

MEETING MINUTES

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M. – February 1, 2018
City Hall – Conference Room A

I. CALL TO ORDER:

At 8:00 a.m., City Manager Bohenko called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

City Manager, John Bohenko
City Councilor, Doug Roberts
Public Works Director, Peter Rice
Deputy Fire Chief, James Heinz
Police Captain, Frank Warchol
Member, Harold Whitehouse
Member, Ronald Cypher
Member, Shari Donnermeyer
Member, Mary Lou McElwain
Alternate Member, Ralph DiBernardo

Staff Advisors Present:

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

III. SELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN:

Ronald Cypher nominated Doug Roberts as Chairman for the calendar year 2018. Harold Whitehouse seconded. **Committee members concurred.**

Harold Whitehouse stated he supported Doug Roberts as Chairman because he will present meeting minutes to the City Council and address actions taken by the PTS Committee.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Mary Lou McElwain moved to accept the meeting minutes of December 7, 2017.
Seconded by Public Works Director Rice. **Motion passed 9-0.**

V. FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Harold Whitehouse moved to accept the financial reports dated November 30, 2017 and December 31, 2017. Seconded by Ronald Cypher. **Motion passed 9-0.**

Harold Whitehouse asked if the City received revenues from the Vaughan Street Parking Lot. Public Works Director Rice stated the City received funds for operating expenses.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:

David Rheume spoke regarding action item VII.A. He presented a handout to the Committee. He stated he is a longtime resident of the neighborhood. He requested the Committee formally recognize the existing NO PARKING EITHER SIDE OF STREET sign located on the telephone pole in front of 82 Langdon Street. He requested removing all on-street parking on Langdon Street north of McDonough Street, and provided detailed reasons for the request, as outlined in the handout provided to Committee members. He stated there is adequate parking in the neighborhood without having on-street parking on this section of Langdon. He addressed the traffic calming issue and does not believe it is needed.

City Manager Bohenko moved to suspend the rules to allow additional time for public comment. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Motion passed 9-0.**

Mark Johnson spoke regarding action item VII.A. He expressed safety concerns related to traffic associated with Regan Electric if on-street parking was permitted. He stated on-street parking is not needed and there is ample on-street parking in the surrounding area.

Paul Winkley spoke regarding action item VII.A. He is an employee of Regan Electric. He opposed any on-street parking because it would hinder access for delivery trucks and trailers to the business.

Charles McMahan thanked Eric Eby, Frank Warchol, James Heinz and Peter Rice for their work on the Echo Avenue issue. Mr. McMahan read an email from Rebecca Perkins, City Councilor, expressing her support for the Echo Avenue neighborhood and their petition regarding traffic safety concerns.

Deb Watson spoke regarding action item VII.D. She requested 2-hour time limit for parking be eliminated in front of the residential properties on Islington Street. She addressed the reduction in parking spaces because of the parking space striping configuration on Cornwall Street and Rockingham Street. She stated 10 parking spaces had been eliminated. She also requested that the angled lines be restriped to create more parking in the area.

Peter Weeks requested to speak to action item VII.B. when addressed by the Committee. City Manager Bohenko stated he would make a motion to suspend the rules to allow Mr. Weeks to address the Committee.

Angela Lambert spoke regarding action item VII.D. She requested the Committee investigate the parking space configuration on Cornwall Street. She is a business owner on Islington Street and supported the 2-hour time limit.

Sharon Spinney spoke in support of eliminating the 2-hour time limit for parking on Islington Street between Cornwall Street and Rockingham Street.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Request for NO PARKING on both sides of Langdon Street, north of McDonough Street, by Beth Moreau. City Manager Bohenko moved to prohibit parking along the west side of Langdon Street, north of McDonough Street. Seconded by Shari Donnermeyer.

Parking is allowed on both sides of this section of Langdon Street. NO PARKING EITHER SIDE OF STREET signs are present on the west side of the street. The signs are not recognized by the City in the ordinances.

Eric Eby stated his recommendation was based on measurements of curb lines along both sides of the street, the street width, and the location of driveways on each side of the street. He stated 18' is sufficient for parallel parking spaces that are open on one end. There are sufficient curb lengths to allow four on-street parking spaces on the east side of the road.

He stated the area opposite of Regan Electric's driveway was taken into consideration when making his recommendation. On-street parking is very limited. The demand is very high. He explained the concept of a "yield street". Yield streets have low traffic volume, familiar users, and one lane for two-way traffic. This section of Langdon Street meets this criteria.

He stated this section of Langdon used to be a dead-end. Two-way traffic was, therefore, required. However, since the "Railroad Street" connector road was constructed, it might be possible to create a one-way street. He stated the one-way street option was not being proposed today, but could be investigated at a later date. The parking space north of 91 Langdon Street could also be restricted or modified based on the one-way street alternative.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz stated he supported the motion, but would like to consider the possibility of eliminating the parking space at the north end of the street.

Mary Lou McElwain stated she has observed a recurring problem about private development and parking. She stated parking decisions made by the Planning Board are being addressed by the PTS Committee after the fact. New tenants and homeowners are presenting their parking concerns and complaints to the Committee. This is a problem: development proposals are not reviewed or addressed by the Committee during the initial process. She requested the issue be addressed.

She visited the area several times. She noticed the entire area from Islington Street to McDonough Street is inconsistent regarding parking. She stated she would not support voting on any agenda items involving this neighborhood until the broader issues were addressed.

City Manager Bohenko stated he supported the motion because it provides parking in the area. He also stated the Committee could reevaluate the parking spaces at the end of Langdon at a later date as changes would be temporary until approved in the annual omnibus of traffic and parking ordinance changes. He also stated he would be meeting with City Staff to discuss the broader issue regarding parking decisions made by the Planning Board.

Chairman Roberts spoke to the need to strike a balance regarding parking issues. He proposed City Staff investigate the one-way street proposal and get feedback from Regan Electric and the public regarding this alternative.

Ronald Cypher stated he supported the motion based on an observation he made at the site visit.

Vote 9-0, to prohibit parking along the west side of Langdon Street, north of McDonough Street. The Committee reiterated that the area could be revisited regarding safety concerns related to the parking space near 101 Langdon, and the possibility of changing the street to one-way. Feedback from residents, businesses, and the public is encouraged.

B. Request to change parking meter zone designation on Portwalk Place, by Portwalk. Public Works Director Rice moved to table the request. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse.

Public Works Director Rice stated he agreed with the meter zone designation change to a High Occupancy Meter Zone on Portwalk Place. He proposed to table the request until it could be done in a comprehensive manner.

City Manager Bohenko moved to suspend the rules to allow for public comment. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Motion passed 9-0.**

Peter Weeks referenced the May 17, 2017 meeting minutes of the PTS Committee. Mr. Eby (in those minutes) stated no changes should be made to the meter zone designations with the exception of Portwalk Place. Mr. Weeks said it was left off during the last change. He was told the request would need to be presented again to the PTS Committee. Therefore, he was presenting the request again. He stated he wanted to be sure that when rate changes are made, Portwalk Place is on the list. He stated the request should be revisited if rates are not changed when the new parking garage opens. Mr. Weeks said it had been on the list for some time.

The Committee briefly discussed public on-street parking on Portwalk Place.

Vote 9-0, to table the action item to change parking meter zone designation on Portwalk Place until the new parking garage is operational or as part of the overall Parking Division budget process.

C. Request to remove meters and parking spaces on north side of State Street between Middle Street and 487 State Street, by Steve Bergeron. Eric Eby stated the Committee conducted a site visit on Tuesday, January 30, 2017. He does not have a recommendation at this time, but requested additional time to collect data and report back at the next meeting.

Chairman Roberts stated he reviewed traffic accidents for the area. Most occur at the intersection of Middle Street and State Street. He asked if the intersection could be reviewed for inexpensive solutions in the near future. Public Works Director Rice stated that additional time would be needed in order to review the intersection. The Committee discussed separating the original request from the intersection request. Chairman Roberts asked Police Captain Warchol to include accident data for the Middle Street and State Street intersection in the report back.

Mary Lou McElwain asked for the criteria for tabling action items until the new parking garage is open. Public Works Director Rice clarified the criteria included the parking inventory. He stated the new parking garage would create a new baseline for parking utilization and inventory in the Downtown Business District and McDonough Street neighborhood.

Mary Lou McElwain moved to table the action item to remove meters and parking spaces on north side of State Street between Middle Street and 487 State Street until the March 1, 2018 meeting. Staff will report back in 90 days on intersection improvements at Middle Street and State Street. Seconded by City Manager Bohenko.

Vote 9-0, to table the action item to remove meters and parking spaces on north side of State Street between Middle Street and 487 State Street until the March 1, 2018 meeting. Staff will report back in 90 days on intersection improvements at Middle Street and State Street.

D. Request to eliminate 2-hour time limit on Islington Street between Cornwall Street and Rockingham Street, by Islington Green Condo Association. Eric Eby stated the Old Port Traders had a 2-hour parking sign on their building when they occupied it. The entire stretch of Islington Street between Cabot Street at the traffic signal and the Mobil Station at 201 Islington Street is 2-hour parking. He stated it has always been designated 2-hour parking along that section of Islington Street. He stated the request also included the review of restricted parking on Cornwall Street as a result of the Planning Board Site Plan Approval. The parking spaces were restricted to allow turning into Cornwall Street and Rockingham Street from Islington Street, as well as turning into the site driveway from Cornwall Street. He stated he would review reconfiguring other parking spaces on Cornwall Street to gain on-street parking. He requested time to collect data, evaluate, and report back with a recommendation.

Public Works Director Rice moved to table action item. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse.

The Committee discussed changing the 2-hour time limit designation to a 3-hour time limit. They also discussed possible consequences if the designation was changed to allow for unlimited parking. They agreed it would not be advantageous.

Vote 9-0, to table the action item until the new parking garage is operational.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Report back on request for NO PARKING on Dennett Street at Hunters Hill Avenue, by Cheryl Coviello. Eric Eby stated measurements of sight lines at the intersection were taken. Based on data and measurements of sight lines, he recommended prohibiting parking in two on-street spaces in front of 314 Dennett Street. He stated this action would ensure safe operations at the intersection.

Harold Whitehouse moved to restrict parking on Dennett Street within 60 feet of the south side of Hunters Hill Avenue. Seconded by Ronald Cypher. **Vote 9-0, to restrict parking on Dennett Street within 60 feet of the south side of Hunters Hill Avenue.**

B. Report back: Request for NO PARKING on Brewster Street opposite #30 Brewster Street, by Kelly Hurd. Eric Eby stated the property owners at #30 Brewster Street presented the request due to difficulty entering and exiting their driveway when vehicles are parked across the street. The homeowners requested that on-street parking be prohibited on the east side of the roadway in front of 21 Brewster Street. Brewster Street was under reconstruction in 2017. Eric Eby discussed the issue of high curb reveal and stated this would be resolved when final paving is completed in the spring. He recommended that any changes to the parking spaces should be put on hold until after paving is completed. He stated if the issue was not resolved at that time, he would recommend eliminating one on-street parking space. The remaining space would be centered between the driveways on either side.

City Manager Bohenko moved to table action item until after road construction is finished and report back in July 2018. Seconded by Public Works Director Rice.

Chairman Roberts read an email from Kelly Hurd dated January 31, 2018. She submitted photographs of the area after the most recent snowstorm and spoke to concerns regarding safety.

Vote 9-0, to table action item until road construction is finished and report back in July 2018.

C. Request by neighborhood to close Echo Avenue from the Turnpike. Update on discussions with NHDOT and business owners. Eric Eby updated the Committee on the action item. He met with the NHDOT and was told they would not object to the closure of Echo Avenue and Farm Lane from the Turnpike. He also met with business owners on the corridor. Some of them were not in favor of the closures. He stated the next step would be to schedule a public meeting to include the business owners, residents and NHDOT.

City Manager Bohenko moved to schedule a public meeting. Seconded by Mary Lou McElwain.

Vote 9-0, to schedule a public meeting with business owners and residents from the Echo Avenue area and include representatives from NHDOT.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jen McCafferty spoke in favor of closing Echo Avenue and asked the Committee to move it forward. She also spoke in favor of the radar speed sign placed on Echo Avenue.

Will Gatchell requested the Echo Avenue public hearing be scheduled in the near future. He expressed concern for safety due to excessive speeds.

Charles McMahon thanked the Committee for moving the Echo Avenue issue forward. He also expressed concern for safety.

X. MISCELLANEOUS:

A. Quarterly bicycle and pedestrian accident report. Police Captain Warchol stated he would provide more detail on the 6 accidents reported in this quarter on the next report. Chairman Roberts requested that the number of traffic accidents be included in future reports.

The Committee briefly discussed the closure of the Stark Street Bridge and the effects on vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

XI. ADJOURNMENT – at 9:10 a.m., **VOTED** to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amy Chastain
Secretary to the Committee