

## **CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

### **Downtown Parking Report**

September 20, 2010 – 6:00 p.m.

Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

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City Council Present: Mayor Ferrini, Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh, Councilors Lister, Hejtmanek, Spear, Coviello, Dwyer, Kennedy and Smith

Staff Present: John P. Bohenko, City Manager, Robert Sullivan, City Attorney, Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director, Rick Taintor, Planning Director, Jon Frederick, Parking and Transportation Manager, and Valerie French, Deputy City Clerk I

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Mayor Ferrini called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

Rick Chellman, Downtown Parking Focus Group member stated that Chairman Don Coker sends his apologies for not being able to attend due to a death in the family.

Planning Director Rick Taintor reviewed the handout stating the seven recommendations are as follows:

1. Eliminate Off Street Parking Requirements in the CBA and CBB Districts
2. Repeal Parking in Lieu of or Impact Fees
3. Create Additional Off Street Parking
4. Create a Parking Enterprise Fund
5. Provide Limited Free and Low Cost Parking
6. Provide Variable Parking Rates
7. Invest Some Revenues in Downtown Enhancements

Public Works Director Steve Parkinson and Parking and Transportation Manager Jon Frederick reviewed the Worth Lot Parking Garage, Executive Summary Handout.

Public Works Director Parkinson explained that a feasibility study for constructing a public parking facility on the Worth Municipal Parking Lot on Maplewood Avenue was conducted in 2003 and determined the feasibility of constructing a multi-level parking facility on this site. He continued that the goal of the study was to develop alternative parking schemes that would fit comfortably on the existing site with the primary goal to maximize parking. He stated that an overall goal of the feasibility study was to identify any issues or conditions that could delay, downsize, or prevent the City from moving forward with constructing a parking garage at this site. The 2003 study included addressing the following components:

- Environmental Suitability
- Geotechnical Suitability
- Traffic impacts, streets access/egress
- Utility Access
- Zoning

- Potential implications to historic buildings and abutters
- Orientation of the structure on the site
- Building types and architectural facades, green spaces
- Constructability issues
- Necessary off-site improvements
- Order of magnitude cost estimates

Next he reviewed the scheme summary recommendations common to all 3 scheme configurations which included:

- Garage façade to parallel Vaughan Mall and Maplewood Avenue
- Primary Entrance/Exit on Hanover Street via Right-of-Way (Access Road)
- Possible secondary limited Entrance/Exit on Maplewood Avenue
- Garage location abuts existing buildings on north side of site
- Loading zone provided on Maplewood Avenue
- Existing utilities are adequate to support garage construction
- 112' x 280' garage
- Fire Wall on Hanover Street side of garage adjacent to existing buildings (North)

Steve Parkinson concluded that if this were to go forward it would be completed in April 2013.

Planning Director Rick Taintor then discussed the garage design in terms of the façade and green design stating the green space is very limited at the Worth Parking Lot but green space could be added to the walkway.

Mr. Taintor then discussed the 4<sup>th</sup> recommendation of creating a Parking Enterprise Fund stating it would work similar to the Water and Sewer Funds and would dedicate parking related revenues to downtown parking. City Manager Bohenko stated we have been trying to establish this fund over a number of years and we have now paid off the High Hanover Parking Garage so if the Council chooses to have this garage built, we would create an enterprise fund. He stated we currently have \$1.37 million in the general fund which would be moved to the Enterprise Fund and the parking revenue would go into that fund to offset the costs.

Next, Mr. Taintor discussed recommendation #5 to Provide Limited Free and Low Cost Parking which currently is only provided at the Parrott Avenue lot with 187 spaces. He stated the suggested recommendations are to keep a portion of that lot free/low cost to downtown employees and residents and meter the remainder of the lot. Also, provide free/low cost parking on the roof of the High/Hanover garage. Finally, study the future possibility of creating another deck or a full multi-level garage on the Parrott Avenue lot with one level or a portion of a level to remain free/low cost for designated users.

Jon Frederick reviewed recommendation #6, Provide Variable On-Street Parking Rates and Durations and Rick Taintor reviewed recommendation #7, Invest Some Revenues in Downtown Enhancements.

Councilor Kennedy stated she came prepared to talk about the Parking Report, not the parking garage. City Manager Bohenko stated that the garage is a part of the report and they are not looking for any decisions tonight.

Councilor Kennedy continued stating that she doesn't see a lot of sustainability in the report as far as transporting people into the City by bus or trolley from outer lots and wonders what the utilization rate would be considering all lots. Rick Chellman stated that the best utilization of lots are the ones that can be walked to and from and feels that the trolley would be nice, but they are unreliable. He continued that smaller busses are better than bigger busses, but feels that Portsmouth is a more walkable City and feels resources are better spent on convenient downtown parking that provides revenue and will be used.

Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of a Parking Enterprise Fund and who it benefits either directly or indirectly

Councilor Spear stated he still has a lot of questions and there isn't much time left in this work session. City Manager Bohenko stated that this can be added to the Council Goal Setting Retreat.

Consensus was that this needs to be discussed in relation to other entities such as Traffic and Safety issues, Taxi issues, senior transportation, mass transportation, etc.

Coviello stated that we need to look at the potential future use of the Parrott Avenue Lot as well. Assistant Mayor Novelline Clayburgh stated she would like to see rates raised from 75 cents to \$1.00 at the meters and keep the garage rate lower to encourage parking at the garage.

Councilor Smith stated he agrees with most of the recommendations in the report except for the variable rates with the Pay and Display system because he feels it would be tricky to monitor. He also stated that there are laws that regulate where money derived from parking revenues are supposed to be used.

Mayor Ferrini stated this is the first layer of this discussion and he appreciates the time and effort of the Downtown Parking Focus Group.

At 6:55 p.m., Mayor Ferrini closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Valerie A. French,  
Deputy City Clerk I