



# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*

**City Manager's Office**

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City Manager

## **Parking Committee Minutes February 28, 2022**

### **Attendees:**

Brent Todd, City Councilor, Parking Committee Chair

Paula McLaughlin, City Councilor

Stacey Brown, City Councilor

Jim Bouley, Mayor

Councilor McNamara was excused.

### **Staff:**

David Florence, Parking Division Supervisor

Karen Hill, Transportation Engineer

Amanda Lombard, Fiscal Tech III, Parking Division

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, & Special Projects

### **Public:**

Ryan Layme, Owner of 5 Rollins Street

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Todd at 5:08 PM.

- 1) **Overview of Agenda:** Councilor Todd provided an overview of the meeting agenda and welcomed the new members of the Committee.
- 2) **Adoption of Minutes:** The Mayor moved to adopt the meeting minutes of November 22, 2021. Councilor Todd seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted on a unanimous vote.
- 3) **Parking System Overview:**
  - a. **Staff Presentation:** Mr. Walsh exhibited a PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview of the Parking System, including assets and infrastructure, staffing, and financial details; as well as the findings and recommendations of the 2017 Strategic Parking Plan. A copy of the presentation was provided to the Committee.
  - b. **Parking Committee's Goals / Priorities and FY 2022 / FY 2023 Work Plan:** Following Mr. Walsh's presentation, the Committee reviewed the FY 2022 Parking Committee work plan, which was adopted by previous iteration of the Parking Committee in June 2021. Items listed on the work plan were as follows:

- 1) Mitigate / manage the ongoing negative financial repercussions of the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 2) Continue to implement the 2017 Strategic Plan:
  - i. Prepare for meter rate, lease / permit rate, and citation rate increases recommended by the Strategic Plan for FY 2023;
  - ii. Continue negotiations to convert long-term leases in the School Street and Storrs Street Parking Garages to a permit program; and,
  - iii. Select and implement an on-line portal for parking permits (i.e. resident permits, parking garage permits, and on-street parking encumbrance permits.) (Carried over from FY 2021).
- 3) Complete the Narrow Streets Project for Zone 1 (“the Wall Street Neighborhood”).
  - i. Schedule Neighborhood Forums; and,
  - ii. Prepare subsequent ordinances to implement recommendations once.
- 4) Continue to review citizen parking requests as received.
- 5) Capital Projects:
  - i. CIP #432 State Street Garage Structural Evaluation and Needs Assessment: prepare for FY 2023 design and FY 2024 construction.
  - ii. CIP #529 Storrs Street Garage: proceed with construction of repairs and renovations.
- 6) Other Potential Ideas:
  - i. Complete reorganization of Parking Division staffing. Fill all Parking Officer and Equipment Technician (“PEOT”) positions funded in FY 2022.
    1. 7.6 positions total (to be reduced to 7);
    2. 5 positions currently funded in FY 2022.
  - ii. Meter Expansion Zone subcommittee.
    1. Monitor revenues as City emerges from COVID-19 Pandemic;
    2. Evaluate potential modifications of meter expansion geography; and,
    3. Fee structures and resident permit options.
  - iii. Outdoor Dining in Parking Spaces (Parklets).
    1. Continue program beyond 2021 dining season?
    2. If so, establish revised regulations and design criteria, as well as fee structure.
  - iv. Citations.
    1. Monitor collection rates; and,
    2. Review relationship between General Fund and Parking Fund concerning non-meter parking citations and General Fund Administrative Fee.
  - v. Winter Parking Ban tickets and vehicle impoundment protocols.
    1. Evaluate citation amount (\$100 / \$200 / \$400); and,
    2. Review Police Department protocols for impounding vehicles.

- vi. Study Pay by License Plate (recently implemented in Portsmouth NH).
- vii. Neighborhood Pavement Markings.
- viii. Formalize Loading Zone Regulations (time limits, signage, etc.).
- ix. Study Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

The Mayor noted that he has formed a separate ad-hoc committee to review restaurant dining in parking spaces and develop a more formal program associated therewith. A report will be presented to the City Council in March.

It was also noted that the Parking Committee reviewed loading zone regulations during its November 2021 meeting. During that meeting, the Committee elected to not establish any regulations for loading zones or loading activities in the center median on Main Street.

The Mayor also discussed staffing levels for Parking Officer and Equipment Technicians (POETs). He recognized the challenges of chronic vacancies and understaffing and expressed potential interest in strategies to fill vacant positions to improve enforcement of meter zones, as well as neighborhood parking.

After additional discussion, it was the general consensus of the Committee that the topics listed on the work plan are still valid and should be pursued as opportunities or resources allowed.

#### 4) **Citizen Requests and City Council Referrals:**

- a. Eastern Avenue: Request from Paula Cantata to limit parking to one side of Eastern Avenue: It was noted that this item was included on the agenda at the request of Mayor Bouley. Mr. Walsh updated the Committee with a quick overview of Ms. Cantata's request and explained that this item had been previously reviewed by the Parking Committee during its November 2021 meeting.

During its November meeting, the Committee took no action on this request. Rather, the Mayor volunteered to speak with representatives of CATCH Neighborhood Housing concerning tenants parking on Eastern Avenue. The Mayor noted that he had discussed said concerns with CATCH; however, parking behaviors have not changed. As such, he asked the Committee to consider restricting parking to one side of the street.

Staff explained that when parking is limited to one side of the road, it is generally best practice to locate the parking to the side of the road that has the fewest driveways. Doing so maximizes parking supply. As such, Karen Hill, City Transportation Engineer, recommended that parking be limited to the north side of the roadway. However, Ms. Hill noted that her recommendation was contrary to Ms. Cantara's request that parking be located on the south side of the road.

Discussion ensued. After additional discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee to support the staff recommendation to limit parking to the north side of the road. The Mayor noted that the City Council could reconsider which side of the road to restrict parking in the event public testimony was persuasive one way or another.

Motion: Mayor Bouley moved that the Parking Committee recommend that the City Council adopt an ordinance to limit parking on Eastern Avenue to the north side of the street. Councilor Todd seconded the motion. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Councilor Brown requested that a letter go out to the abutters to notify them when the Ordinance is scheduled for public hearing before the City Council. Mr. Walsh noted that the Parking Division does not customarily notify abutters of proposed parking changes. After additional discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee to notify property owners located on Eastern Avenue of this potential change.

#### 5) **Staffing Update:**

- a. Parking Officer & Equipment Technician (POET) Recruitment Update: Mr. Walsh reminded the Parking Committee that the Parking Division has seven (7) Parking Officer and Equipment Technician positions. Of this total, five (5) were funded in FY 2022, of which three (3) are currently staffed. Staffing vacancies have negatively impacted the Parking Division's enforcement activities. David Florence, Parking Supervisor, informed the Committee that the Parking Division is currently conducting final interviews with a candidate for the vacant POET #4 position. Recruitment efforts for the vacant POET #5 position are ongoing.

#### 6) **Financials:**

- a. FY 2021 Year End Financial Statement and Fund Balance: Mr. Walsh provided an overview of the year-end financial statements for FY 2021, which closed on June 30, 2021.
  - i. Revenues: Total revenues for FY 2021, through June 30, 2021, were \$2,384,275.65, or 77% of budget. This figure was approximately \$114,500 less than revenues received in FY 2020. It was noted that the COVID-19 Pandemic, which began in March 2020, had significant negative impacts on the Parking Fund during FY 2020 and FY 2021.
  - ii. Expenditures: Actual total expenditures for FY 2021, through June 30, 2021, were \$2,730,566.17 or 86% of budget. This figure was \$173,459 more than FY 2020, and was primarily related to increased debt service associated with the School Street Parking Garage project.
  - iii. Gain/Loss: FY 2021 finished the year with a loss of \$346,290.52. Consequently, the Parking Fund's working capital (i.e. "Fund Balance") decreased from \$617,621 to \$271,331.
- b. FY 2022 Year to Date Financial Statement and Fund Balance: Mr. Walsh provided an overview of FY 2022 financial statements through January 31, 2022. As of January 31, 2022, 58% of the fiscal year has elapsed.
  - i. Revenues: Revenues from July 1, 2021 through January 31, 2022 were \$1,677,921.33, or 62% of budget. This is ahead of budget by approximately 4% year to date. In addition, revenues year to date are \$387,000 more than the same period during FY 2021. Mr. Walsh noted that the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to

impact the Parking Fund. However, revenues have steadily improved since pandemic emergency restrictions were terminated in summer 2021.

- II. Expenditures: Actual total expenditures for FY 2022, through January 31, 2022, were \$2,105,409 or 76% of budget. This figure is approximately \$20,000 less than the same period in FY 2021.
- III. Gain/Loss: Through January 31, 2022, expenditures are outpacing revenues, and the Parking Fund is currently running a deficit of approximately \$427,488. Much of this is related to the timing of debt service payments, which are made twice per fiscal year in July and January. However, this is much improved over FY 2021, which was running a deficit of \$835,753 for the same period during FY 2021.

7) **State Street Parking Garage Facility Needs Assessment**: Mr. Walsh presented a brief PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview of the findings of an engineering needs assessment of the State Street Parking Garage prepared by the HL Turner Group. A copy of the presentation was also provided to the Committee.

Mr. Walsh explained that the facility opened in 1982 and was the City's first municipal parking garage. The facility contains 238 spaces and was renovated in 2006 and 2013. A 2018 needs assessment by the same firm recommended that comprehensive repairs be initiated by 2020; however, those were delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Parking Fund's inability to afford said repairs due to the negative financial impacts on the Fund associated with the Pandemic.

- a. Emergency Repairs: Mr. Walsh reported that the structural needs assessment determined that the facility requires \$200,000 of emergency repairs. Emergency items include repair of an expansion joint on the main level of the garage, installation of temporary supports in both stair towers, and removal of loose overhead concrete. Residual funds would be used to repair the most severe potholes in the facility to help stay off additional deterioration of the elevated concrete decks. Mr. Walsh stated the City Council would be voting on March 14, 2022 to appropriate funds for these repairs. If approved, work would begin in early April, once weather and temperatures are favorable. Repairs will take approximately 90 days to complete.

Mr. Walsh also noted that the needs assessment recommends that comprehensive repairs of the entire facility be initiated within one year (i.e. Spring 2023).

- b. Repair and Renovation Options: Mr. Walsh presented three options to the Parking Committee for the facility, as follows:
  - Repair / Renovate Existing Garage: The estimated cost to repair and renovate the facility is \$9,490,000. This figure presumes start of construction in spring 2023.
  - Demolish the Garage; Construct a New 60+/- Space Parking Lot: \$4,340,000, also presuming start of construction in spring 2023.
  - Demolish the Garage; Construct a New 240 Space Parking Garage: \$25,400,000, presuming a spring 2023 start.

Mr. Walsh also reported to the Committee that the FY 2022 Capital Improvement Program includes \$4,020,000 of bonded debt for design and construction of repairs and renovations for the facility. This assumption has been carried in the FY 2022 pro forma for the Parking Fund.

Discussion ensued. The Mayor discussed the State of New Hampshire's long discussed plans to potentially construct a new parking garage at the site of the NH Department of Justice property. He explained that the garage could be as large as 500 spaces. Although intended for the Legislature, the facility might be available to State employees when the Legislature is not in session. Therefore, if the proposed facility came to fruition, it would have implications for the downtown public parking system. The State may decide about proceeding with their project this spring. He suggested the City take a phased approach to renovating the State Street Garage.

Mr. Walsh stated that, given the severity of structural concerns with the State Street garage, City Administration would likely recommend the \$9.49 million option to renovate the garage in the FY 2023 Capital Improvement Program, which would be funded by bonded debt. However, debt service for the project would be sold incrementally over two to three years to phase in the financial impacts of these new debt payments on the Parking Fund.

Discussion also ensued about potential demolition and replacement of the garage with a new 60+/- space surface parking lot. Members of the Committee asked if the public parking system could absorb the loss of approximately 180 spaces if the State Street Garage were to be demolished and replaced with a 60 space surface lot. Staff explained the operational inefficiencies of how the School Street and Storrs Street parking garages currently operate. Staff noted that said inefficiencies stem from long-term lease agreements at each facility which provide for exclusive use leases of large quantities of reserved parking. Staff hypothesized that if reserved parking at the School Street and Storrs Street garages were fully transitioned from exclusive use leases to shared parking permits, and also allowed to operate in accordance with best management practices relative to the location of metered and reserved parking in each facility, then it was potentially conceivable that the School Street and Storrs Street garages, coupled with a replacement 60 space lot at the State Street site, could absorb the loss of the State Street Parking Garage based upon current parking demand in the Downtown Central Business District. However, as Downtown continues to redevelop overtime, coupled with other macroeconomic trends (such as working from home trends sparked by the Covid-19 pandemic), the long-term impact of the potential loss of 180 spaces was difficult to predict.

## 8) **Other Business:**

- a. **Request to Expand Residential Parking Permit Program for 5 Rollins Street:** Ryan Layme, owner of property located at 5 Rollins Street, addressed the Parking Committee. Mr. Layme's property is a 10 unit rooming house with no onsite parking. Specifically, he requested that the Committee expand the on-street residential parking permit program to include Washington Street in order to support his tenants at 5 Rollins Street. Mr. Layme explained that he acquired the property in 2020. Historically, parking for the property was provided via a lease agreement with First Church. The Church was recently acquired by the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (the CCEH). The CCEH is selling the Church for redevelopment and, as such, is terminating the parking lease.

In December 2021, Mr. Layme emailed Councilor McNamara with a request to "purchase" parking spaces on Washington Street for tenants of his property. On December 23, 2021, he applied to the Parking Division for residential parking permits for his property. His application

was denied, as the program is limited by City Ordinance to properties located on Essex, Perry, Blanchard, and Rowell Streets.

The Parking Committee discussed the current on-street residential parking permit program and the complexities of Mr. Layme's request. The Committee stated it would take his request under advisement. The Committee also suggested to Mr. Layme that he explore other private parking options in the neighborhood to support his property, including a parking lot owned by Merrimack County on Chapel Street.

- b. Next meeting: The Committee discussed potential agenda items for its next meeting on March 28, 2022. It was the consensus of the Committee to review citizen requests and City Council referrals at their next meeting. The Committee also decided to review meter revenues on a street by street basis at its April meeting.

9) **Adjournment**: The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Lombard  
Parking Division Fiscal Tech III