

MINUTES
PARKING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M. – Thursday, December 13, 2012
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ken Smith called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chair
John Bohenko, City Manager
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director
Corey MacDonald, Deputy Police Chief
Steve Achilles, Assistant Fire Chief
Ron Cypher, Member
Sheri Donnermeyer, Member
Ted Gray, Member
Harold Whitehouse, Member

Staff Advisors Present:

Tom Cocchiaro, Parking Operations Supervisor

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Mr. Gray moved to accept the minutes of the October 11, 2012 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Cypher and voted.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Whitehouse moved to accept the Financial Report and place on file. Seconded by City Manager Bohenko and voted.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) Sudbury Avenue Petition for “Resident Only” Parking Signs

Mr. Whitehouse spoke to the question posed by Mr. Wright in his correspondence to the committee stating that in 1999, he was on the City Council and at that time, they acted on a proposal to make a portion of Hanover Street “resident only” parking, which was against the Planning Boards’ recommendation, but they did not include any other areas.

Mr. Whitehouse moved to add Sudbury Avenue to the “Resident Only” Parking ordinance, seconded by Mr. Cypher.

Public Works Director Parkinson clarified that the petition is also requesting Rock Street and the remaining portion of Hanover Street be added as well. Mr. Whitehouse stated they did not review those areas during the site walk.

City Manager Bohenko moved to suspend the rules to allow Mr. Wright to speak to his request, seconded by Mr. Whitehouse. Motion passed.

Randy Wright, 30 Sudbury St., explained the parking issues on Sudbury Avenue which are caused by people who work in the downtown area parking on the street for the entire day, thereby not allowing people who live on the street to park near their own homes. He stated that many of these vehicles are from out-of-state and feels that there is a loophole in the parking ordinance that allows this situation to occur. He stated that nearly all of the residents in the areas of concern signed the petition and urged the Committee to rectify this situation.

City Manager Bohenko stated that Mr. Wright has spoken eloquently on the issue but his concern is that this is a major policy decision for the City and we can't change one street at a time without a set policy. He stated that the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee and City Council need to decide if residential only parking areas need to be expanded and reviewed the by City Attorney as to how this would be enforced, etc.

Deputy Police Chief MacDonald stated that the patrols do enforce the area where there are "resident only" parking signs for those that are clearly out-of-state license plates and by issuing warnings, etc.

City Manager Bohenko again stated that a clear policy needs to be set and feels that this should be a part of the parking garage discussion. He stated we will continue to see this push-out into the neighborhoods over the next 2 years before a garage is built.

Public Works Director Parkinson asked if this should be referred to the City Council. Chairman Smith stated no, it should be decided by this committee.

Mr. Whitehouse stated that by supporting this request, we will be moving the process along and can get it settled once and for all.

Mr. Whitehouse amended his original motion by adding Rock Street and the rest of Hanover Street, from Pearl Street to Brewster Street, the seconder, Mr. Cypher agreed.

Discussion ensued as to how it will be determined who is and is not a Portsmouth resident and how it will be enforced.

Chairman Smith stated this has been an ongoing issue since 1999 and the police are able to enforce it and run license plates to obtain the information on residency of the owner.

Mr. Cypher asked what was done on Pearl Street. Chairman Smith explained that this was handled differently because there are businesses located there and there is residential parking during off-business hours.

Motion FAILED on a 4-5 roll call vote. Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Cypher, Mr. Gray and Chairman Smith voted in favor. Ms. Donnermeyer, Public Works Director Parkinson, Asst. Fire Chief Achilles, Deputy Police Chief MacDonald and City Manager Bohenko voted opposed.

(B) Renewal of Atlantic Parking Bow Street Valet Service

Brian Slovenski of Atlantic Parking Services explained that he is requesting permission to continue operating a Valet Parking Service in the parking spaces provided on Bow Street.

Chairman Parkinson clarified that this renewal will include the 3rd space recently approved by the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee. Chairman Smith stated yes, but the current contract has expired and he is looking to have all of the valet service contracts expire at the same time so that this situation will not occur again.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to approve the renewal of Atlantic Parking Service Bow Street Valet contract to expire June 30, 2013, seconded by City Manager Bohenko. Motion passed.

(C) Request for Driveway at 287 Marcy Street

Mr. Gray stated they visited the site and found it to be a tight area.

Mr. Gray moved to approve the request as a back-in, head out parking space for compact size vehicles, seconded by Mr. Whitehouse.

Mr. Gray asked if there is an arrangement with the neighbor.

Paul Marino, 287 Marcy Street, stated that the right-of-way is on his property deed.

Mr. Gray asked who will pay for the curb cut.

Mr. Marino stated that he had previously requested to install brick sidewalk and was told at that time that the City was going to be doing that and he asked that when it was done, no curbing be put in that area. Public Works Director Parkinson explained that the City does work with property owners when projects are being done.

Motion passed.

Public Works Director Parkinson clarified that the minutes of this meeting will go to the Council for final approval of this request and that no work will be done until Spring.

(D) "No Left Turn" onto Route 1 Bypass North from Maplewood Avenue

Public Works Director Parkinson stated that this issue has been reviewed many times and has typically not been granted due to sight distance issues as well as the fact that the off-ramp is part of the State highway property.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to refer to the Department of Public Works for inclusion into the Consultant study in conjunction with the State DOT bridge reconstruction project, seconded by Deputy Police Chief MacDonald. Motion passed.

(E) Remove Stop Sign at Intersection of Railroad Tracks and Banfield Road

Public Works Director Parkinson stated that this is still considered an active line and he has made an inquiry with the NTC as to the status and has not received an answer back.

Public Works Director Parkinson to refer to the Public Works Department to take appropriate legal action once determination of rail track status has been made, seconded by City Manager Bohenko. Motion passed.

VI. OLD BUSINESS:

(A) Reevaluate Bicycle Rack Locations - DPW

Public Works Director Parkinson explained that since approving these locations, we have had to re-evaluate due to various issues and complaints.

Deputy Police Chief MacDonald stated that there have been 3 incidents at that intersection over the last 3 years.

City Manager Bohenko stated that we need to review the different locations for the individual racks versus the bike corrals, as the individual racks should be located in areas that people will feel are convenient to their destinations.

Public Works Director Parkinson moved to refer to the Public Works Department to work with the GIS to look for appropriate locations and report back, seconded by Assistant Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

NOTE: Planning Director Rick Taintor was prepared to give a presentation on Bicycle Racks on State Street, which was not a part of this discussion. This presentation will be given at a future meeting.

VII. REFERRALS

(A) Council Referral – Establish Work Session to Discuss Downtown Parking Issues

City Manager Bohenko explained that the City Council recently voted to discontinue the Parking Garage Site Selection Committee and deferred it to the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee. He explained that there has been a lot of work and analysis already done and feels it is important that this information be presented to the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee as a starting point to help understand the complexities and challenges involved.

Mr. Whitehouse stated that the average citizen wants there to be a work session where they can sit and discuss the issue with the members and have their questions answered.

Chairman Smith stated that he will be making himself available at a to-be-determined downtown location for people to express their concerns to him, and clarified that this will not be an official meeting.

Ms. Donnermeyer asked if the site previously rejected by the City Council can still be considered. Chairman Smith stated yes, it is now the charge of the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee.

MOTION made by Mr. Whitehouse to establish a Work Session to discuss Downtown Parking issues on Tuesday, January 8, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers, seconded by City Manager Bohenko. Motion passed.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no speakers.

IX. INFORMATIONAL

- (A) New Parking Zones and Labeling for Implementation of Revised Parking Ordinances (DPW)

Public Works Director Parkinson reviewed the new signage that will be put in place at the parking garage and on the meters to alert people to the new changes taking effect January 2, 2013. Chairman Smith asked if there will be staff available to explain the changes to people out in the field. Public Works Director Parkinson stated not this time and explained that this occurred when the new parking system was implemented, but this is just a change in the fees.

Ms. Donnermeyer asked if the I-Park devices need to be updated with the new changes. Parking Operations Supervisor Tom Cocchiaro stated there is no way to reprogram them but they will still be able to be used.

- (B) OTI America EasyPark In-Car Parking Meter Contract in Final Review (DPW)

Parking Operations Supervisor Tom Cocchiaro explained that this will be implemented in January in conjunction with the recent ordinance changes going into effect.

- (C) Install Lighting on all Pay & Display Meters (DPW)

Parking Operations Supervisor Tom Cocchiaro explained that these will be LED lights, battery-powered and motion detected operation at a cost of approximately \$500.00 each.

- (D) Install 3 Banners at Parking Garage Entrances Highlighting "First Hour Free" Parking (City Manager Request)

Public Works Director Parkinson explained that the banners will be announcing the first hour free-parking.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

City Manager Bohenko moved to adjourn at 8:55 a.m., seconded and passed unanimously.