

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM A
CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE

*Members of the public also had the opportunity to join the meeting via
Zoom*

9:00 AM

May 7th, 2026

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Annie Hopkins called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

2. ATTENDANCE

Members Present:

Public Works Director Peter Rice
Fire Chief William McQuillen
Deputy Police Chief Mike Maloney
Committee Chair Annie Hopkins
Stefanie Casella, Planning Department
Erica Wygonik
Mark Syracuse
Mary Lou McElwain
Jane Mitchell-Pate
Barbara Sadick (alternate)

Members Absent:

None

City Staff Present:

Eric Eby, City Engineer
Ben Fletcher, Parking Director
Tyler Reese, Project Manager
Dave Desfosses, Project Manager
Jefferson Lane, DPW Administrative Assistant

3. FINANCIAL REPORT

[00:05:10] Peter Rice moved to accept the financial report dated March 31st, 2026, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT (15 MINUTES)

[00:05:27] There were five speakers: Carolin Berendsen, general manager of Getty Bagel, provided context to New Business Item 7. C.; Tyler Garzo, 62 McKinley Road, spoke regarding the Van Buren Avenue proposed redesign; Sophie Gee, Joy Curth, and Lauren Wolf, representing the Local Love initiative, spoke on seeking City support for the Local Love initiative, encouraging residents to come downtown and support local businesses by offering parking in the Hanover

Garage for those three hours the third Thursday of the month. Joy Curth also spoke on tying Commercial Loading Zone passes to businesses, instead of vehicles. To allow for staff and committee discussion on the matter, Peter Rice moved to suspend the rules and bring forward Item 9. Miscellaneous following public comment, seconded by Stephanie Casella. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

A. [00:24:15] Local Love downtown parking & Commercial Loading Zone Passes. Peter Rice invited Parking Director Ben Fletcher to speak on the City's methods of parking enforcement, discussing enforcement software technical abilities that rely on a vehicle's license plate number to keep track of any pass or session, and that the City doesn't currently have the technology to tie passes outside of license plate numbers. Peter Rice requested a report back at a later meeting on ability to whitelist businesses for parking. Speaking on the Local Love Three Dollar Thursday initiative, Parking Director Fletcher addressed the challenge of issuing free or reduced rate parking to certain groups over another. Discussion ensued on developing 'big picture' ideas to assist small businesses in the long term, as well as the applicability of 'fair use'. Conversation arose around parking revenues being down on the year, but Directors Rice and Fletcher discussed how outside forces, like the weather and international relations, have played a role. Following an inquiry from the gallery, Peter Rice moved to suspend the rules and open public comment, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed. Joy Curth spoke on parking violation discrepancies and physical placards in vehicles. Sophie Gee commented on the scope of 'local' visitors to include residents from neighboring towns, and to keep that in consideration with any future decision making.

6. PRESENTATIONS

[00:36:37] Fleet Street, recommended traffic flow and parking configuration between Congress Street and Hanover Street, by DPW. Project Manager Dave Desfosses led the presentation, discussing the impact on Fleet Street from the ongoing downtown construction, input from residents on what they'd like to see done with Fleet Street, as well as the proposed and recommended designs. Dave Desfosses explained the preferred one-way Fleet Street layout. Following the presentation, questions arose from committee members, including sidewalk layouts, traffic pattern concerns, and the possibility of integrating a contraflow bike lane. In the interest of utilizing Dave Desfosses' time, Bill McQuillen moved to suspend the rules and bring forward Informational Item 8. B. Construction Projects Update, seconded by Peter Rice. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed. Dave then spoke on other projects around the City, including various sidewalk and paving projects.

7. NEW BUSINESS

(No public comment during Committee discussion without Committee approval.)

A. [01:10:24] Fleet Street, request for recommendation regarding one-way traffic flow and on-street parking between Congress Street and Hanover Street, by DPW. Erica Wygonik moved to recommend that traffic flow on Fleet Street be changed to one-way flow with on-street parking from Congress Street to Hanover Street, seconded by Bill McQuillen. Jane Mitchell-Pate proposed an amendment that included consideration of a contraflow bike lane. Peter Rice pointed out that considering a bike lane would be best considered by the Bicycle & Pedestrian Blue Ribbon Committee, and that a bike lane is still in the realm of possibility, even if not explicitly included in this motion. Jane Mitchell-Pate withdrew her amendment. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

- B. [01:12:38] Gates Street, request for parking restriction opposite 74 Gates Street, by resident. Following inquiry from the gallery, Peter Rice moved to suspend the rules and open public comment, seconded by Mark Syracuse. Owen May, resident at 74 Gates Street, spoke on the parking challenges faced when other drivers are parked opposite the driveway. Committee discussion ensued, determining whether having restrictions would create a new enforcement challenge, as well as the challenge of making a street-wide decision based on one property owner. Peter Rice proposed that the resident create a caucus of neighbors if this is a shared concern and bring it forward to a future meeting. Bill McQuillen moved to place the item on file, seconded by Jane Mitchell-Pate. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.
- C. [01:20:00] Cabot Street, request for parking restriction between Islington Street and The Getty Bagel driveway, by business owner. Erica Wygonik moved to schedule field site visit for Committee members and make recommendation at next meeting, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. Committee discussion ensued identifying the problem area and the efficacy of an additional signal or traffic camera. It was determined that the ideal time for a site visit would be a Friday morning. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.
- D. [01:24:32] State Street, request for recommendation in support of license agreement for parking space, by resident. Erica Wygonik moved to object to the request and recommend that City Council not approve license, seconded by Mark Syracuse. Following inquiry from the gallery, Peter Rice moved to suspend the rules and open public comment, seconded by Mark Syracuse. Tim Phoenix spoke on behalf of the property owner at 10 State Street, citing concerns of his client occasionally getting blocked in by parked vehicles. Mary Lou McElwain suggested increased enforcement in this area but did not support a license agreement for a parking space. Erica Wygonik noted this property was previously subject to site plan review. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.
- E. [01:29:59] City Ordinances, Chapter 7, Vehicles, Traffic and Parking, request to modify ordinance to allow parking within 10 feet of all intersections, by Hampton Falls resident. Referred to Committee by City Council. Erica Wygonik moved to recommend no changes to parking restrictions near intersections in Chapter 7, seconded by Jane Mitchell-Pate. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.
- F. [01:30:21] Hanover Street, request for renewal of valet license for The 100 Club, by business owner. Erica Wygonik moved to approve renewal of valet license for The 100 Club for one year, seconded by Jane Mitchell-Pate. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- A. [01:30:38] Van Buren Avenue, report back on residents' request for narrower roadway and parking restrictions after upcoming reconstruction project. Peter Rice moved to recommend to proceed with project as currently designed by City, seconded by Bill McQuillen. Eric Eby spoke on his findings from reaching out to the Dondero PTA and receiving their feedback—finding that those who provided feedback preferred the City's design as proposed. Flyers were also handed out to abutters on Van Buren requesting feedback, but no feedback was ever received. Following inquiry from the gallery, Erica Wygonik moved to suspend the rules and open public comment, seconded by Peter Rice. Tyler Garzo presented his thoughts on data gathered from the Dondero PTA meeting. Returning to the motion on the floor, the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

- B. [01:38:23] Cate Street and Hodgdon Way, request for speed feedback sign, blind drive sign, speed enforcement, by residents. Erica Wygonik moved to refer to staff for implementation of items which are warranted, seconded by Jane Mitchell-Pate. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.
- C. [01:38:43] Middle Street at Cass Street, request to reapprove temporary removal of parking space north of Cass Street. (originally approved by PTS October 2024, implemented in Spring 2025, monitored in June 2025, but missed deadline for 2025 omnibus.) Erica Wygonik moved to reapprove removal of one parking space on Middle Street north of Cass Street, seconded by Jane Mitchell-Pate. Erica Wygonik asked to evaluate the possibility of a bump-out as part of planned curb work, to deter parking. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.
- D. [01:40:19] State Street at Chapel Street crosswalk. Report back on request for RRFB. Mark Syracuse moved to install pedestrian warning signs, but not RRFBs, seconded by Erica Wygonik. Eric Eby spoke on the criteria for installing a RRFB, determining that this area did not fit the criteria. Erica Wygonik asked Deputy Chief Mike Maloney if there's a history of pedestrian crashes at this location, to which he answered no. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.
- A. [01:43:15] Maplewood Avenue, request to review pedestrian signal operations, by resident. Mark Syracuse moved to place on file, seconded by Jane Mitchell-Pate. Following discussion, the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

9. INFORMATIONAL

- A. [01:45:00] Police monthly collision report – request for e-bike update next month
- C. [01:45:29] Discussion of Committee purpose and mission. Jane Mitchell Pate moved to table this item until next month, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed.
- D. [01:46:30] 150 Portsmouth Boulevard neighborhood traffic concerns
- E. [01:48:14] Outdoor Dining update

10. ADJOURNMENT

[01:48:48] Erica Wygonik moved to adjourn, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. On a unanimous vote, the motion passed. Chair Annie Hopkins adjourned the meeting at 10:44 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jefferson Lane
Administrative Assistant II, Department of Public Works