



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

City Manager's Office

41 Green Street, Concord NH 03301

(603) 225-8570

Thomas J. Aspell, Jr.
City Manager

Parking Committee Minutes November 23, 2020

Attendees:

Byron Champlin, City Councilor, Parking Committee Chair
Linda Kenison, City Councilor (arrived at 5:27PM)
Nathan Fennessy, City Councilor
Brent Todd, City Councilor
Jim Bouley, Mayor

Staff:

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, & Special Projects
Greg Taylor, Deputy Police Chief
Amanda Lombard, Fiscal Clerk Parking Division

Public:

Becky McKeown, Resident

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Champlin at 5:00 p.m.

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 Fennessy moved to adopt the minutes from October 26, 2020. Councilor Todd seconded. The minutes were adopted on a unanimous roll call vote.
3. **Requests and Referrals:**
 - a. **Request from Phyllis Skafidas for a Resident Parking Permit in a Meter Zone near 71 Pleasant Street.** It was noted that Ms. Skafidas sent a letter dated October 21, 2020 to the Parking Committee as a follow-up to her initial discussions with the Committee on December 23, 2019 concerning a request for a "hardship exemption" residential parking permit which she could use to park in recently metered on-street spaces near her home.

Ms. Skafidas was not in attendance at this meeting.

Mr. Walsh provided a brief recap of the December 23, 2019 discussion with Ms. Skafidas. He explained that Ms. Skafidas has a driveway at her property with room for multiple vehicles. It was also noted that the City does not offer “hardship exemption resident parking permits” for metered parking spaces. He also noted that during the December 23, 2019 meeting, the Parking Committee advised Ms. Skafidas to utilize on-street parking located on Rumford Street, which is directly opposite of her home and is not metered.

No additional action was taken on this request.

- b. Request from Becky McKeown for a Resident Parking Permits in a Meter Zone on South State Street: Mr. Walsh noted that a letter from Ms. McKeown was included in the Parking Committee’s agenda package.

Ms. McKeown is requesting creation of a resident permit parking program for properties located within the newly established meter zone on South State Street. Parking meters were installed on South State Street in January 2020 in accordance with the recommendations of the 2017 Strategic Parking Plan.

Ms. Keown addressed the Committee. She explained that she resides at 36 South State Street and has been a resident there for approximately 7 years. The property is a 6 unit apartment building. The property has two driveways, which provide on-site parking. Her home is adjacent to several businesses including Becket Glass, Bridge and Byron Printing, a laundry mat, Lucky’s Barber Shop, and McLeod’s Florists.

It was noted that most properties in the area have some level of on-site parking.

Ms. McKeown does not believe it is fair that residents must pay meters to utilize on-street parking spaces. Hence she has requested the creation of a resident permit program to use on-street metered spaces at little or no cost.

Discussion ensued. Prior to the installation of meters, it was noted that South State Street was regulated via a 2 hour free parking zone. Ms. Keown stated that she and other residents would use these spaces, and move their cars every two hours. Alternatively, she would park on adjacent side streets (such as Concord or Thompson streets) which are also regulated by time zones.

Ms. McKeown stated that she has been utilizing free time zone spaces on Concord Street for her parking needs since the meters were installed. Members of the Committee noted this was not materially different than how she was parking prior to the installation of the meters.

Discussion ensued about pre-Covid-19 Pandemic parking activity on South State Street. It was noted that South State Street saw heavy parking demand when events were held at the Capitol Center for the Arts, or Bank of NH Stage. Ms. Keown confirmed that was the case, and noted that she would park on adjacent side streets when parking on South State was unavailable.

Councilor Kenison joined the meeting at 5:27PM.

Councilor Champlin noted the City does not provide resident parking permits for households located in meter zones. He discussed equity with households residing on Main Street (which is also metered). He asked that if the City does not provide parking considerations for residents living in metered zones on Main Street, why should relief be provided for residents in meter expansion zones?

Discussion concerning the challenges and mechanics associated with resident permit programs ensued. Discussion of the UNH School of Law Neighborhood resident permit program, and challenges associated therewith also ensued. Challenges included administrative burdens and push back from residents concerning annual fees.

Councilor Todd discussed parking challenges in mixed use or transitional neighborhoods. He concurred with previous comments about the administrative challenges associated with residential permit programs. He also noted that an ample supply of free parking is available on side streets located west of South State Street, and that Ms. McKeown is taking advantage of those free parking areas.

Councilor Kenison discussed the overall financial condition of the Parking Fund. She stated that it is impossible to determine the financial success of the meter expansion zones until the Covid-19 Pandemic has subsided.

Councilor Fennessy discussed his personal experience with resident permit programs in other major metropolitan areas. He also suggested that the City review available parking data to determine whether removing some under-performing meters might be a viable option to address Ms. McKeown's request.

Councilor Champlin responded to Councilor Fennessy's suggestion regarding selective removal of parking meters. He noted that this was recently done on Court Street at the request of June Latti. He also noted that, absent a resident permit program, any parking spaces where meters are removed would become available to the general public, thereby undermining the intended goal of providing resident parking.

Councilor Champlin suggested that the Committee avoid instituting policies to address parking issues for individual members of the public. He suggested that a motion to deny the request might be appropriate.

Alternatively, Mayor Bouley suggested a motion to table the request might be appropriate, that would give the Committee the opportunity to consider this request further and research potential options. The Mayor also recalled discussions regarding newly installed meters on Storrs Street, south of Theatre Street, which have been underutilized since installation in January 2020.

Discussion ensued.

Councilor Champlin asked Ms. Keown a series of questions concerning the structure of a potential resident permit program. Ms. Keown stated that she would be comfortable having

to renew a permit annually. She also stated she would be willing to pay for a permit, if the fee was reasonable.

After additional discussion, a motion was duly made and seconded to table the discussion. The motion carried on a unanimous roll call vote.

Following the vote, the Committee requested that staff provide detailed information regarding meter revenues on South State Street to aid them in their consideration of this request.

4. **Financials:**

a. October 2020 Financial Statement: Mr. Walsh provided an overview of the October financial statement. Revenue and expenditure information was as follows:

i. Revenues:

- Total revenues were \$789,490+/- as of October 31, 2020, or 25% of budget year to date.
- Revenues from meter citations were at \$103,494 or 18% for the year.
- Meter Revenues were at \$245,562 or 17% for the year.
- Rental income was at \$315,296 or 47% for the year.

ii. Expenditures:

- Total expenditures were at \$1,012,545+/- as of October 31, 2020 or 34% of the budget.
- Parking Division expenditures through October 31, 2020 were \$947,554 or approximately 37% of budget
- General Services Department expenditures through October 31, 2020 were approximately \$64,990 or 16% of budget. Mr. Walsh noted that this amount will increase significantly once snow removal contracts are issued in November.

b. COVID- 19 Pandemic Financials Impacts and FY2021 Q1 Year End Financial Projections: Mr. Walsh walked the Parking Committee through several spreadsheets that detailed revenue impacts from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

- i. Meter Parking Revenue: Since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, as signified by Governor Sununu's Emergency "Stay at Home Order" issued on March 15, 2020, the City has lost an estimated \$403,222 in meter revenue year-to-year through October 31, 2020. Prior to the on-set of the Pandemic, FY2021 revenues were slightly ahead of the previous fiscal year.
- ii. Meter Parking Citation Revenue: Since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic on March 15, 2020, the City has lost an estimated \$94,059 in meter revenue year-to-year

through October 31, 2020. Prior to the on-set of the Pandemic, revenues were at 97% year-over-year.

- iii. P-Card Revenue: Prior to the start of the Pandemic, P-Card revenues were lagging and were off by approximately \$43,000 from July – February year-over-year. Mr. Walsh explained that this was due, in large part, to a lack of contract between the State of New Hampshire and the SEA/SEIU labor union, as well as relocation of some State employees from Downtown to the Meldrim Thompson Office Park on Hazen Drive. This issue has been affecting the Parking Fund for the past 2 years.

5. Meter Zone Expansion Update:

Mr. Walsh provided an overview of a memorandum dated November 19, 2020, which provided a detailed history of the FY2019 and FY2020 meter expansion zones, minor modifications of those approved by the City Council over the past year or so, as well as financial information related thereto.

Mr. Walsh reported that the meter zones were recommended in the 2017 Strategic Parking Plan. In total, 258 meters were proposed. The purpose of the meter zones was to 1) better manage public parking around activity generators such as the Capitol Center for the Arts, Federal Court, and Merrimack County Court, as well as 2) expand revenues to support various capital improvements for parking system facilities and infrastructure.

Mr. Walsh noted there had been some revisions to the meter expansion zones, as follows:

- a. Storrs Street Meter Zone Expansion: As part of the FY2020 budget process, the City Council adopted Ordinance #3043, on June 17, 2019, which approved the installation of 81 additional meters on Storrs Street, specifically north of Dixon Avenue and south of Theatre Street. The same ordinance also eliminated the planned installation of 7 parking meters on Dixon Avenue. The changes were pursued due to the following:
 - i. Granite Center Redevelopment Project: This project, which was undertaken by local developers Steve Duprey and Jon Chorlian, involved the acquisition and renovation of properties at 6 Dixon Avenue, 14 Dixon Avenue, and 1 Eagle Square.

Specifically, the project involved the reconfiguration of Dixon Avenue in order to establish an expanded “pocket park”. The expanded park resulted in the elimination of all on-street parking on Dixon Avenue, except two handicap parking spaces.

The developers also encouraged the City to establish additional on-street parking on Storrs Street, north of Dixon Avenue, to support retail uses at their property located at 14 Dixon Avenue.
 - ii. Concord Hospital Reserve Parking: The City, in part, elected to eliminate on-street parking south of Theatre Street in order to encourage Concord Hospital employees based at the Smile Building to utilize their reserved parking spaces at the Storrs Street Garage.
- b. Pleasant Street at the Federal Courthouse: Ordinance #3044, as enacted in conjunction

with the FY2020 budget, eliminated Law Enforcement only parking on various sections of Pleasant Street along portions of the Federal Building and Courthouse. Said spaces were replaced with 10-hour metered parking in mid- January 2020.

Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Marshal's Office contacted the City objecting to the change due to security concerns. On May 11, 2020, the City Council adopted Ordinance #3071, which re-established Law Enforcement parking. This resulted in the loss of approximately 7 meter spaces.

- c. Court Street: In accordance with the recommendations of the 2017 Strategic Parking Plan, as well as Ordinance #3043, the City planned to install meters on Court Street. Prior to metering, the street was a free parking area with a 3 hour time zone.

At the request of June Latti, resident of 10 Court Street, the City Council approved Ordinance 3061, on March 9, 2020, which modified the meter plan so that no meters would be installed on that section of Court Street between Montgomery and North State Streets.

This resulted in the loss of approximately 4 metered spaces.

After these changes, a net total of 333 meters were installed in the meter expansion zones.

Mr. Walsh reiterated that Phase II of meter expansion (293 meters) were installed in mid-to-late January 2020. Approximately 2 months later, the Covid-19 Pandemic hit.

The Pandemic has caused severe disruption to downtown economic activity due to emergency stay at home orders, closure of live entertainment venues, and restrictions on in-person dining at restaurants. Consequently, the Parking Fund is sustaining losses and running a deficit. Therefore, the potential exists that the Parking Fund might become insolvent in FY2022.

The on-set of the Covid-19 Pandemic meant that the City had less than two months of normal conditions for the new meters to generate revenues.

Based upon actual revenues and expenditures for the month of February 2020, the City projects that these meters would generate approximately \$61,160+/- in net operating income after expenses in their first full year of operation under normal (i.e. non-Covid-19 Pandemic) circumstances.

The Parking Committee thanked the staff for this information and took it under advisement.

6. Capital Improvement Projects Update: A brief discussion ensued concerning the following projects:

- a. School Street Garage Renovations (CIP 433): Mr. Walsh reported that the project is substantially complete; however, completion of the punch list has been hampered as the project's electrical contractor has been stricken with Covid-19.

Mr. Walsh stated that approximately \$75,000 remains available in the project budget. He noted that this would be used to complete some additional exterior brick masonry repairs in the spring, together with installation of a trench drain on L1 of the facility.

Once the work is completed, and unless PRM Holdings and the Duprey Companies otherwise decide to engage in negotiations with the City concerning the City's August 2020 proposal to permanently transition the garage to a permit system, reserved parking will be transitioned from the interim permit program back to dedicated (exclusive use) leases.

If the garage is transitioned back to dedicated lease spaces, PRM and the Duprey Companies will be invoiced for their respective cost shares for the project. Combined, their cost shares will be approximately \$140,000 annually for the next 15 years.

- b. Storrs Street Garage Renovations (CIP 529): Mr. Walsh reported that plans and specifications are currently in process. He anticipates that the project will go out to bid in January or February. Work will begin this spring. Like the School Street Garage Renovations, this work will likely require implementation of an interim permit program. The work will take approximately one year to complete.
- c. State Street Garage Renovations (CIP #433): Mr. Walsh reported that the HL Turner Group has been contract to complete a needs assessment for the facility. That effort is on hold, given the City will likely delay this project due to the negative financial impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Mr. Walsh reported that the FY2020 estimate for the project was approximately \$3.66 million. Construction costs are likely to increase while the project is delayed.

7. Other Business:

- a. School Street Parking Garage South Stair Tower Plaza: Mayor Bouley inquired about the newly installed granite cube bollards at the plaza. He asked if these were relocated from Main Street and whether they would present challenges for deliveries during winter months. Mr. Walsh stated that the bollards were brand new and purchased as part of the School Street Garage Project. Mr. Walsh stated that a 4-5' gap has been provided between each cube to help facilitate deliveries and pedestrian traffic. He stated that he has instructed the City's snow removal contractor to clear snow from the gaps in order to not impact deliveries during winter months.
 - b. Outdoor Restaurant Seating: Mayor Bouley noted that spring will soon be here and the Covid-19 Pandemic is still ongoing. He suggested that the City will need to continue to allow restauranteurs to have expanded outdoor seating opportunities for the upcoming season. He insinuated that tables and chairs within parking spaces are less than ideal and asked for any suggestions about alternate arrangements. It was also noted that free use of parking spaces deprives the City of parking revenues.
8. **Adjourned**: Councilor Fennessy moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Kenison seconded. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Lombard
Parking Division Fiscal Tech III