PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

CONFERENCE ROOM A

CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE

Members of the public also have the option to join the meeting over Zoom
*(See below for more details)**

8:30 AM **October 6th, 2022**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Andrew Bagley called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Members Present:
Chairman Andrew Bagley
Steve Pesci
Erica Wygonik (Alternate)
Public Works Director Peter Rice
City Manager Karen Conard
Deputy Police Chief Mike Maloney
Harold Whitehouse
Mary Lou McElwain (Z)
Mark Syracusa
Fire Chief William McQuillen

City Staff Present:
Parking Director Ben Fletcher
City Engineer – Parking, Transportation and Planning Eric Eby
Associate Engineer Tyler Reese

III. FINANCIAL REPORT

[00:06:25] Peter Rice moved to accept the Financial Report dated August 31, 2022, and place it on file, seconded by Mark Syracusa. **On a unanimous vote, motion passed 9-0.**

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT (15 MINUTES)

This is the time for all comments on any of the agenda items or non-agenda items.

[00:07:20] There were eight speakers: Scott Gerrato spoke regarding taxi parking downtown. Evan Mullen requested that the Committee study traffic safety on Summer

Street. Ken Goldman, Michelle Worth, Sampo Kaasila, Barbara Sadick, Elizabeth Bratter, and Liza Hewitt spoke regarding the Neighborhood Parking Program.

V. PRESENTATIONS

None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

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

A. [00:37:40] Taxi Stands, request to report back on removal of taxi only parking spots downtown and across the city, by City Council.

There is only one licensed taxi driver in the city. He requests keeping the taxi stand in front of Toscana.

Peter Rice made a motion to eliminate all taxi stands except for the existing one in front of Tuscan Steakhouse. Mark Syracusa seconded the motion. **On a unanimous vote, motion passed 9-0.**

B. [00:42:33] Morning Street, request to restrict parking at Woodbury Avenue intersection, by resident.

This signage would be in line with state laws and city ordinances, which prohibit parking within 30 feet of an intersection.

Harold Whitehouse made a motion to install No Parking Here to Corner signs 30 feet from Woodbury Avenue, seconded by Mark Syracusa. **On a unanimous vote, motion passed 9-0.**

C. [00:44:14] Mariette Drive, request for speed study, by resident. Mark Syracusa made a motion to refer to staff for study and report back. Motion was seconded by Harold Whitehouse. **Motion passed on a unanimous vote 9-0.**

D. [00:45:20] Maple Haven, request for stop sign evaluation at several locations, by resident. Karen Conard moved to refer to staff for study and report back, seconded by Mark Syracusa. **Motion passed on a unanimous vote 9-0.**

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. [00:46:49] Islington Creek Neighborhood Parking Program, discussion and recommendation of program fee to Fee Committee. Benjamin Fletcher presented framework and recommendations for paid parking to the Committee should the City Council decide to implement a permanent Neighborhood Parking Program.

Steve Pesci made a motion to recommend that City Council end the pilot program, and to present the framework laid out by the Parking Director if a permanent program is implemented by the City Council. Motion was seconded by Mark Syracusa. **On a unanimous vote, motion passed 9-0.**

VIII. INFORMATIONAL

A. [01:30:39] Monthly Accident Report from Police.

Deputy Police Chief Mike Maloney commented that there were 81 crashes in August. Of that, 48 of them were reportable. There was one accident involving a bike, as well as one involving a pedestrian.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

A. [01:31:43] Email from a resident regarding whether fees are paid to the City for events held at the Bridge Street Lot.

B. [01:33:18] Request from a resident of Broad Street to look at the intersection of South Street and Broad Street. People are parking close to the intersection.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Harold Whitehouse moved to adjourn at 9:59 a.m., seconded by Mark Syracusa. **On a unanimous vote, motion passed 9-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Leila Birr,
Administrative Assistant, Department of Public Works

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https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xjurgSbqRA2S8Uw3KnbUkw

Islington Creek Neighborhood Parking Program (NPP)
Pricing Recommendation

At the City Council meeting on August 22, 2022, the Parking Division was tasked with developing a pricing strategy to assure a permanent Islington Creek Neighborhood Parking Program can be run at no net cost to the City.

The Islington Creek neighborhood has an inherent parking supply vs. demand issue. While certain sections of the neighborhood (those located nearest the Foundry Garage) are indeed over-utilized due to large rental property populations and a short supply of on-street and private parking inventory, the overall neighborhood, as bounded in the current pilot program (Pilot), is not experiencing occupancy figures to a degree that would normally dictate demand reduction resolutions. Parking Industry Best Practice suggests mitigation measures be explored when occupancy reaches 85% or above, while the Islington Creek neighborhood has for years not exceeded 75%.

The City has completed a year-over-year analysis of the 2021 and 2022 spring and summer seasons, using occupancy data from May through early August in each year. Data indicate that the neighborhood enjoyed less than a 2% reduction in demand that can be directly attributed to the Pilot. This equates to less than 5 additional open spaces neighborhood-wide. Considering the $113,500 net cost to run the program, this equates to $22,883 per 'gained space' that can be directly attributed to the program. For context, the highest-grossing parking space in downtown Portsmouth generates slightly less than $8,000 in gross revenues annually.

While the gained spaces do indicate a positive result, the spaces 'gained' were not within the geographical area most affected by high demand and short supply, that being between Rock Street and Bridge Street. Rather, the open spaces were primarily realized in the less-populated, lower-demand areas west of Cornwall Street.

Rather than continuing the current program under the Pilot format, with its high costs and minimal benefits, the Division recommends implementing an on-street metered parking program.

Metering Method

Rather than purchasing and installing parking meters throughout the neighborhood, the Division recommends that metering this area be performed solely through the use of the ParkMobile smartphone application. This will allow for minimal additional signage and no crowding of sidewalks with parking meters or kiosks, while providing the additional features popular with users of the app in the City's downtown area, such as text notifications when sessions are expiring and the option to extend if desired.

The ParkMobile approach is the least intrusive process, leaving the neighborhood's character intact. Additionally, Portsmouth resident users of ParkMobile do not pay the $.35 service fee and enjoy a price reduction of $.50 per hour. Non-residents and users without passes will simply engage the meter system for the duration of their stay.

Pricing

Pricing and policy recommendations from the Parking Division are always geared toward behavior management. For example, pricing in the Downtown accelerates after the 3rd hour, providing an economic incentive for users to choose to vacate (turn over) spaces at the City's desired 3-hour time frame. This leaves the space open for the next user, enabling support of local businesses by providing a convenient parking option for those who would choose to patronize those businesses.

Unlike the City's high-demand parking areas, there is no call to encourage users to turn spaces over at the 3rd hour in a residential neighborhood. Because of this, the Parking Division does not recommend using the Stay & Pay pricing model that has seen success in the Downtown area. Rather, the flat hourly rate structure utilized in each of the City's parking garages more accurately reflects the pricing structure that should be implemented for this neighborhood.

In order to continue to encourage the use of the nearby Foundry Garage, a rate of $1.50 per hour for on-street parking in this neighborhood is recommended. This aligns with the current B-Zone rate of $1.50 for the first three hours, but would not escalate in the 4th hour and beyond. Pricing in this manner provides a natural incentive for users to choose the Foundry Garage with its $1 per hour rate.

NPP Passes

The anticipated revenue from on-street visitor parking can be expected to offset a good portion of the costs associated with extending this program. This allows for a situation where a flat, nominal fee can be applied to NPP passes. For year one, the Division recommends a $125 annual fee, per pass, for up to 3 passes per household, each of which must be associated with a single, particular vehicle as in the current program. These fees will offset the cost of labor and materials for processing applications. At the conclusion of year one, revenues can be assessed against ongoing costs and annual permit fees can be adjusted to accommodate. Due to high resident turnover in the target neighborhood, the Division recommends an annual renewal, with the process being staggered by block to avoid lengthy waits for renewals.

Advantages

With a simple application of the ParkMobile app for all non-passholders, the following unpopular features inherent in the current Pilot model are eliminated:

- Guest Passes are no longer necessary
- Event Passes are no longer necessary
- Contractor Passes are no longer necessary