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City Manager

# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*

**City Manager's Office**

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## **Parking Committee Minutes September 25, 2023**

### **Attendees:**

Brent Todd, City Councilor, Parking Committee Chair  
Stacey Brown, City Councilor  
Karen McNamara, City Councilor  
Jim Bouley, Mayor

### **Staff:**

Tim Thompson, Assistant Community Development Director  
Matt Walsh, Deputy City Manager, Development  
Amanda Lombard, Fiscal Clerk Parking Division  
David Florence, Parking Division Supervisor  
Karen Hill, Transportation Engineer

### **Public:**

Ted Wing  
Tony Schinella  
Bob Maccini

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Todd at 5:00 p.m.

1. **Overview of Agenda:** Councilor Todd provided an overview of the meeting agenda.
2. **Staffing Update and Introduction:** Mr. Walsh, Deputy City Manager, introduced Tim Thompson to the Committee. Tim was previously the Community Development Director for the Town of Merrimack. Tim brings over 27 years of municipal planning and economic development experience and is the City's new Assistant Director of Community Development and will be taking over primary administration of the City's parking program, including staffing the Committee.
3. **Adoption of Minutes:** Councilor McNamara moved to adopt the meeting minutes of June 26, 2023. Mayor Bouley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
4. **Citizen Requests and City Council Referrals:**

- a. **Sarah Plancon: Request to limit parking on Walker Street (Bradley to Rumford Street) to one side of the road.** Sarah Plancon was not in attendance. A request submitted by Ms. Plancon states Walker Street has become increasingly busy and having parking on both sides of the road creates a lot of traffic issues. Councilor Todd made note that this section was not part of the narrow streets survey. Mr. Thompson summarized Ms. Plancon's request, that parking on both sides of the street is becoming problematic given the increase of traffic using the street and that other streets in the neighborhood are limited to parking on one side of the street. Mr. Thompson stated that this section of Walker Street has about 27 to 28 feet of pavement between the curbs. In consultation with the Fire Marshal and the General Services Department, if the Committee wanted to approve the request to limit parking to one side of the road, the staff recommendation would be to restrict parking on the South side of Walker Street as it is a School route and is also the side that General Services plows the sidewalk after winter storms.

The Committee believed that it was important to get direct feedback from Ms. Plancon and others along this stretch of the road prior to making any recommendations. Staff stated that they would reach out to the neighborhood, sending letters to invite public comment at the October meeting.

- b. **Ted Wing: Request to review / expand No Parking at intersection of White Street and Washington Street:** Councilor Todd welcomed Ted Wing to the meeting. Mr. Wing explained his request to remove one parking spot on either side of Washington Street due to visibility and safety concerns when turning from White Street onto Washington Street. He stated that visibility at the intersection combined with the vehicle speeds on Washington Street creates an unsafe situation. The problems are intensified when the law school is in session, and students park illegally all over the area, including at White Park.

Mr. Thompson stated that one space was eliminated to the east of the intersection in 2020. The existing parking spaces on Washington Street exceed the City's setback requirements and accident data does not indicate significant safety problems.

Dave Florence, Parking Division Supervisor stated the Parking Division has written warnings around UNH Law School and the UNH Police will run plates and speak with students directly. The Parking Division works closely with the UNH Police Department.

Karen Hill, Transportation Engineer, stated she took a look at the of the nearest parking spaces from the intersection in the field recently. On the west side there is approximately 45 feet of setback from White Street, whereas the minimum requirement is 30 feet. The nearest parking space on the east side is set back even further due the 2020 removal of the a parking space (20 Feet) in front of the Law School as it did not meet the crosswalk or fire hydrant set back requirements.

The Parking Committee suggested reaching out to the neighborhood to get their input. Mr. Wing indicated he would invite neighbors to the meeting.

Mr. Wing reiterated the issue of students parking in the White Park parking lot. He would like for the people who utilize the park be able to park in the parking lot and the UNH students who need to park utilize the two parking lots designated for the UNH students.

Mayor Bouley suggested inviting UNH and the surrounding neighbors to attend a meeting to discuss the two parking lots designated for the Law students along with potential removal of two additional parking spaces.

The consensus of the Committee was to continue the discussion of the request at the October 23, 2023 meeting.

- c. **Tony Schinella: Request to modify expired meter parking citation:** Councilor Todd welcomed Mr. Schinella to the meeting. Mr. Schinella explained he received a parking ticket due to being a few minutes late to pay the meter recently. He expressed several concerns regarding the amount of the fine, the relative short amount of time that occurred between the meter expiration and the ticket issuance, and his concerns that the City's enforcement of parking violations and fine amounts would be discouraging visitors to the City from returning and parking for downtown businesses and restaurants. He stated he was unaware the citation amount had increased from \$10 to \$15.

Mr. Walsh explained the City has always tried to maintain a fine that is 1.5 times the parking rate to be a deterrent to people who violate parking time limits. A study was done back in 2018 where the City compared our rates with other communities at the time. Nashua's rate was still at \$10; however, the other communities studied were charging \$15 or more. As a result, the City approved an adjustment to increase the "expired or non-paid time" citation to \$15.

Historically, the Parking Division typically issues around 20,000 expired meter tickets a year. As of 2022 the number has decreased to approximately 15,000. Part of that resulted from the introduction of the PaybyPhone app. There are currently around 40,000 PaybyPhone users locally. The App has reduced the number of people getting \$15 citations due to the convenience of the app. The total ticket revenue for this Fiscal Year is anticipated to be approximately \$425,000.

Mr. Walsh added that as part of the 2024 budget approved by City Council, one of the goals is to do a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) to bring additional parking smartphone app providers into the market place. This will give customers the option to choose what app they want to use depending on the convenience and service charge and ideally minimize the administrative burden on the City.

- d. **Zach Taylor: Request to implement annual parking pass concept for metered parking areas.** Councilor Todd stated that Mr. Taylor was not in attendance. Councilor Todd provided an overview of Mr. Taylor's request, seeking the City to implement an annual parking pass alternative, such that visitors to the City could pay an annual fee rather than the hourly fees for people that frequently visit Concord.

Mr. Walsh reported to the Committee that while an interesting idea there are multiple methods visitors can use to pay for parking (i.e. kiosk or meter by credit card, debit card, coin, City parking card, or through the PaybyPhone app).

The Committee consensus was that an annual parking pass is not something the City needs to pursue at this time.

5. **Concord High School Neighborhood Parking:** Councilor Todd referred to the 2004 Concord High School Neighborhood Parking Study report provided by staff in the meeting packet. Due to the number of requests the Parking Committee has received regarding parking restrictions in the CHS area, it may be a good idea to take stock of the various changes that have occurred since the study that was done.

Mr. Walsh added that back in 2004 the number of student drivers was increasing fairly dramatically. The study was done by a consultant with participation of the school district and the Planning Division. The majority of the various parking restrictions and requirements that were put in place then are still in place today.

The most recent request to review parking in the area of the high school was brought to the Committee's attention by Mr. Bob Maccini due to his concern with the 2020 decision that eliminated time limit restrictions on School Street between Pine Street and Liberty Street, which were completed without the neighborhood being notified. The 2020 request to remove the parking restrictions was submitted by a neighboring property owner at 98 School Street. Following the two-hour parking restriction repeal, CHS students have flocked to park along this stretch of road, since it is one of the only Streets near CHS with no restrictions on daily parking.

Mr. Maccini was in attendance, and expressed his concern with the parking issues along the streets that are in the vicinity of the high school. Mr. Maccini requested the Parking Committee review all the other streets in the area of the CHS.

The consensus of the Committee was that a full comprehensive study does not need to be done however staff suggested having a meeting with School District staff to discuss CHS parking in general.

Mayor Bouley stated his desire to have a summary done on the current parking restrictions for the streets around CHS. Mr. Thompson stated he will provide the requested information at the next Committee meeting. The Committee can then follow up with the high school at future meetings for discussions on the issues and challenges associated with student parking.

6. **Financials:** The Parking Fund statements Year-To-Date (YTD) for FY 2024 through August 31 were provided, representing 16.67% of the Fiscal Year.
- i. **Revenues:** Total revenues YTD are \$510,124.68 or 16% of budget. This figure is approximately \$284,738.69 less than revenues received in the prior fiscal year for the same period. Said circumstance is directly attributable to receipt of \$438,358 of Covid-19 ARPA funds from the Federal Government in FY2023 to offset revenue losses which occurred during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
  - ii. **Expenditures:** Actual total expenditures YTD are \$808,122.38 or 25% of budget. This figure is \$31,956.13 higher than the prior fiscal year for the same period.
  - iii. **Gain/Loss:** Through August 31, the Parking Fund has negative net operating income of \$297,997.70, which is not unanticipated due to the frontloading of debt service and insurance expenditures in the fiscal year every July.

7. **Updates:**

- a. **South Main Street pavement markings and ordinance update:** Mr. Walsh stated the long lines were reportedly painted between Gas Street and Langdon Ave. Karen Hill was unable to confirm if that was completed as of yet. Once long lines are painted then staff will field review with the hope of getting tick marks will be established were parking locations were supposed to be. Mr. Thompson will steer the project through City Council ordinance process. Ms. Hill stated the center line and fog line will shift to accommodate the 8 feet required where the parking spaces will be.
8. **Other Business:** Councilor McNamara said constituents are concerned about the surcharge they receive while using the PaybyPhone app. Mr. Walsh stated the original contract with PaybyPhone, the fee was \$0.32 per transaction. Of that \$0.11 cents were paid to PaybyPhone and \$0.21 cents was the credit card fee. Following the original deal's expiration, the City renewed the contract and the fee increased to \$0.43 and the City of Concord was made the "merchant" for all the credit card charges which created an administrative burden on the Parking Division (with approximately 300,000 transactions per year). The City is now paying PaybyPhone as the City receives the gross revenue and then pays the vendor, whereas the roles were reversed prior to the renewal. As stated earlier in the meeting, the finding other vendors for this service is a budget goal for FY2024.
9. **Adjourned:** The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Lombard  
Parking Division Fiscal Tech III