

MEETING MINUTES

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

8:00 A.M. – June 7, 2018
City Hall – Conference Room A

I. CALL TO ORDER:

At 8:00 a.m., Chairman Roberts called the meeting to order.

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Member, Shari Donnermeyer

Staff Advisors Present:

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

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Mary Lou McElwain moved to accept the meeting minutes of May 3, 2018.
Seconded by Public Works Director Peter Rice. **Motion passed 9-0.**

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Deputy Fire Chief James Heinz moved to accept the financial report dated April 30, 2018.
Seconded by Ronald Cypher. **Motion passed 9-0.**

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jane Nilles supported the prohibition of parking on the west side of Highland St. up to the first driveway. Parking on both sides creates traffic and pedestrian problems, and prohibits good sight lines.

City Manager John Bohenko moved to advance action item VII.D. (Landgon St. and Brewster St. parking and traffic flow public meeting) to be addressed next on the agenda.
Seconded by Public Works Director Peter Rice. **Motion passed 9-0.**

D. Report back: Langdon Street and Brewster Street parking and traffic flow public meeting. Chairman Roberts read an email from Kelly Hurd. She supported the change. The road is too narrow for two-way traffic and parking. Making the street one-way would eliminate sight line issues.

Public Comment: David Rheaume requested that the last proposed parking space on Langdon Street not be approved. McDonough St. and Langdon St. are very narrow at that corner. It is already tight for large trucks to make that turn, and adding a parking spot there would create more of an issue.

Michelle Wirth supported the change on Brewster St. to one-way from Islington St. She expressed concern about where people would park if there were no more parking on Langdon St. north of McDonough St. Eric Eby replied that they tried to strike a balance between residents' requests to eliminate parking and the neighborhood need for parking. Ms. Wirth was not in support of removing parking on Langdon St.

Neil Cohen was not in support of removing parking and noted that the parking in that area was very tight. Many of the lots do not have room for parking, so the residents must find parking on the street.

Harold Whitehouse moved to change Brewster Street to one-way from Islington Street to McDonough Street; restrict parking on east side of Brewster Street north of McDonough Street; restrict parking on east side of Langdon Street north of #81 Langdon Street. Seconded by Ronald Cypher.

Eric Eby stated that the recommendation was to make Brewster St. one-way from Islington St. to McDonough St. because the roadway is narrow and it would not be a big change in traffic volume. The recommendation is to also restrict parking on the east side of Brewster St. by Nickerson-Remick. The parking would remain on the residential side of the street. The recommendation for Langdon St. is to restrict parking from #81 north. Eric Eby has talked to Regan Electric and saw how difficult it was to get vehicles in their driveway with cars parked on the street. Before the houses were built there was no curbing, so they could make the turn more easily. Eric Eby clarified that 3 parking spaces would be eliminated with this change.

Mary Lou McElwain clarified that the back loop did not have parking. Eric Eby confirmed that had already been posted no parking. It is not a city street; it is a city parcel with a roadway on it. It is a narrow curved roadway that would not allow for parking. If it became a city street, then they could look at possibly changing the parking rules. It still may be difficult to add parking though. Mary Lou McElwain noted that the parking in that area was a big issue. She recommended approving the one-way on Brewster Street, but holding off on making a decision on parking. They could revisit the parking once the new garage was complete. Eric Eby responded that when cars were parked on the Nickerson-Remick side of Brewster St. it was difficult to get one lane of traffic through. It was an issue that needed to be addressed now.

Ralph DiBernardo noted the safety issues the parking created. It did not allow for emergency vehicles to get into the street, and it prevented the vehicles from getting in and out of businesses. He did not think the Committee should postpone this action item.

Harold Whitehouse suggested implementing the change on a trial basis. Eric Eby responded that anything the PTS votes on is on a trial basis for up to a year.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to suspend the rules to allow for additional public comment. Ronald Cypher seconded. **Motion Passed 9-0.**

Neil Cohen opposed the proposed parking restrictions on Langdon Street near Regan Electric.

Ronald Cypher amended the motion to add a report back in 60 days. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Vote 8-1, to change Brewster Street to one-way from Islington Street to McDonough Street; restrict parking on east side of Brewster Street north of McDonough Street; restrict parking on east side of Langdon Street north of #81 Langdon Street with a report back in 60 days.**

Mary Lou McElwain voted opposed.

Chairman Roberts stated there were two people this morning who supported the action item. One submitted an email and the other person had to leave the meeting before addressing the Committee.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Request to renew valet parking license, by the One Hundred Club.

City Manager John Bohenko moved to renew the valet parking license for the One Hundred Club. Seconded by Ralph DiBernardo. **Motion passed 9-0.**

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Report back: Request to expand No Parking area on Highland Street near Middle Street, by Jane Nilles. Ronald Cypher moved to prohibit parking on west side of Highland, up to first driveway. Seconded by Public Works Director Peter Rice. **Vote 9-0, to prohibit parking on west side of Highland Street, up to first driveway.**

Eric Eby noted that this parking restriction would allow for traffic to pass. Parking would still be allowed on the other side of the roadway because there is a high demand for parking in that area.

B. Report back: Request to lower speed limit to 20 mph on Dodge Avenue, by Harold Sullivan. Eric Eby noted that after recording speeds on Dodge Avenue, the 85th percentile speed was 22 mph and the average speed was less than 20 mph. They can't post a speed limit of 20 mph by state law. The lowest they can post is 25 mph.

City Manager John Bohenko moved to lower speed limit to 25 mph and post 25 mph speed limit sign. Seconded by Ralph DiBernardo. **Vote 9-0, to lower speed limit to 25 mph and post 25 mph speed limit sign.**

C. Report back: Request for a loading zone between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm, 7 days a week, on Vaughan Street at 3S Artspace, by Martin Holbrook. Ronald Cypher moved to make no change at this time and revisit after hotel construction is complete. Seconded by City Manager John Bohenko.

Eric Eby noted that this location was not impacted by the hotel construction. They could still double-park their trucks like they have been doing. The parking in this area is in high demand, and they did not want to take parking away. It is best to keep this as is, and take another look at it once the hotel construction is complete.

Chairman Roberts agreed that parking was in high demand in that area, and was reluctant to restrict a large number of spaces to one user during the day.

Vote 9-0, to make no change at this time and revisit after hotel construction is complete.

E. Report back: Chairman Robert's parking space suggestions. Chairman Roberts noted that most of his suggestions came back in the negative. He suggested having staff further confer with the Fire and Police Departments to discuss their concerns and report back at the August meeting.

Ralph DiBernardo moved to have City Manager meet with the Chairman, City staff from the Public Works, Fire, Police, and Planning Departments on Fleet Street parking suggestions and report back at the August 2, 2018 meeting. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Vote 9-0, to have City Manager meet with the Chairman, City staff from the Public Works, Fire, Police, and Planning Departments on Fleet Street parking suggestions and report back at the August 2, 2018 meeting.**

Harold Whitehouse suggested testing the issue with the Fire Department's #5 ladder truck, if possible.

Chairman Roberts stated the Congress Street (Music Hall to Maplewood Avenue) parking space suggestions would be addressed at a later date when the analysis of a two-way street is finished. The other suggestions did not need to be looked at further.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL:

A. Zagster bike share 2018 update, by Planning Director Juliet Walker.

Planning Director Juliet Walker provided a presentation on the Zagster program. The program is in its second year. A Zagster station has been added at Portwalk Place. The Zagster program is a lease agreement, so the city has very little involvement with maintenance and upkeep. The station on Russell St. in front of the Sheraton was moved to a spot in front of City Hall. Since the Portwalk Place station was added, they felt that

it was an opportunity to pilot the station at City Hall. The locations will be monitored for usage data.

Mary Lou McElwain was not in support of the Zagster program because it did not provide helmets. She did not think that the City Hall location was safe because of the ongoing construction. Planning Director Juliet Walker responded that the City Hall location was chosen based on visibility and not interrupting traffic flows. She was in conversation with the Farmer's Market to ensure that the Zagster location did not interfere with the market.

Planning Director Juliet Walker explained to the Committee the membership options, maintenance protocol, sponsorship program for new locations and the financial cost to the City.

B. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, by Planning Director Juliet Walker.

Planning Director Juliet Walker presented the Application for Traffic Calming Measures and stated that the form was formalizing a process already in place. She felt that it was important for people to have a clear process that outlined what information needed to be provided in the request. There is a web page for the traffic calming program that includes the application presented today. Eric Eby will initially review the applications. He will evaluate the requests and perform initial analysis before presenting them to the Committee. The application process will require residents to provide more information about the issues they are raising. Some requests will require a petition to be submitted as well. This process will encourage collaboration with the residents and discussion about different solutions. Chairman Roberts spoke in favor of this process.

C. Middle Street bike lane project, by Planning Director Juliet Walker.

Planning Director Juliet Walker provided an update on the project. They were successful in receiving a reasonable bid from Highway Safety Systems. Construction is anticipated to start later in the summer. City funding for the project is around \$90,000 and \$180,000 is coming from grants. A few items were taken off the initial plans, like the pedestrian actuated signals, but if more funding becomes available they will be added back in.

Harold Whitehouse asked what the length of the bike lane project would be. Planning Director Juliet Walker responded that it would be from the Andrew Jarvis Drive intersection to Miller Avenue.

Ralph DiBernardo asked if it was paint only. Planning Director Juliet Walker responded that it was paint and bollards. The bollards can be removed and they will work with DPW to determine when they should be removed for snow plowing season.

Public Works Director Peter Rice clarified that the Andrew Jarvis Drive intersection would be under construction after the end of the school year. The road would be widened to help allow for the bike lane. The entrance to the high school will be closed during the weekdays for the summer. The construction will be complete by the time school is back in session, and the mast arm for the signal will come a few weeks after that.

Harold Whitehouse asked about the intersection of Greenleaf Avenue and Lafayette Road. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that they were constructing the Andrew Jarvis Drive intersection first. After that, the traffic flow would be reevaluated and the Greenleaf Road area would be reviewed.

D. Parking meters on Vaughan Street, Raynes Avenue, Islington Street and State Street. Public Works Director Peter Rice noted that area had 100% utilization all the time. Metering these spaces will encourage turnover. The information provided today was just informational and City staff would be reporting back to the Committee with specifics at a future meeting.

E. PTS open action items. No discussion by the Committee.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS:

The Committee discussed the topic of roadway markings (painting lines) to designate on-street parking spaces.

Ralph DiBernardo complimented the police officers working in Market Square on May 4th on crosswalk and stop sign enforcement. He thanked Public Works for addressing the problem of cars parking on the grass on Aldrich Road near Islington Street.

Chairman Roberts informed the Committee in a recent Police Department presentation to City Council the data showed a decline in traffic accidents.

Harold Whitehouse noted that he hoped the Committee would be included in a City Council site visit to the new garage site.

Mary Lou McElwain stated she wanted to rescind her vote at the May 3, 2018 meeting on action item (VI.D.) regarding electric vehicle charging station parking space regulations. She opposes free parking at the electric car charging stations. Mary Lou McElwain moved to reconsider the vote.

Public Works Director Peter Rice clarified that the spaces were already free. The direction from City Council was to start installing charging stations. The charging station at the garage was grant funded. The charging station at City Hall was through parking funds. The fee committee will be working to determine an appropriate fee to charge at the stations.

The motion was not seconded, so the motion will not be considered.

Mary Lou McElwain stated she wanted on the record that she was opposed to two free parking spaces next to the free charging station.

Pat Bagley handed out a petition signed by 25 residents that opposed the proposed new parking spaces in front of Langdon House. She questioned how this parking would be a traffic calming method. Public Works Director Peter Rice clarified that they were not putting parking in that area as part of a project. Chairman Roberts stated the issue was referred to the Committee by Councilor Dwyer on June 4, 2018. The referral to the Committee from City Council is to consider adding parking in front of the Langdon House.

X. ADJOURNMENT – at 9:21 a.m., VOTED to adjourn.
Respectfully submitted by:

Becky Frey
PTS Recording Secretary