

PARKING COMMITTEE MEETING
7:30 AM –Thursday, October 9, 2008
City Hall – Conference Room A

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ken Smith called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Councilor Kenneth Smith, Chair
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director
Deputy Police Chief Len DiSesa
Jon Frederick, Parking Manager
Andrew Purgiel, City Auditor

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

MOTION made by Jon Frederick to accept the minutes of the August 14 and September 11, 2008 meetings. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) Ceres Street – Request for Loading Zone – Traffic & Safety Committee referral (Map attached) – Jon Frederick stated that the proposed loading zone was recommend by the Traffic & Safety Committee, putting a loading zone on the left hand side of street heading down Ceres from Bow St. The zone is approximately 56’ long and extends to the end of the curb on the left hand side of street. It is a 24-hour loading zone. Both sides of the street are designated as “No Parking”.

Hollis Broderick, co-proprietor of The Antiquarium is opposed to having the proposed no parking area, feels it won’t assist them by having a designated area. It is essential they park as close as they can to their business. They have large furniture and need to have access to their doorway

Brad Hawthorne manages most of the buildings there and also has four apartments, some street level, some above balconies with tenants that need ability to drop off groceries, laundry, etc. and feels it’s impractical for them to have to carry from the top of the hill.

Conrad DeRochers, owner of Macro Polo and Macro Unleashed, between Tavern Bar and wood carving shop in front of the proposed loading zone. To put a loading zone on curb side is a safety hazard as it is a pedestrian street. He recommends putting the loading zone on the other side of the street to not block the sidewalk from pedestrians.

Jack Blalock, owner of Old Ferry Landing since 1975, has seen the evolution of this area. There are a lot of trucks delivering to his business as well as to the neighboring restaurants. He feels if the current unofficial

loading works the best and will leave the left hand side of Ceres St. heading from Bow free and clear for pedestrian traffic and small trucks.

George Sirocco from Salamander Glass agrees with much of the other speakers regarding the loading zone being more functional on the water side rather than the sidewalk side of the street. He feels the problems that have been experienced there may be alleviated if there was a little more aggressive enforcement. There is a public safety hazard with the speed some drive down there and the many children and families milling around eating ice cream. He feels the current loading/unloading has been working well and would work better if some public employee would be there more frequently to move people along that are just eating ice cream and creating more of a hazard through congestion.

Peter DeSoglio of the Dolphin Striker feels what has been said is true and the problem is not going away. Agrees that the whole left hand side needs to stay clear. The unofficial loading zone should be made official.

Denise Mallet of the Black Trumpet stated that the curb has been destroyed over and over again over the years and if all deliveries were on the left, that curb would just be destroyed. People would not walk down the sidewalk in front of the shops resulting in lost business. She asked that the concerns with the trucks be shared with them and they could better enforce with their own vendors and this might be a better compromise. A lot of the cars you see parked down there are not dropping off deliveries but going off elsewhere. She suggested better signage for the area.

The Chair took a moment and gave a history of Ceres Street. Ceres Street is a no parking area, so none of this is even supposed to be taking place. As the ordinance currently stands, the activities on Ceres Street are illegal. What we are trying to do is make it official so that activities going on there are legal. When the idea of having a loading zone came up, the question became, "Where would be place it?" Anything beyond the Moran gates is too narrow and just doesn't work. Anything on the right hand side is blocking the driveway and we cannot, by law, block an active driveway.

Deputy Chief DiSesa stated it is also an access for emergency vehicles.

The Chair stated that legally we cannot put a loading zone on the side between the right-of-way and the gates to Moran. The loading zone would be a 24-loading hour zone. Any loading zone in the City after 7:00 p.m. becomes a parking space unless it's deemed a 24-hour loading zone. In that case nobody is allowed to park there at all, leaving continuous access for commercial vehicles. We will be discussing later on in this meeting a system to allow businesses owners to purchase a commercial loading zone pass for private vehicles to be identified as loading/unloading and access commercial loading zones with non-commercial vehicles. The idea is to

assist all of you and help make activity on Ceres Street legal and we are trying to come up with a system that works. Parking enforcement is enforcing the current laws and this is how we got to this stage. Residents who park there to unload their groceries, etc. will be doing it at their own risk. We are trying to clean up and make what has been going on there legal.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated that what we see since the gas crisis hit is larger trucks are being used for deliveries so vendors can save money on gas. They will pack 3 times as much delivery material into a large truck rather than 2 or 3 small box trucks. We see large tractor trailers negotiating these small narrow streets. Ceres is a cow pasture street, not on our radar for speed.

The Chair stated the second part to be brought up is to allow you to be able to have access to this loading area.

Jon Frederick stated the unofficial loading zone is against the fence on the right side. The problem from the enforcement and safety perspective is vehicles parked two abreast in that area and sometimes 3 abreast coming from Bow Street. This becomes an issue when multiple people want to park their vehicles for 10-15 minutes to load/unload. Businesses need to load/unload but there's got to be safe access to and from each end of the street. If we were to maintain the status quo we'd still have the issue of not having something official in accordance with the City's Ordinance which has been broached to us by the Legal Dept.

Steve Parkinson stated that part of the issue down there as he sees it is because we have this unofficial loading zone and there is no signage. Mr. Parkinson agrees with Jon and suggested the possibility of a trial period as we do under the Omnibus to create an official 24-hour loading zone where it has currently been utilized and clearly mark the remainder of the street as "No Parking". Additionally, add a 24-hour loading zone the size of one parking space on the left side of the street tucked in under the bump out. This would limit the parking vehicles for deliveries to that specific area only. Since they are 24-hour loading zones, they would not be open to parking after enforcement hours.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to have a one year trial period creating an official 24-hour loading zone in the current unofficial loading zone area, one 24-hour loading zone on the west side of Ceres under the bump out nearest Bow Street, and clearly mark the remainder of the street "No Parking". Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated he had no issue if there was enough room for a fire truck to get by as he is concerned about the safety aspect.

The Chair reiterated that what we have done is you have two loading areas that are now official, no parking status remains the same throughout the street and these loading areas are 24 hours so they cannot convert into parking spaces.

The Chair asked for a motion to suspend the rules and take Old Business A.

MOTION made by Jon Frederick to suspend the rules. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Len DiSesa. Motion passed.

Commercial Loading Zone Permits – (Memo dated September 9, 2008 attached) – Jon Frederick stated another issue they are seeing that the Legal Dept. brought to our attention is the parking of non-commercial vehicles in loading zones. Our Ordinance currently reads “During these times only trucks, vans and other commercial delivery vehicles engaged in loading or unloading of product, merchandise or equipment may park in commercial loading zones.” Any other commercial vehicle would be a non-commercial vehicle that is marked for commercial purposes as the Flower Kiosk, Prelude, something with the emblem on the vehicle itself. The writing and creating of the dashboard permit is going away. The City will be issuing individual permits that would be placed on dashboards in a personal vehicle. One would need to display this permit to use a commercial loading zone. A hand written sign will no longer be recognized. We are proposing a \$25.00 administrative fee for this permit good for the calendar year, January 1st to December 31st of every year. Each year would have to pay another fee for that year’s permit that would be issued through the Parking Clerk’s Office and enforced through the Parking Enforcement Division.

The Chair stated the history of this is a lot of people would place a hand written sign on the dashboard. We realized we had to come up with something official in an attempt to help businesses be able to use the commercial loading zones and continue doing business legally, thus saving on parking tickets.

Once this is past here it goes to City Council for three readings and will be an Ordinance change. This probably won’t take effect until mid December.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to recommend to City Council to approve the Commercial Loading Zone Permit. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief DiSesa. Motion passed.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGE

Jon Frederick commented that the rules state that in no means does this permit open up metered parking spaces for free use to load/unload. The permit is only applicable in commercial loading zones.

The owners of the business were very appreciative and thanked the Committee.

- (B) **F.A. Gray** – Parking Enforcement of Spaces in Front of Store (letters dated August 21, and September 5, 2008 attached) – Jon Frederick stated he spoke with F.A. Gray who have addressed this and asked their stakeholders not to use that area anymore as it was causing problems for their neighbors, so we should not see this as an issue in that regard.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to accept the letter and place on file. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

- (C) **Kline’s Furniture** – Parking by Occupants of Keefe House – Jon Frederick stated the only thing we know why there are only 18 spaces at the Keefe House is that it was an elderly housing complex owned by the Portsmouth Housing Authority so they were exempt from parking regulations in the Zoning Ordinance.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to accept the report. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

- (D) **Omnibus Ordinance Change** (Memo dated October 2, 2008 with maps attached) – Jon Frederick stated it is time to propose the following Ordinances changes to City Council that have been tried for a period of one year: 15 minutes space on Bow St., 15 minute spaces on all of Hanover St. east of High, three 15-minute spaces on High St. at Congress, 15 minute space and taxi stand on Market St. moved during the sidewalk expansion, two 2-hour spaces on High St. at Ladd and two 15-minute spaces at southwestern end of Worth Lot.

MOTION made by Jon Frederick to forward the above Chapter 7 Omnibus Ordinance Changes to City Council for approval. Seconded by Steve Parkinson, Motion passed.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGE

- (E) **Operations Manual Review** (Memo dated October 2, 2008 attached) – Jon Frederick stated that each year the City Manager requests as a Committee to review the Operations Manual for the Parking Enforcement Officers. There were no changes made to the manual this year to be reviewed.

MOTION made Jon Frederick to approve the current Parking Enforcement Officers Policies Procedures and Operations Manual and review again in October 2009. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

- (F) **Mt. Vernon Street** – No Parking Both Sides of Street - Proposed Ordinance Correction – (Memo dated October 2, 2008 and map attached) Jon Frederick reported that currently Mt. Vernon St. is signed for “No Parking Either Side of Street”. The Ordinance has it listed as “No Parking” on the westerly side. This is to correct the inconsistency.

MOTION made by Jon Frederick to submit to City Council the Ordinance change reflecting “No Parking” both sides of street.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa reported the residents who feel they can park on the right side as you go into City Hall lot. There is either a “No Parking” either side or “No Parking this side at the top of the hill on the left.

Jon Frederick responded it is “No Parking This Side”.

Steve Parkinson stated his confusion and suggested an on-site.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to table in order to do a site walk. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

- (B) **Peirce Island** – Request for Over-Night Parking Pass Permits for Boaters (fax of Purpose and Implementation attached) – Jon Frederick stated this allows overnight parking, the permit obtained from Parking Clerk’s office which allows an individual boating overnight to park their vehicle at the boat ramp parking lot. There is a proposed \$25.00 deposit and a \$5.00 per night fee. The \$25.00 deposit will be returned upon return the permit. The clerk will furnish the Police Department with a list of vehicles who have been authorized to park overnight.

MOTION made by Deputy Police Chief DiSesa to initiate the Over-Night Parking Pass Permits program with a \$25.00 deposit to be returned upon return of the permit and a \$5.00 per night fee. Seconded by Andrew Purgiel. Motion passed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

Respectfully submitted
Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary