



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

City Manager's Office

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Thomas J. Aspell, Jr.
City Manager

Parking Committee Minutes November 22, 2021

Attendees:

Byron Champlin, City Councilor, Parking Committee Chair
Jim Bouley, Mayor
Nathan Fennessy, City Councilor
Linda Kenison, City Councilor
Brent Todd, City Councilor

Staff:

Chip Chesley, General Services Director
Karen Hill, Transportation Engineer
David Florence, Parking Division Supervisor
Amanda Lombard, Fiscal Tech III, Parking Division
Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, & Special Projects

Public:

~~Karen McNamara, City Councilor~~
Paula Cantara
Gerry Carrier, Little River Oriental Rugs
Gerry Mark, Caring Gifts

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Champlin at 5:04 PM.

- 1) **Overview of Agenda:** Councilor Champlin provided an overview of the meeting agenda.
- 2) **Adoption of Minutes:** Councilor Kenison moved to adopt the minutes from October 19, 2021 and October 25, 2021. Councilor Todd seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.
- 3) **Citizen Requests:**
 - a. **Eastern Avenue:** Paula Cantara addressed the Parking Committee and discussed her concerns regarding on-street parking on Eastern Avenue as articulated in her August 24, 2021 email to City staff.

Specifically, Ms. Cantara explained that her parents reside at #10 Eastern Avenue and that individuals are parking directly opposite of her parent's driveway, thus making it difficult for vehicles to exit her parent's property.

Ms. Cantara also explained that on-street parking is currently permitted on both sides of Eastern Avenue. As a result, parked vehicles can sometimes make it challenging to maintain sufficient space so that two vehicles may pass simultaneously. She also stated that the street is relatively narrow and expressed concerns that emergency vehicles may not be able to navigate the roadway due to current parking practices.

Mr. Walsh stated that Eastern Avenue is just under 27 ft wide. He noted that a street must be at least 28 ft wide in order to have two travel lanes with parking on one side.

Karen Hill, City Transportation Engineer, stated that she supports removing parking from one side of the street.

It was noted that, customarily for these types of requests, on-street parking is typically limited to the side of the road with the fewest driveways in order to maximize the available supply of parking spaces. For Eastern Avenue, that would be the north side of the street. However, Ms. Cantara stated that she would prefer to have parking on the same side of the road as her parent's home, which is the south side of the street. Staff noted that having parking on the south side of the road would reduce the supply of parking, as well as result in obstruction of sight distance at driveways.

Discussion ensued. It was the Committee's perception that vehicles parked on Eastern Avenue were likely tenants and visitors of the abutting apartment complex located on the north side of the street. The apartment complex is operated by CATCH Neighborhood Housing. The Mayor volunteered to contact the Executive Director of CATCH to discuss this issue. If, following the Mayor's discussions with CATCH, parking activity does not change, the Committee could revisit this item at a future meeting.

Councilor Todd moved to table further consideration of this item pending the outcome of the Mayor's discussions with CATCH Neighborhood Housing. Councilor Kenison seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- b. Kennedy Lane: The Parking Committee reviewed a letter from Gerry Carrier, owner of Little River Oriental Rugs, requesting changes to on-street parking located on Kennedy Lane. Little River Oriental Rugs has frontage on Kennedy Lane, as well as North Main Street.

Mr. Carrier addressed the Parking Committee. He explained that his letter discussed two parking concerns.

First, he requested that the City remove a twenty-minute parking zone on the west side of Kennedy Lane near Depot Street. In Mr. Carrier's opinion, the twenty-minute parking zone is problematic as it serves to narrow the travel way, thus restricting passage of vehicles on Kennedy Lane. In turn, this inhibits snow removal activities, as well as access to the City's Downtown Solid Waste District dumpsters. In addition, the twenty-minute zone is frequently misused by a small group of individuals for extended periods of time in violation of the posted time limit, thus frustrating Mr. Carrier, other merchants, and members of the public.

Secondly, Mr. Carrier had concerns about private parallel parking located on the east side of Kennedy Lane near Pleasant Street Extension. Specifically, rather than abiding with the

traditional parallel parking configuration, vehicles have recently begun parking at this location using an angled configuration, thus obstructing traffic at the southerly end of the alley.

Following the conclusion of Mr. Carrier's remarks, staff provided a brief overview of Kennedy Lane. Staff explained that Kennedy Lane is a narrow street, approximately 16' wide, running between Depot Street and Pleasant Street Extension. Private parallel parking, owned by Capital Plaza Concord LLC, is located on the east side of the street. A twenty-minute parking zone, approximately 40' long, is located on the west side of the alley near Depot Street. The twenty-minute time zone was established by Ordinance 2026 on March 8, 1993.

Staff noted that in 2019, the Parking Committee, as part of its Narrow Streets project, considered removing the twenty-minute parking zone. Initially, the Committee favored removing the twenty-minute time zone due to extremely narrow width of Kennedy Lane and related concerns about emergency vehicle access, snow removal, and challenges accessing the Downtown Solid Waste District dumpster located at the southerly end of the alley. However, the Committee ultimately decided against taking any action in 2019 as it desired to have additional discussions about potential changes with direct abutters.

Gerry Mark, owner of Caring Gifts located on North Main Street, addressed the Parking Committee. He testified that he is the primary user of the twenty-minute parking zone, and that he relies on this parking area to access the service entrance to his business. He stated that removing the twenty-minute zone would negatively impact his business.

Discussion regarding the twenty-minute parking zone ensued. Members of the Parking Committee generally concurred with Mr. Carrier's observations and concerns. The Committee discussed various parking options for Caring Gifts. Specifically, the Committee noted that Caring Gifts' personnel could use loading zones located on North Main and Depot Streets which are located in close proximity to their establishment. The Committee also discussed the notion of Caring Gifts leasing a private parking space on the east side of Kennedy Lane from the Duprey Companies to facilitate their loading activities at their service entrance. Mr. Mark indicated that he would be willing to lease a space from the Duprey Companies if one was available.

Discussion then ensued regarding the recent angle parking phenomenon at the southerly end of Kennedy Lane. Staff stated that parking activities which obstruct vehicular traffic within the public portion of the alley are illegal. Therefore, staff will take appropriate enforcement action to ensure the parkers complied with parallel parking at this location.

Councilor Todd moved to remove the twenty-minute parking zone on Kennedy Lane, Councilor Kenison seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- 4) **Loading Zones:** Mr. Walsh reviewed a staff report dated November 15, 2021 which discussed loading zones, as well as the use of the center median on North and South Main Streets (between Centre and Thorndike) for loading activities. The report was prepared at the request of the Parking Committee.

The report described the location of loading zones throughout the central business district. Mr. Walsh explained that the City currently has no ordinances regulating loading zones. Therefore,

although these zones have been designated by signage and pavement markings, they are essentially unenforceable and ripe for misuse by the public.

Mr. Walsh also noted that a handful of twenty-minute parking spaces are scattered throughout the City. In some instances, these act as defacto loading zones. Mr. Walsh noted that twenty-minute spaces are regulated by the Section 18-1-8 and Schedule 3 of the Code of Ordinances, and are valid from 7:00 AM to 12:01 AM.

Mr. Walsh then discussed loading zone regulations in Portsmouth, Keene, and Manchester, New Hampshire. He explained that all three communities regulate loading zones, as follows:

- a) Portsmouth NH: Loading zones are regulated by ordinance. Specifically, Portsmouth has two classes of loading zones, as follows:
 1. Limited Hour Loading Zones: These zones are valid Monday – Saturday from 6AM-7PM. The maximum parking time is 30 minutes. All commercial vehicles wishing to use loading zones must secure a permit annually. A separate permit is required for each vehicle. Violations for misuse of a loading zone permit is \$100-\$200.
 2. 24 Hour Loading Zones: These zones may only be used by licensed commercial vehicles 24 hours per day. Commercial vehicles must secure and display the same annual permit as required for limited Hour Loading Zones.
- b) Manchester NH: Loading zones are regulated by ordinance. The maximum parking time in a loading zone is 15 minutes. Loading zones may be used by all vehicles. Violations are subject to a \$50 fine, which increases to \$75 after 30 days and \$90 after 60 days.
- c) Keene NH: Loading zones are regulated by ordinance. Maximum parking time in a loading zone is 15 minutes. Loading zones may be used by all vehicles. Loading is also prohibited on several streets at certain times throughout the day. Violations are subject to \$10 fine, which increases to \$30 after 30 days and \$60 after 60 days.

Mr. Walsh stated that the lack of a City ordinance regulating loading zones is problematic. He noted that his circumstance recently complicated a staff proposal to establish a loading zone in the City's Warren Street Parking Lot at the School Street Parking Garage. The loading zone was intended to facilitate deliveries to properties near the Garage while simultaneously keeping delivery trucks of the City's newly renovated plaza adjacent thereto.

Mr. Walsh stated that staff recommends creation of a loading zone ordinance, consistent with following outline, so that staff may enforce such zones, as well as to help facilitate the creation of additional loading zones in the future:

- The location of all loading zones shall be specifically identified in the Code of Ordinances.
- Loading zones shall be valid 24 hours / day, 365 days per year (including holidays).
- The maximum parking time in a loading zone shall be 15 minutes.

- Vehicles may secure a Parking Encumbrance Permit from the Parking Division to encumber a loading zone for a period of longer than 15 minutes for unusual circumstances such as moving, construction, and other similar activities. This is already permitted by Article 18-3-18 of the Code of Ordinances.
- Active loading shall be required in all loading zones, and hazard lights must be flashing whenever a vehicle occupies a loading zone.
- Loading Zones shall be available to all vehicles (not just commercial vehicles).
- Fine Schedule: \$15 per offense. Fine shall increase to \$30 after 10 business days: \$60 after 20 business days. These increases are typical for all parking citations, as set forth in Section 19-1-1 of the Code of Ordinances.

Mr. Walsh also stated that, in conjunction with establishment of a loading zone ordinance, staff also recommends amending the Code of Ordinances so that 20-minute spaces would only be valid during hours of meter enforcement. However, the Police Department has requested that such an amendment exempt the 20-minute space at Police Headquarters on Green Street due to the "24/7" nature of their business activities.

Mr. Walsh then discussed use of the cobble median on Main Street for loading activities. Mr. Walsh noted that the median, which is flush with roadway pavement, was intentionally designed to be mountable by vehicles in order to maintain flow of traffic in Downtown. However, the median was never expressly intended be used as a loading zone. Rather, this practice has occurred organically in the few years since the Main Street "Complete Street Project" was constructed.

Mr. Walsh stated that loading activities within the median has resulted in the following public safety and traffic concerns:

- Vehicles parked too close to, or on top of, crosswalks.
- Vehicles parked too close to intersections, or within intersections (including turning lanes at intersections).
- Vehicles obstructing private driveways.
- Vehicles creating narrow street conditions.

Mr. Walsh reviewed the median loading analysis put together by Karen Hill. The analysis identifies where loading could occur within the median within the context of existing laws and ordinances associated with narrow streets, driveways, cross walks, and intersections.

It was noted that designating specific loading areas within medians would be challenging, but likely could be accomplished with pavement markings and signage.

Discussion ensued about loading zones. The Mayor questioned why any loading zone regulations were required. He suggested that parking enforcement staff could have one on one discussions with those individuals misusing loading zones or the cobble median for loading activities. It was also suggested that staff could develop a flyer which could be handed out to local businesses and

delivery truck drivers explaining that loading activities in the median need to be 20 feet from cross walks and intersections.

Discussion concluded, and the Committee took no action on these issues.

- 5) **Parking Officer & Equipment Technician (POET) Recruitment Update:** Mr. Walsh informed the Committee that there is still one vacancy for the (POET) position. Recruitment is ongoing, but challenging in the current labor market.
- 6) **In Car Parking Meters:** Mr. Walsh noted that the Mayor, at the request of some downtown business owners, had asked staff to review the possibility of implementing in-car meters to pay for metered parking. Mr. Walsh reported that staff had looked into in car meters as requested. Unfortunately, the lone vendor who offers these devices was in the process of exiting the New Hampshire market. Therefore, this option will not be viable for Concord.
- 7) **Other Business:**
 - a. **State Request for Proposals (RFP) for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:** Mr. Walsh stated that City Administration has been approached by multiple vendors expressing interest in partnering with the City to install electric vehicle charging stations. He explained that the interest has been sparked by a recent request for proposals (RFP) issued by the NH Department of Environmental Services to install electric vehicle charging stations throughout the State. Specifically, between 80% - 100% of the cost of installation would be financed by the State using funds received from the recent Volkswagen Emissions Settlement. The request for proposals closes January 7th. Mr. Walsh discussed some of the challenges associated with the State's request for proposals, and stated that it was unlikely the City would be submitting a response thereto.
 - b. **Next Meeting:** The Committee's next meeting is tentatively set for January 24, 2022 at 5:00PM.
 - c. **Councilor Kenison's Retirement:** The Chair recognized that this would be the final meeting for Councilor Kenison due to her impending retirement from the City Council. Members of the Committee and staff expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation to Councilor Kenison for her years of service to the Parking Committee.
- 8) **Adjournment:** Councilor Kenison moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Todd Seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Lombard
Parking Division Fiscal Tech III