

**PARKING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Thursday, April 15, 2004**  
**City Hall – Council Chambers**

**Members Present:**

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

The Parking Committee meeting was called to order by Alex Hanson, Chairman at approximately 8:35 a.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:**

Motion made by Steve Parkinson to accept the February 19, 2004 minutes of the Parking Committee. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

**IV. CORRESPONDENCE: None**

Alex Hanson suggested moving the Boot and Tow Ordinance to the end of the meeting, as there were people from the public present.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS: (Out of Order)**

- (A) **Bike Portsmouth/Seacoast Area Bike Routes (SABR) Request for Metered Space – Bike-to-Work Day – 3/24/04** email attached – **MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson to refer to the City Manager with power. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Dave Young. Motion passed.

The DBA President was not yet present to speak to the requested agenda items so the Committee returned to the Boot & Tow item.

**V. OLD BUSINESS:**

- (A) **Boot & Tow Ordinance Review** – Legal Department Memorandum attached – Report back. Other New Hampshire communities such as Manchester are linking unpaid parking tickets to the auto registration process. The Legal Dept. provided a summary of the enabling legislation that allows this to occur. John Burke suggested tabling this matter until he,

the Tax Collector and IT Department could meet with their peers in Manchester to investigate the administrative and computer requirements of the program and report back.

**VII. INFORMATIONAL:**

- (A) **Parking Impact Fee Review** – Update – The City Manager stated that the EDC has provided a progress memorandum to the City Council. They have requested additional time. They are looking at a combination of mechanisms and reviewing what other communities are doing. Alex Hanson suggested that Newburyport’s policies also be reviewed.
- (B) **Proposed Sheraton Expansion/Parking** – Update – City Manager John Bohenko stated that an EDC subcommittee is working with the Sheraton to get a Memorandum of Agreement together for the City Council that will outline and articulate issues for the City and Sheraton so that the planning process can move forward.
- (C) **Omnibus Parking Ordinance for 2004** – Update – John Burke stated that a draft Ordinance will be brought to the May Parking Committee meeting.
- (D) **Press Request for Parking Information** – Attached.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS: (RESUMED)**

- (B) **Proposed One Time Courtesy Ticket for Expired Meter Violations** – Downtown Business Association request for consideration – Paul Sorli, DBA President, presented two letters to the Committee that were unanimously approved by the Downtown Business Association (DBA). The courtesy ticket was discussed by Natalie Hassold of Tugboat Alley who had researched Portland, Maine’s free ticket promotion.

Natalie Hassold stated that she spoke with Andrew Martin, Parking Enforcement in Portland who is constantly getting calls from people in other cities and towns stating that Portland’s policy is a nice gesture. She also sees it as a great opportunity for residents and people that work downtown. Portland allows one free violation every 6 months.

City Manager John Bohenko stated that John Burke had researched the policy previously for the Committee. He asked John the amount of Portland’s violation. John stated \$10 for expired meter or time zone violation, which is double ours. John noted that when the promotion was started in Portland nearly a decade ago, they doubled the fine from \$5 to \$10. The City Manager stated that it had been many years since the City of Portsmouth increased its fine amount for expired meter.

Chairman Alex Hanson suggested that Natalie review this with the members of the DBA and submit a proposal. Natalie stated that she doesn't think the DBA got this far, but they are interested in restudying some kind of a forgiveness ticket.

The City Manager stated that the City has studied this. He added that we could update the research to see if doubling the fine would make the proposal revenue neutral.

Natalie Hassold's recommendation was for the City to restudy it and present it to our group as well as the Chamber again for consideration.

Alex Hanson stated that we can give you the data and you can make the presentation and report to the City Council.

The City Manager stated he understood the concept and would prefer to have the City Council review it since it involves a public relations issue but also may impact revenues.

Chairman Alex Hanson suggested the DBA get the item on the City Council agenda and to be at the City Council meeting to speak to it.

**MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson that additional information be compiled by staff and the matter be referred to the City Council. Seconded by John Burke. Motion passed.

- (C) **Using Parking Revenue for Traffic Control Officers** – Downtown Business Association request for consideration - Paul Sorli stated the second letter is to increase the fees in the parking garage on days of community events for the purpose of offsetting costs of city services on those particular days.

The City Manager asked John Burke what the fees were currently. John answered \$5 flat rate fee for Market Square Day and \$3 flat rate fee for Children's Day.

The City Manager stated that he thought the proposal had merit to look at, but again it is a City Council policy issue.

The City Manager stated that one of the things that could be looked at is co-sponsorship, probably the best way to deal with this. The idea being that the City would enter into an agreement with the entities as co-sponsors of the event.

Barbara Massar stated that this is not exclusively for Pro Portsmouth.

John Burke stated that flat rate pricing needs to be considered carefully. He noted that a significant percentage of people come in to use the parking garage on event days unrelated to the event for short durations. When the flat rate is higher and they are staying for an hour or two to go to a restaurant or such – they generally express their displeasure to the parking attendants.

The City Manager stated that if this moves forward with the City Council he would like to have it in the budget for next year.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

- (A) Michele Osway, 106 Penhallow St. stated that she had met with John Burke and Bob Sullivan regarding parking issues. Specifically, she was being ticketed in the loading zone by the Police Department on Penhallow after 6 p.m. when she thought it was o.k. Deputy Police Chief Dave Young stated that there had been confusion on the part of officers, but that these tickets were being voided on a case by case basis.

Her second issue was that she was opposed to meter violations going from \$5.00 to \$25.00 after you get 20 tickets in a calendar year. She stated that she is looking for some special dispensation as a downtown business owner. She discussed the fact that she needs to park close to her restaurant for deliveries, pickups, etc. and she parks in the garage in the morning, then gets her car for deliveries, etc. However, she understands that she is going to get parking tickets because of her need for getting in and out.

The City Manager asked her if she was getting tickets for being in the parking space beyond the 2-hour limit. She responded yes, sometimes. She stated that she does not have a problem with the \$5 ticket it is when it jumps to \$25.

The City Manager stated that parking turnover is key. If someone needs to park over two hours they should park in the parking garage, which is centrally located downtown and not far from Penhallow Street. It was pointed out that there is a commercial loading zone directly in front of her restaurant as well and many other businesses do not have this level of convenience.

Natalie Hassold commented on the turnover issue saying that the DBA should put on its Agenda more than one time a year a reminder to employers to not let their employees park at the meters.

John Burke stated that this is key. An onstreet parking space is a city's most valuable parking space. A National Chamber of Commerce study linked the value of an onstreet parking space in an urban downtown at

between \$25,000 and \$50,000 in retail sales assuming the parking space turns over. He noted that the City has approximately 850 metered downtown parking spaces. If they don't turnover, that is all you get - 850 spaces for a day. If they can turnover on average 4 or more times you can increase your effective parking capacity to thousands of spaces, which allows businesses to grow.

The City Manager stated that there is vibrancy in the downtown and we all want to see it continue – but parking turnover is the key.

Paul Sorli asked what the policy was on using traffic guards for traffic control rather than Police officers. The City Manager stated that these issues are being reviewed with the Police Dept.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

---

Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary