

PARKING COMMITTEE MINUTES
Thursday, March 20, 2003
City Hall – Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Parking Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Alex Hanson at approximately 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: City Councilor Alex Hanson, Chairman
John P. Bohenko, City Manager
John Burke, Parking & Transportation Director
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director
Deputy Police Chief Dave Young
Andrew Purgiel, City Auditor

II. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Motion made by City Manager John Bohenko to accept the January 16, 2003 minutes of the Parking Committee. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Dave Young. Motion passed.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Hanover Street - Valet Parking** – 100 Club Pilot Program – This is informational only. John Burke reported that a License Agreement is in place.
- (B) **Market Street Taxi Stands** – John Burke reported that he attended the Taxi Commission meeting on Monday. The owner of Breaking New Grounds complained to the Commission that taxis are not using the two new taxi stand spaces in front of his store and he would like to see them revert back to metered parking. The Taxi Commission decided that the pilot program should continue into May and they should revisit the issue of utilization at that time.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Congress Street – Request for 15-Minute Parking** – Theresa Ahadi, of Market Square News Inc. was present and referred to her letter requesting that the two 15-minute parking spaces on Fleet Street be moved to Congress Street where they could be better utilized by area businesses. She has customers that just run in for a newspaper and have to double park. She stated that Eva's Shoppe does a lot of mail order business and has people run in for a minute. She stated that the two 15-minute spaces

would alleviate the double parking in the area. Chairman Alex Hanson stated that the 15-minute spaces would also help with the situation at the pizza shop on Congress Street.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to move the two 15-minute parking spaces from Fleet Street to Congress Street and make the two spaces on Fleet Street 2-hour parking. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Dave Young. **MOTION PASSED.**

- (B) Market/Hanover Street Municipal Parking Lot – Request to use lot for Spring Sidewalk Sale.** Jennifer Slade of Attrezzi referred to her letter that requested closing the small parking lot next to the High-Hanover Parking Garage for one day in May for an open house/spring cleaning sidewalk sale. She stated that the sale would be open to area businesses. Alex Hanson suggested that this matter be included in the discussion at the City Council work session of April 7th regarding the proposed closing of Market Street to automobile traffic.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to refer this matter to the City Council for discussion at the work session on April 7, 2003. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Dave Young. **MOTION PASSED.**

- (C) Downtown Parking Validation Program** – Peter Egelston, Owner of the Portsmouth Brewery was present to speak to the proposed Downtown Validation Program. He stated that there is a perception that parking in Portsmouth is impossible. And perceptions become reality whether they are true or not. He believes that the validation program is a good idea as it will allow merchants to credit their customers for parking in the garage. The way it could work is that the merchants would buy rolls of stickers from the City that represent time in the garage. They would affix decals in their store windows alerting customers that they validate garage parking. They then could provide the stickers to their customers who would affix them to the back of the parking ticket. This certainly would encourage using the parking garage and that Portsmouth wants your business. It would also move people into the parking garage, which would free up parking on street.

The City Manager agreed with Mr. Egelston and thought this should be considered. He suggested that time could be sold in hourly increments, perhaps in \$100 blocks to the merchants. Because there typically would be some shrinkage with the stickers, a small discount to encourage participation could be considered.

MOTION made by John Bohenko to authorize the Director of Parking and Transportation to develop a pilot program for a Downtown Parking

Validation Program and bring it back to the Committee at the April meeting. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. MOTION PASSED.

V. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

- (A) **Parking Survey – Rates & Fees** – John Burke stated that his office conducted a survey of similar size communities throughout New England related to parking rates and fees. He stated that the City had the lowest fine rate structure of all the communities by far. The survey was provided to the Committee.

Alex Hanson asked about the multiple time zone violations. He stated that Attorney Sullivan should determine if an Ordinance is required to issue multiple tickets (i.e. a meter violation and a 2-hour violation).

Chairman Hanson suggested raising the fine for parking in a loading zone to increase compliance and to be more in line with other communities. John Burke stated that the loading zones are being well used by trucks. Steve Parkinson suggested holding the rate until the end of the pilot period for the loading zones.

John Burke noted that enforcement is currently having a problem with the PARKED IN A NO PARKING AREA offense. Specifically, people will park in these no parking areas (near crosswalks, too close to intersections, etc.) and once they receive the \$10 violation, they may decide to leave their car there all day. Enforcement has no ability to write another ticket or to tow. Therefore, the result is a car in an unsafe spot all day. It was recommended that the fine rate be raised to \$20 to achieve compliance.

MOTION made by John Bohenko to recommend increasing the fine for PARKING IN A NO PARKING AREA from \$10.00 to \$20.00. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief David Young. MOTION PASSED.

This Ordinance will be brought forward with the Omnibus Ordinance in May.

The issue of an administrative summons fee was raised. This is a fee that reimburses the City for issuing and serving summons to scofflaws. It was recommended this be established at \$50.00. The fee recommendation will be brought to the City's Fee Committee.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to recommend establishing an administrative summons fee at \$50.00. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. MOTION PASSED.

Deputy Chief Dave Young suggested that we find out whether other communities hand deliver summons like Portsmouth does. John Burke stated he would find out.

- (B) **HHPF – Security Surveillance System** – John Burke stated that a new computerized system has been installed at the parking garage that allows us to monitor the surveillance log of our security officers. There are check points all through the garage where the security officer has to activate the system. This ensures that he is doing his job all through the evening and covering the entire facility. He presented a computerized printout of one complete security schedule.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 am

Respectfully submitted

Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary