



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

City Manager's Office

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Thomas J. Aspell, Jr.
City Manager

Parking Committee Minutes **January 25, 2021**

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 of Development
Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, & Special Projects
Chip Chesley, General Services Director
Jeffrey Hoadley, General Services Deputy Director
Jim Major, General Services, Highway and Utilities Superintendent
Greg Taylor, Deputy Police Chief
Amanda Lombard, Fiscal Clerk Parking Division
David Florence, Parking Division Supervisor

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Champlin at 5:00 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.
2. **Adoption of Minutes:** Councilor Fennessy moved to adopt the minutes from November 23, 2020. Councilor Todd seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted on a unanimous roll call vote.
3. **Requests and Referrals:**
 - a. **Suzanne Isabelle-Request for installation of Pavement Markings on Thompson Street:** The Parking Committee reviewed a letter from Suzanne Isabelle, resident of 18 Thompson Street, which expressed concerns about on-street parking. Specifically, Ms. Isabelle requested that the City install pavement markings to denote parking setbacks at driveways, intersections, and fire hydrants. Ms. Isabelle did not attend the meeting.

In her letter, Ms. Isabelle reported it is a common occurrence that cars park too close to the corners and driveways, making it difficult for snowplows and emergency vehicles to navigate the narrow street. She also stated there is almost always a vehicle parked in front of the fire hydrant.

Ms. Isabelle's letter also discussed various factors which she believes are contributing to parking issues on Thompson Street. These included recent Zoning Board of Adjustment approvals to redevelop properties into multifamily apartment buildings, as well as the installation of meters on sections of South, State, Wall and Chesley Streets.

Mr. Walsh explained that Thompson Street is a one-way street between South Main Street and South Spring Street. Ms. Isabelle's letter pertains to that section between South State and South Street (which is one-way traffic west bound and parking on the north side of the road). Mr. Walsh reported that the City receives a few requests annually to install pavement markings in neighborhoods on the periphery of the Downtown commercial district.

Mr. Walsh reminded the Parking Committee that per its September 28, 2020 discussion of Lucy Harrington's request to have pavement markings installed on Concord Street, staff, per a vote of the Parking Committee, was directed to install pavement markings to layout parking spaces when so requested by an aggrieved resident. It was also noted that pavement markings could not be installed until the spring.

Councilor Kenison added that she visited Thompson Street and believes that vehicles are parking on Thompson Street to avoid meters on other streets. She suggested that other staff members go out and take a look at the street and report back their findings.

Chip Chesley, General Services Director, addressed the Parking Committee. He stated that the General Services Department needs to prioritize these requests as they are received. He explained that General Services has other pavement marking requests, such as crosswalks and stop bars, which may rise to a higher priority. Given the limited capacity of the pavement marking crew, it can be challenging for General Services to respond to these additional requests quickly.

If this request is approved by the Parking Committee then General Services would work with Mr. Walsh to determine how to properly mark the street in accordance with the City's Code of Ordinances and State Law relative to parking setbacks for driveways, intersections, fire hydrants, and other similar items.

Councilor Kenison also suggested that once the Committee approves or denies requests, the residents should then receive a follow up letter or email notifying them of the Committee's decision.

Councilor Champlin agreed and added that the Committee's long range goal is to increase neighborhood enforcement. He noted that the Parking Division currently has two vacant Parking Enforcement Officer positions, which would assist with neighborhood enforcement if filled. However, these positions are going unfilled due to financial impacts of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic.

Councilor Kenison moved to install pavement markings on Thompson Street. Councilor Todd seconded the motion. The motion carried on a unanimous roll call vote.

4. **Financials:**

- a. FY 2020 Year End Financial Statement (CAFR): Mr. Walsh provided an overview of the year end audited financial statement for the FY 2020 budget, which ended on June 30, 2020.
 - I. Revenues: Actual total revenues for FY 2020 were \$2,235,543, which was less than the budgeted amount of \$2,786,115 by \$550,572.
 - II. Expenditures: Actual total expenditures for FY 2020 were \$2,433,345, which was less than the budgeted amount of \$2,800,792 by \$367,447.
 - III. Gain/Loss: Overall, the Parking Fund lost \$58,322 in FY2020.
 - IV. Fund Balance: Parking Fund working capital decreased from \$675,944 in FY 2019 to \$617,622 at the end of FY 2020.
- b. FY 2020 Projected if Covid-19 Pandemic had Not Occurred: Mr. Walsh reported that the Covid-19 Pandemic, which officially began in mid-March 2020, had a significant negative impact on FY 2020 parking revenues.

Mr. Walsh reported that Covid-19 related meter revenue losses between March and June 2020 were approximately \$328,000. Covid-19 meter citation losses during the same period were an additional \$74,739.

Mr. Walsh reported that if these pandemic related losses had not occurred, revenues for the Parking Fund for FY 2020 would have been approximately \$2.9 million. After expenditures, the working capital in the Parking Fund would have actually increased from \$675,944 to approximately \$1.020 million if the Covid-19 Pandemic had not occurred.

- c. December 31, 2020 Financial Statement: Mr. Walsh provided an overview of the December financial statement. Revenue and expenditure information was as follows:
 - I. Revenues: During the period of July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, total revenues were \$1,034,998, which is 33% of total budget. As of December 31, 2020, 50% of the fiscal year had elapsed. Metered parking fees, meter parking citations, and P-Card transactions continue to trend significantly below budget due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, rental income is performing better, as it is only 2% less than budget year-to-date.
 - II. Expenditures: During the period of July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, total expenditures were \$1,258,816, or 44% of budget YTD. As of December 31, 2020, 50% of the fiscal year had elapsed. Expenditures are running below budget in part due to 2.6 vacant Parking Enforcement Officer positions.

Discussion ensued. Councilor Fennessy asked why expenditures in FY 2020 are greater than the same period in FY 2019. Mr. Walsh explained that this is attributed to certain items such as property taxes, snow removal, and wages and benefits; all of which tend to increase from year to year. He also noted that debt service is slightly greater for the same period year-over-year.

Councilor Fennessy expressed concerns about the Covid-19 Pandemic's impacts on revenues and suggested that the City curtail spending to the extent practical in FY 2020 in order to preserve fund balance.

Mayor Bouley asked if General Services is still staffing the Downtown Services Team seven days per week. Chip Chesley reported that the Department is staffing Downtown Services seven days per week, as that approach improves the level of services to the community and allows for more timely responses to maintenance needs.

- d. COVID- 19 Pandemic Financials Impacts and FY 2021 Q1 Year End Financial Projections: Mr. Walsh walked the 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 in March 2020 to present, the City has lost an estimated \$545,607 in meter revenues.
 - II. Meter Parking Citation Revenue: Since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March 2020, the City has lost an estimated (\$106,006) in meter citation revenues.
- e. FY 2021 Year End Projection: Mr. Walsh reviewed his January 20, 2021 report to the Parking Committee, which projected FY 2021 revenues, expenditures, and fund balance based upon actual expenditures through the end of the second quarter for FY 2021 (i.e. December 31, 2020).

Mr. Walsh stated that, based upon current trends, he anticipates the Parking Fund will lose approximately \$446,000 in FY 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Therefore, fund balance will decrease from \$617,622 to approximately \$171,500. Mr. Walsh provided an overview of underlying assumptions supporting his projections.

Mr. Walsh also reviewed potential options outlined in his memorandum related to revenues and expenditures to help mitigate parking losses in FY 2021 and beyond.

Councilor Todd discussed the portions of Mr. Walsh's memorandum, which noted that modems for the majority of parking kiosks will need to be upgraded in order to remain operational, due to discontinuance of 2G and 3G service, once 5G service is enacted nationwide. He asked if we have an idea of the timing of when we will be required to purchase the modems.

David Florence responded that he was currently working with the City's kiosk vendor to determine when the migration to 5G will occur. He confirmed that 3G will be discontinued once 5G is enacted nationally. The City's kiosks operate on 3G via T-Mobile and, thus, new modems will be required in order to process credit card payments. He speculated that

the switchover will likely occur within the next 6-12 months, and, therefore, would likely need to be addressed in the FY 2022 budget. He estimated the cost of modems would be approximately \$25,000. He added that the new modems would be compatible with Verizon, T-Mobile, Sprint, as well as AT&T, thus enabling the City to potentially negotiate a better price, as well as achieve more reliable service.

5. **Meter Zone Expansion:**

- a. South State Street Meter Revenues by Street Segment (Block): Mr. Walsh reviewed a spreadsheet which detailed net meter revenues for South State Street on a block by block basis between Pleasant and Thorndike Streets. This information was requested by the Parking Committee at its November meeting.

In total, this area has 57 on-street meters, of which approximately 45 located between Wall and Thorndike, were added as part of meter expansion. He noted that net revenues were \$15,114 for the period of January 1 – December 31, 2020. Mr. Walsh reiterated that net revenues were low due to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, which officially began in mid-March 2020 approximately 45 days after meter expansion was completed.

- b. Staff Report – Residential Parking Permit Options in Meter Expansion Zones: Mr. Walsh reviewed a memorandum dated January 20, 2021, which reviewed potential options for implementation of a resident permit program in meter expansion zones. The memorandum was prepared at the request of the Parking Committee at its November 23, 2020 meeting.

The memorandum provided an overview of the meter expansion program. In accordance with the 2017 Strategic Parking Plan, as well as the FY 2019 and FY 2020 budgets, the City metered 333 parking spaces in Downtown. Of this total, 293 meters were installed in January 2020. The Covid-19 Pandemic began approximately two months later.

Using February 2020 revenue and expense data (which was the only full month of operation prior to the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic), staff estimated the annual net revenue for these 333 spaces would be \$61,160 in a non-Covid-19 environment. However, Covid-19 has significantly impacted Downtown activity associated parking revenues.

The memorandum provided four potential options for a resident permit program in meter zones.

After review, Councilor Champlin stated he had reservations about making changes to the meter expansion zone during the Covid-19 Pandemic. He noted the Pandemic was creating temporary and unprecedented challenges for the Parking System and suggested it would be appropriate to wait to see how meters in expansion zones perform under normal conditions, after the Pandemic ends and the parking system stabilizes, before making any potential changes to meter expansion areas.

Councilor Todd agreed with Councilor Champlin's comments.

Mayor Bouley stated that the Parking Committee has received good data from staff over the past several months about meter expansion. He suggested that the Parking Committee

establish a subcommittee to review data and options, as well as propose potential of a couple of members to come back and make suggestions to the group.

After additional discussion, it was the consensus to establish a subcommittee to review meter expansion zones. Subcommittee members are Mayor Bouley, Councilor Fennessy and Council Kenison.

6. **Discussion of FY 2022 Parking Fund Budget:** Mr. Walsh reported that the City's annual budget process is under way and that he is obligated to submit a draft FY 2022 Parking Budget to the City Manager and the Finance Department by March 7th. He asked the Parking Committee for any goals, guidance, or input it may have for the FY 2022 Parking Budget.

Discussion ensued. Councilor Fennessy stated that he would like to see the City reducing spending on parking garage repairs. Councilor Champlin added that the City should be looking at sensible ways to maximize our revenues while minimizing our expenses.

Councilor Fennessy suggested that the Parking Fund's Covid-19 Pandemic related financial challenges will last into spring 2022, as it appears likely the Pandemic will continue until that time.

7. **Other Business:**

- a. **Outdoor Restaurant Seating:** Picking up on the Parking Committee's discussion of the Covid-19 Pandemic and its impact on downtown merchant activities, Carlos Baia briefly discussed outdoor dining in parking spaces. He explained that City Administration plans to approach the City Council in February to renew the program, which was initially enacted last year in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Specifically, the program will allow for restaurants to occupy the City's on-street public parking spaces from April 1 – November 15, 2021 for expanded outdoor dining due ongoing to limitations on indoor dining related to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Consistent with the City Council's decision last year, the \$15 / space / day parking encumbrance fee would be waived for the upcoming season. It was noted that approximately 20 parking spaces were used last year by downtown restaurants for dining.
- b. The Committee tentatively set its next meeting for March 22, 2021.

8. **Adjourned:** Councilor Todd moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Fennessy seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM on a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Lombard
Parking Division Fiscal Tech III