

## MEETING MINUTES

### **PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING**

8:00 A.M. – April 6, 2017  
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER:

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

#### II. ROLL CALL:

##### **Members Present:**

Chairman, Brad Lown  
Deputy City Manager, Nancy Colbert Puff  
Public Works Director, Peter Rice  
Deputy Fire Chief, James Heinz  
Police Captain, Frank Warchol  
Member, Ted Gray  
Member, Ronald Cypher  
Member, Shari Donnermeyer  
Alternate Member, Mary Lou McElwain

##### **Staff Advisors Present:**

Parking and Transportation Engineer, Eric Eby  
Assistant Planning Director, Juliet Walker

##### **Member Absent:**

Member, Harold Whitehouse

#### III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Ted Gray motioned to accept the February 2, 2017 meeting minutes. Ron Cypher seconded.  
**Motion passed 9-0.**

#### IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Public Works Director Rice motioned to accept the financial reports dated March 2017 and April 2017. Deputy City Manager, Nancy Colbert Puff, seconded.  
**Motion passed 9-0.**

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Arthur Carakatsane asked the Committee to suspend the rules to allow him and others to speak to action item VI.C. during Committee discussion.

Public Works Director Rice motioned to suspend the rules to allow for public comment during action item VI.C. Ted Gray seconded. **Vote 9-0, to suspend rules to allow for public comment.**

Derek Nadeau spoke against changing the Parrot Avenue parking lot regulations. He expressed concern about how any change would negatively impact downtown residents and hospitality industry workers utilizing the lot.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Request for stop sign on Cleveland Drive at Arthur Road and Taft Road. The Committee conducted an on-site visit on Tuesday, April 4, 2017. Eric Eby stated a resident at 73 Taft Road initiated the action item. The resident complained about vehicles speeding through the intersection and the snow banks limiting sight lines. She requested a 3-way or 4-way STOP sign at the location. Eric Eby recommended reporting back to the Committee once he has collected traffic data, speed data, turning movement counts and reviewed the major movements at the intersection. He stated a traffic calming test pilot could be an option if speed was determined to be excessive.

Ted Gray inquired about existing traffic counts and vehicle speed data. Eric Eby stated there is no existing data. Mary Lou McElwain supported gathering data to analyze safety issues.

Public Works Director Rice motioned to direct staff to report back. Shari Donnermeyer seconded. **Vote 9-0, to direct staff to report back at a future meeting.**

B. Request for Valet Service license on Pleasant Street near Court Street. The Committee conducted an on-site visit on Tuesday, April 4, 2017. Shari Donnermeyer inquired about the specifics of the requested valet spots. Eric Eby stated in the letter from Northeast Valet, they proposed for year-round valet service from Monday through Sunday, beginning 5 p.m. to midnight. They requested the last three metered spots closest to Court Street in front of Louie's Restaurant.

Public Works Director Rice motioned to direct staff to report back at a future meeting. He expressed concern about losing three parking spaces and the valet spots being next to each other. Shari Donnermeyer seconded. **Vote 9-0, to direct staff to report back at a future meeting.**

C. Food truck pilot program, referred from City Council for consideration. Chairman Lown stated this action item was referred by the City Council for a recommendation. Eric Eby presented a map of the proposed parking locations for the food trucks. The area included: Hanover St. between Market St. and Fleet St., Fleet St. between Hanover St. and Congress St., Haven Court

behind the parking garage, loading zone area on High St., and the two 15-minute parking spaces in the Vaughan Mall parking lot. The hours of operations would be 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Deputy City Manager, Nancy Colbert Puff, provided the Committee with background regarding this action item. She stated the proposal presented today was presented to the City Council and they referred the action item to the PTS Committee for a final recommendation.

Eric Eby stated a benefit of referring it to the PTS Committee is that the action item could be executed as a pilot program for a trial period. If the program was successful, an ordinance could be adopted. However, it could be easily dismissed if unsuccessful without going through the ordinance process.

Ron Cypher spoke against the proposed locations because of nearby residences. Shari Donnermeyer spoke to other cities having food trucks in separate areas away from the downtown. Mary Lou McElwain spoke against the proposed locations in the downtown and commented on concerns regarding noise, health, sanitation issues and trash pollution.

Public Works Director Rice clarified that the role of the Committee was confined to the impacts associated with parking. He stated that the operational challenges mentioned by members would be policy decisions for the City Council to address with City staff.

Mary Lou McElwain expressed concern that if the Committee approved the recommendation it would be reported as though the Committee approved of all aspects of the program. Chairman Lown clarified that the Committee would be addressing the loss of downtown parking spaces for specific hours on a regular basis for use by the food truck vendors.

The Committee discussed the current parking demands in the proposed areas, and recommending that the pilot program be seasonal, if approved.

The Committee voted earlier to suspend the rules to allow for public comment.

Arthur Carakatsane submitted a letter to the Chairman dated March 29, 2017, which outlined the concerns of the Harbour Hill Condominium Association, and their opposition to the proposed food truck pilot program. He addressed the following: undocumented data about who wanted the program, late-night hours of operation, proximity to residences, and to the Hilton Garden Inn, culinary alternatives, food trucks becoming a “public nuisance”, traffic, congestion and pedestrian safety. He also submitted a letter from Dan Kostick, a resident at the Harbour Hill Condos, stating his opposition to the program.

Barbara DeStefano spoke against the proposed food truck pilot program in the downtown. She stated she represented the tenants of Portwalk. She commented that the parking spaces proposed for the food trucks were consistently occupied during the hours of proposed operations. She expressed concern for additional noise and trash.

Rick Becksted commented on food trucks at July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities. He suggested moving the proposed locations further away from downtown and restricting operations to 10 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Pat Bagley spoke against the proposed food truck pilot program. She expressed concern about the hours of operation, noise and safety issues.

Kevin O'Leary spoke against the proposed food truck pilot program. He agreed with the issues expressed by previous speakers and expressed concern about the precedent the program may set.

William Hardy submitted a letter to the Chairman dated January 14, 2017, sent to Mayor Blalock and City Manager Bohenko supporting a food truck program. Mr. Hardy owns Vagabond Coffee Car, a small food truck and a cart. He has been active in the Portland food truck scene. He expressed the need to have a full-day program to prove the concept is viable.

Judy Miller spoke against the pilot program and concurred with statements made by other residents. She expressed concern that the hours of operation could encourage unwelcomed behavior.

Clement Dwyer spoke against the pilot program. He questioned the financial impact of the program and who would benefit from it. He spoke against the proposed locations and hours of operation. He requested the Committee deny the proposal.

Shari Donnermeyer expressed support for food trucks in general, but opposed the locations and agreed that the time limitation (10 p.m. to 2 a.m.) would not support a profit.

Police Captain Warchol spoke to safety concerns about the parking spaces for the pilot program. He talked about the flow of pedestrian traffic around the trucks and the tendency for pedestrians to stand or walk in the street. He also mentioned that the trucks could delay people leaving the City and other safety issues that could occur because of the delay. He stated he could not support the pilot program based on safety issues.

Ted Gray spoke against the pilot program due to the hours of operation and safety concerns. He motioned to dismiss the food truck pilot program. Ron Cypher seconded.

Public Works Director Rice spoke to the motion. He suggested amending the motion to specifically state that the time structure and location needed to be revised and brought back for reconsideration. He stated the concept was not bad, but the concerns expressed by residents and Committee members should be addressed before moving forward with a pilot program.

Deputy City Manager, Nancy Colbert Puff, clarified that the City has an existing food truck program that allows for one truck on State St. and one on Hanover St. The Committee briefly discussed the existing program.

Chairman Lown suggested amending the motion to state the Committee recommended against the adoption of the proposed food truck program at this time. Ted Gray amended his motion and Ron Cypher seconded. **Vote 9-0, to recommend against the adoption of the proposed food truck program to the City Council.**

D. Parrot Avenue parking lot regulations. Eric Eby stated the action item was presented to the Committee for discussion purposes. The Committee has the authority to change parking lot regulations. Currently, the Parrot Avenue lot allows parking up to 72-hours. It is free for the entire time period. Enforcement is difficult due to the inability to accurately track vehicles.

Public Works Director Rice stated that the City Council referred the action item to the Committee in order to investigate methods to increase turnover. He stated some of the discussion centered on reducing the parking time limit to 24-hours, which could create more parking spaces for downtown workers and patrons.

Chairman Lown clarified that from his discussion with the City Council, that they wanted the Committee to investigate the effects on parking, traffic and safety if meters were installed. He stated they would also like an assessment as to what might happen to the Parrot Ave parking spaces and the surrounding neighborhood if it was metered. Public Works Director Rice asked if the consideration was for the same rates and time limits as elsewhere. Chairman Lown stated the inquiry was based on increasing turnover and availability of the spaces for people who need them.

Mary Lou McElwain asked about John Burke's Downtown Parking Utilization Study and how it related to this lot and requested a report back from staff before making a final decision.

Shari Donnermeyer asked for clarification on City Council's direction.

Mary Lou McElwain motioned to direct staff to report back on aspects of parking, traffic and safety regarding metering the Parrot Avenue parking lot. Public Works Director Rice seconded. **Vote 9-0, to direct staff to report back on aspects of parking, traffic and safety regarding metering Parrot Avenue parking lot.**

## VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Report back on Bartlett Street and Thornton Street intersection. Eric Eby stated traffic in this area has been a concern for neighborhood residents for some time. He collected traffic count data and discovered that 75% of the traffic traveling Bartlett St. turns left onto Thornton St. and then right onto Woodbury Ave.

He stated a guardrail was located in front of 358 Thornton St. because vehicles failed to negotiate the left turn and would run off the roadway. To try and control vehicle speeds, a 4-way STOP sign was installed at the intersection of Bartlett St. and Thornton St., however it has not solved the problem. Traffic continues to use Thornton St. as a cut through.

Eric Eby recommended, based on the data collected, changing the section of Thornton St. between Woodbury Ave and Bartlett St. from two-way traffic flow to one-way traffic flow. The one-way flow would be from Woodbury Ave to Bartlett St. He stated the traffic analysis confirmed that the intersections could handle the traffic volumes and would improve the safety. Also, he discovered that the above-mentioned section of Thornton St. was currently listed as a one-way

street in Chapter 7 Ordinances (Article III, Section 7.336). Therefore, an ordinance change would not be required if the action item was approved.

Mary Lou McElwain inquired about the median and parking on Thornton St. coming from Woodbury Ave. Eric Eby explained that parking would be available on the left side of the median and traffic would enter on the right side of the median onto Thornton St.

Ron Cypher asked about the 4-way STOP sign at Bartlett St. and Thornton St. Eric Eby recommended the 4-way STOP sign be removed, as it would no longer be warranted with the change in traffic flow. He also recommended installing a speed radar sign at Bartlett St. and Thornton St. to monitor speed and traffic volumes.

Mary Lou McElwain commented on traffic volumes and speed on Dennett St. Eric Eby stated the traffic volumes were low on Dennett St. from Maplewood Ave to Woodbury Ave. He noted that Bartlett St. was part of a designated truck route between Route 1 Bypass and Islington St. He recommended keeping the current STOP sign configuration on Bartlett St. because of the truck route designation.

Public Works Director Rice requested that the Dennett St. intersection be monitored for traffic speeds and volumes.

**Vote 9-0, to accept staff recommendation to change the section of Thornton Street between Woodbury Avenue and Bartlett Street from two-way traffic flow to one-way traffic flow. The one-way flow would be from Woodbury Avenue to Bartlett Street and remove the STOP signs on Bartlett Street and Thornton Street.**

B. Report back on proposed bicycle, moped and motorcycle ordinances. Eric Eby stated the three proposed ordinances were being presented for final approval. The bicycle ordinance changes were previously approved by the Committee in 2015, but were never submitted to City Council for formal adoption. The question of moped and motorcycle parking was raised and it was decided to address all three ordinances together.

The newly proposed motorcycle ordinance identified the first parking space on Pleasant St. at Market Square as motorcycle parking. This would occur only between April 1 and November 30. The one vehicle space would be restriped to create four or five motorcycle parking spaces. All motorcycles would be required to pay the parking meter fees for the hours of enforcement. Eric Eby stated the designated motorcycle parking space was part of a test pilot last fall. Video observation confirmed that it reserved parking for motorcycles, which would otherwise have to compete with vehicles for parking.

The newly proposed moped ordinance allows mopeds to park on sidewalks, like bicycles, as long as they have a license plate to clearly identify them as a moped (i.e., motors that are 50 cubic centimeters or less) or they display a permit issued by the City of Portsmouth, identifying the vehicle as complying with the definition of a moped.

The proposed bicycle ordinance changes would bring them into conformance with current state laws and local policies.

The Committee discussed motorcycle parking in Market Square, motorcycle noise and parking enforcement.

Shari Donnermeyer motioned to suspend the rules to allow for public comment. **Vote 8-0, to suspend rules to allow for public comment.** (Public Works Director Rice was not present for voting.)

Marc Stettner spoke to the motorcycle and moped ordinances. He spoke against the fees associated with the motorcycle ordinance. He advised the Committee to adopt a program that was fair, based on surrounding communities. He recommended changing the language of the motorcycle ordinance, stating that motorcycles are subject to free or reduced parking meter fees. He also recommended expanding the area beyond the one location at Pleasant St. and Market Square. He also recommended noting the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) in the moped definition section of the ordinance.

Mr. Stettner proposed 2-wheeled vehicles be allowed to park for free in the triangular NO PARKING areas at the ends of on-street parking spaces.

Chairman Lown clarified that the Committee does not have jurisdiction to create fees. The Fee Committee would be responsible for the authorization of any fees.

Shari Donnermeyer motioned to approve the moped and bicycle ordinances. Deputy City Manager, Nancy Colbert Puff, seconded. **Vote 8-0, to approve the moped ordinance and bicycle ordinance, which will bring it into conformance with current state laws and local policies, as written.**

Shari Donnermeyer questioned the location of the motorcycle designated parking space and suggested it be moved to another location. Chairman Lown stated motorcyclists had historically congregated at the location.

Ron Cypher motioned to approve the motorcycle ordinance as written. Deputy City Manager, Nancy Colbert Puff, seconded. **Vote 8-0, to approve the motorcycle ordinance as written.**

#### VIII. INFORMATIONAL:

A. Downtown traffic modeling project update – Eric Eby notified the Committee that a consultant had been hired to conduct the downtown traffic modeling project. Resource Systems Group, Inc. (RSG) was chosen. They will be presenting to the Committee once the project is complete. Eric Eby stated they would be reviewing the impact of changing one-way streets to two-way streets in the downtown.

B. Middle Street bike lane project update – Juliet Walker notified the Committee that she and Mr. Eby would be meeting with the NHDOT coordinator to discuss project design issues. She also stated evening parking counts would be conducted on Middle St. at the request of residents.

C. Bike share (Zagster) program update – Juliet Walker provided an overview of the Zagster program scheduled to begin in May 2017. She provided the Committee with details regarding station locations and capacity. Six stations and 30 bikes would be part of the program. The station locations were identified as: Parrot Ave at Junkins Avenue, Market Square in front of North Church, Memorial Bridge Lot, Russell St. in front of the Sheraton parking lot, Bridge St. on the sidewalk near the parking lot, and Summer St. at Islington St.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Rick Becksted spoke against the bike share station on Market Square because of congestion and proposed it be placed on the sidewalk. He spoke against the one-way traffic flow on Thornton St. because of congestion.

Pat Bagley spoke against the bike share station on Market Square. She suggested moving the station around the corner for safety, but spoke in favor of the program as a whole.

Randal Leach spoke in favor of the one-way traffic flow on Thornton St. He resides at 358 Thornton St and observed the traffic problems in the area for many years. He requested semi-trucks be prohibited on Bartlett St.

Eric Eby addressed the concerns about the Market Square bike share station. He stated the station would calm traffic and increase pedestrian safety.

X. MISCELLANEOUS:

A. Quarterly accident report for 12/24/2016 to 03/20/2017. Police Captain Warchol noted there was one pedestrian accident in the time period. The driver was issued a citation and no injuries were reported.

Mary Lou McElwain requested Josh Pierce, President of the Seacoast Area Bicycle Riders, present at the May meeting. The Committee agreed and it will be placed on the May agenda.

Mary Lou McElwain inquired about two bike share locations and thanked Police Captain Warchol for the accident report.

XI. ADJOURNMENT – At 9:48 a.m., **voted** to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amy Chastain  
Secretary of the Committee