Center.**

Mr. Walsh reported that this request had been withdrawn by the School District.

d. **South State Street / West Street Intersection: Discussion of Councilor Kenison's narrow street parking concerns.** Karen Hill provided an overview of the intersection and presented a plan on how to address concerns raised by Councilor Kenison.

Specifically, Ms. Hill recommended the following:

- Re-stripe the approaching westbound thru/left lane. Make the lane 12' wide (in lieu of the current 15' width). This modification would push traffic over and better align the lane with proposed striping on the west side of the intersection.

- Remove parking on the south side of West Street, west of the South State / West Street intersection, for distance of approximately 83' between South State and the first driveway west of the intersection. This proposal would shift traffic over and away from the parking lane.

Councilor Kenison moved that the Parking Committee recommend implementation of Ms. Hill's proposal. Councilor Fennessy seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Delinquent Citations:

a. **Update from Police Department concerning efforts to collect delinquent parking citations.**

David Florence, Parking Division Supervisor, provided a historical overview of collection rates for delinquent parking citations.

During 2015-2017, the collection rate was approximately 80-85%, which is consistent with industry norms. However, the collection rate has steadily declined to the current rate of 53.7%.

Mr. Florence provided a brief overview of the process the Parking Division must undertake in order to pursue delinquent parking tickets. This process includes looking up each motor vehicle registration in the New Hampshire Department of Motor Vehicles' "SPOTS" database in order to assign a delinquent ticket to a vehicle owner. Once this is accomplished, the City can then proceed with sending the vehicle owner collection notices for unpaid parking citations.

He explained that the City has a significant backlog of unpaid citations to run through the NHDMV SPOTS database.

In response to the City Council's concerns about lagging collection rates, Mr. Florence reported that the Parking Division has been working with Deputy Chief Taylor and Deputy Chief Smagula to arrange for Police Department Dispatchers to complete necessary queries in the NHDMV SPOTS database in their spare time during overnight shifts. He noted that tickets for 180 vehicles were processed last weekend alone.

Staff reported that they will keep the Parking Committee apprised of collection rates on a monthly basis.

Discussion ensued.

Councilor Pierce thanked staff for renewed attention to this matter. He also requested that staff share a copy of the City's standard delinquent collection letter. Staff stated this would be provided at the next Parking Committee meeting.

5. Financials:

a. **August 2020 Financial Statement:** Mr. Walsh provided an overview of the August financial statement. He reported that, as of August 31, 2020, roughly 16.7% of FY2021 had elapsed.

- i. Revenues. Total revenues are at 12% or 4.7% less than budget.

Meter revenues are less than budget by approximately 8.7% year-to-date. However, meter revenues from PayByPhone have yet to be received and reported for August; therefore, meter revenues are understated. Meter revenues have increased significantly since the start of the Pandemic in March 2020, but remain approximately 25-30% less than last year for the same period.

Citation revenues are also less than budget by 8.7%.

Lease and Permit revenues for Q1 of the Fiscal Year have been booked and are under budget by approximately 1%. It is anticipated this will moderate as the fiscal year progresses.

- ii. Expenditures: Total expenditures are at 27% or 10.3% more than budget.
 - 1. Parking Division:
 - a. Total expenditures are at 30% of budget year to date, or approximately 13.3% ahead of budget. Mr. Walsh explained that this is normal, as some expenses are paid in full at the beginning of the fiscal year. He also noted that half of debt service is paid at the start of the fiscal year, thereby skewing expenditures.
 - b. Compensation remains less than budget by approximately 4.7%, as the Parking Division has three vacancies (two full-time Parking Enforcement Officers and one part-time Parking Meter Technician).
 - 2. General Services:
 - a. Total expenditures are at 8% year to date or approximately 8.7% less than budget.
 - b. Mr. Walsh specifically noted that expenditures on repair and maintenance of facilities (i.e. \$270,430 budget) are at 0% year to date for parking garages and surface lots.

6. Other Business:

- a. **Loading Zone Ordinance:** Mr. Walsh briefly discussed the proposed loading zone at the School Street Parking Garage near the Warren Street entrance. He reported that staff had begun to move forward with required documents for the City Council to consider this request. However, during the process of preparing those documents, it was determined the City does not have a specific "loading zone" ordinance. He suggested that the Parking Committee may want to consider establishing such an Ordinance to regulate these locations.

Discussion ensued about the quantity of loading zones currently located in Downtown. Mr. Walsh speculated that there are approximately a half dozen or so located in the Downtown Central Business District. Current locations include 11 South Main Street, Depot Street, 17 School Street, as well as South State Street at McLeod's Florist Shop.

It was noted that delivery vehicles frequently use the cobblestone median on Main Street for loading and deliveries.

It was also noted that there is a 20 minute parking space on Kennedy Lane, which was created for "loading" several years ago and, anecdotally, appears to be abused by a certain business.

Mr. Walsh suggested staff could explore the creation of an entirely new ordinance to govern loading zones, or use existing time zone ordinances (such as 10 or 15 minute parking zones) for these locations. He asked the Committee for their thoughts about these options.

Councilor Champlin asked for staff to explain why it is necessary for the City to enact an ordinance when the City had gone so long without one. Mr. Walsh stated that an ordinance would allow the City to effectively enforce loading zones. He stated that without an ordinance, a parker could occupy a loading zone continuously without repercussions.

At the end of the discussion, some members of the Parking Committee questioned the need for an ordinance. Others suggested they would open to considering a proposed ordinance if it would be diligently enforced by the Parking Division. Staff stated they would take these comments under advisement.

- b. **Discuss topics of October meeting agenda:** A brief discussion of potential agenda topics for the October Parking Committee meeting ensued.

Mr. Walsh reported that Jackson Street will be on the agenda, and property owners will be notified per the Parking Committee's previous request.

Members of the Parking Committee also requested the following topics be discussed at the October meeting:

1. Updated delinquent citation collection rates;
2. A copy of the City's standard delinquent citation collection letter;
3. FY2021 year-end projections per Q1 revenues and projected expenditures;
4. Summary of staff positions supported by the Parking Budget and vacancy status of each; and
5. Meter revenue summary by payment type (cash, credit card, PayByPhone), as well as summary of PayByPhone users and monthly transactions.

Councilor Champlin requested that Councilors Hatfield and Pierce continue to receive agenda packets for Parking Committee meetings.

- c. **Meter Feeding:** A brief discussion ensued about meter feeding on Main Street. Specifically, some members of the Committee stated that Downtown merchants had recently approached them stating that – anecdotally – meter feeding appears to be on the rise. Mr. Florence reported that there have been some complaints about meter feeding associated with contractors working on the Bangor Savings Bank project, which the Parking Division has been monitoring. Mr. Florence also stated that meter feeding has been on the rise since implementation of the PayByPhone mobile payment app last February.

7. **Adjourned:** Councilor Fennessy moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Todd Seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Amanda Lombard
Parking Division Fiscal Tech III