



Mary Midura <mmidura@northamptonma.gov>

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## Minutes and charts...

1 message

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**Susan Timberlake** <asusantimberlake@gmail.com>

Fri, Sep 6, 2013 at 4:45 PM

To: Mary Midura <mmidura@northamptonma.gov>, tmasterson@northamptonma.gov, Holly Mott <mottholly@gmail.com>, Wayne Feiden <wfeiden@northamptonma.gov>, William Collins <bill.spoletto@gmail.com>, Sam Welson <swelson@gmail.com>, Marc Warner <marc@warnertransportation.com>

Hi there:

These are the minutes from our 9/4 meeting of the Parking Subcommittee of the Parking and Transportation Commission. They are longer than I intended, but they do capture all the alleys we went down. Even still I missed a few details, I'm sure.

I embedded the handouts at the end, but not Marc Warners 60+ page report on Parking in Colorado.

Enjoy the reading if you weren't there. Some interesting factoids came out.

Next meeting Wed Oct 2nd 6 pm in Wayne Feiden's office.

—Sue

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Cell: 617-930-nine four six three.....(9463)

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Parking Committee  
of the Transportation and Parking Commission  
City of Northampton

**MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday September 4, 2013

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.
  - a. Members present were: Holly Mott, Chair; Marc Warner; Susan Timberlake; Wayne Feiden- City of Northampton liaison. Sam Welson and Bill Collins were absent.
  - b. Guests: Danny Guzzo, Executive Director of the BID (Business Improvement District); Terry Masterson, Economic Development Coordinator (City of Northampton).
2. Minutes of August 26, 2013 were reviewed. Susan Timberlake moved to approve the minutes as presented, Marc Warner seconded and they were approved unanimously.
3. Public Comment: Danny Guzzo, Executive Director of the BID made a presentation about the economic drivers in downtown Northampton and the impact of parking changes.
  - a. Current economics. The BID represents 123 downtown businesses. He stressed the fragility of the current economic climate and discussed the potential harm that a Casino in Springfield, West Springfield or Palmer may have on our restaurant and entertainment sector. Damage to those sectors would also negatively impact the retail and hotel sectors. Northampton's market could erode, it could lose some of its vibrancy causing revenues to decrease for the businesses and Northampton.
  - b. Parking. He urged caution in making changes to the parking fees, restrictions and hours since this could further damage the economic environment for businesses here.
    - i. In particular, he pointed out the change from 2 hour parking to 1 hour parking on Main Street. Ticket and parking fee revenues went up 32% from 2012, but damage was done to the existing businesses on Main Street. Some of the weakening had to do with the economy, but he argued some of it also was caused by implementing changes to the parking regulations.
    - ii. He supports private-public partnerships and would like the City to look at some of the private lots that are underutilized (Verizon, behind Fitzwilly's, Merrit Lane). As an example of a partnership, he mentioned the BID is looking at providing free public WIFI in downtown Northampton- it will cost the BID around \$60,000; they think it will attract more young people to the downtown area and have a positive return on the investment.
    - iii. He strongly urged the Committee to use data and not guess about potential impacts of any changes that are contemplated. Any increase in revenues, he suggested, should go to a BEAT cop for downtown- adding value to the businesses.
    - iv. There was a survey done by the BID. He referenced the significant concerns uncovered about parking. He will provide a copy of the survey results to the Committee. According to Danny Guzzo for 5000 square feet of restaurant space requires 24 employees, for retail operation will have only 6 employees. He commented that a restaurant requires 1 parking space for 4 seats (about 500 sq. ft.). Office space requires 3 spaces per 1000 sq. ft. (WF: Northampton no longer requires a parking requirement for downtown buildout, the assumption is people come on buses, other spaces exist.) A discussion ensued about where employees do park/ should park in Northampton.
  - c. His message to the Parking Committee: Adding technology and making parking more convenient would be good for Northampton. Slightly raising parking rates, and having residents only parking areas would be better than extending the hours of parking to 8:30 pm. The one hour parking on Main Street is very

bad for businesses and their customers. We should consider to extending the Main Street meters to 2, 3 or 4 hours. He was in the practice of paying the parking tickets of his customers because of the negative impact “getting a ticket” had on his restaurant. Tickets are the worst outcome of parking changes. (Poor snow removal is also devastating for the downtown businesses).

- d. Wayne Feiden briefly discussed the demographics of Northampton- the Tanglewood crowd vs. the Casino goers, but that the Casino will still impact Northampton. He predicted a positive short term increase in business before all the venues are built out. After the Casino’s venues are finished, the Casino will have a negative impact on Northampton, drawing away all kinds of business. The nightclub business owners prefer the Casino go to Palmer.

4. Secretary position: Susan Timberlake made a motion to rotate the taking of minutes to all committee members and not assign a secretary. After discussion, Marc Warner seconded and it was unanimously adopted. Susan offered to take minutes for this meeting.

5. Vice Chair position: The position of Vice Chair was brought up because there was a meeting cancelled when the Chair was absent. With discussion, any member of the Committee can volunteer as acting Chair for a meeting where the Chair is absent. Holly Mott commented that we would have more officers than committee members. Susan Timberlake made a motion to table indefinitely the decision about the Vice Chair. Holly Mott seconded and it was approved unanimously.

6. Define Strategy for Formal Committee Review of Parking Reform Package/Marc Warner’s data collection document.

a. Marc Warner’s data collection package was discussed in the context of the Reform package. He walked us through the items.

i. Curb space audit. Wayne Feiden, as Director of Planning and Sustainability for the City of Northampton, has offered his interns to fill out this first section. A sample will be completed (M – F during business hours) and brought back to the Committee so that the format and collection can be refined. Holly Mott mentioned that key times seem to be Thursday, Friday Saturday evening when you cannot find a spot on Mains Street. Knowing what peak seasons and peak times are will be necessary to reliably evaluate any data we collect. Recording the of number of cars that pass by without taking the spot after a car pulls out of a parking space will tell us about the experience of finding a parking spot at peak times.

ii. CBD Parking Changes- supply and demand over time.

1. Marc Warner explained we are looking for the rate of growth to see if we are meeting the need that is developing.
2. Susan Timberlake handed out the charts she made from the two pieces of data she got from the City: Number of Meter heads deployed (estimated) and parking meter revenue (City Collector’s Office- actual data). The revenue from one meter varies by the month as much as **24%** from a high in January to a low in February (actual data 2013). Weather, Smith College sessions, number of enforcement officers and snow plowing may contribute to the variation. For the 6 months viewed from 2013: February and June are low; January and May are substantially higher. While the charts show the seasonality, the data for actual number of meter heads is not readily available (between 544 and 861 deployed individual meter heads, depending on source). This speaks to the lack of availability of current hard facts (except revenue) and ability to do reliable retrospective comparisons. For current information, it looks like a lot of labor will be required (by someone) to get reliable data. Susan noted that there is a 2009 study somewhere since the table she handed out came from it.
3. Wayne Feiden noted that the John Shupe study we have says “2005” but appears to be from “2000” of “2001”. There will be difficulty making valid retrospective comparisons.

- iii. Parking conditions in Northampton and comparable communities. Supply, demand, enforcement, other.
  1. Wayne Feiden discussed some of the communities we have used for comparisons. We usually select different communities depending on what parameter we are looking at. Wayne is doing a study with another community right now. He has a funded PVPC study underway of parking and traffic down Main Street from Market Street to King Street. Amherst is often compared and they have parking til 8 pm- and we should get those lessons learned as we contemplate the Reform Package. Examples from Salem (needed higher vacancy rate) and other communities where the consultant (name) that presented to the TPC in August, are available.
  2. Holly Mott mentioned the impact of the bar scene in Northampton and how it moves around: Paradise City (now Spoleto), the Toasted Owl, McFaddens and how it drives local parking shortages. We will have to be thoughtful about our interpretations of any data that we get.
- iv. Other. Towing protocols, Access cards, findings from revenue audits, design standards for curb spaces, capital expenditures (past and future planned). The committee speculated that this may be beyond our scope as we understood it.

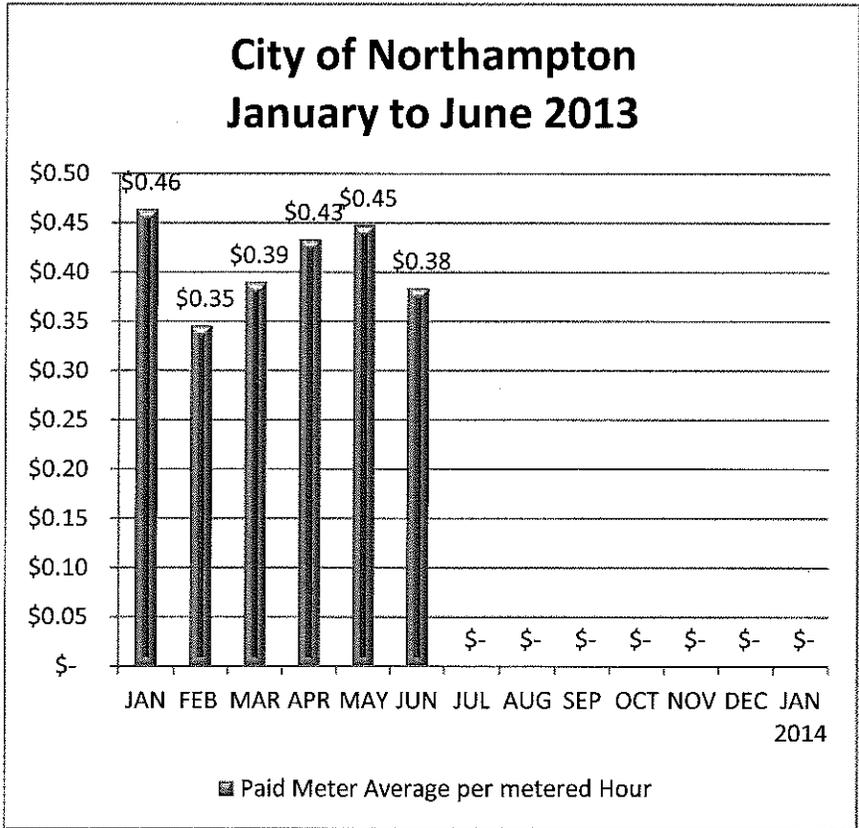
7. Discuss Committee Organization and Systems moving forward.

- a. TASKS and ACTION ITEMS with assignments. Holly Mott expressed concern that we start developing tasks and action items that answer our charge from TPC. Work needs to be happening in between meetings or we won't make much progress to our charge. Do we recommend hiring a consultant to collect data? Do we start collecting what we can? Do we start getting input from stakeholders? It might be a good place to start.
- b. COMPREHENSIVE or SMALL BITS? Do we take small parts or do we look more comprehensively as Danny Guzzo suggested. Marc Warner is a transportation consultant. He thought we could do a lot of it. Susan Timberlake thought it was a \$100,000 worth of consulting if you really did all the items in the data collection package, given how hard it was to get reliable simple data. Wayne Feiden mentioned that Salem did it comprehensively because they had a demand exceeding supply issue and didn't want to damage any component of their downtown. He didn't know what it cost.
- c. THE MAYOR' PERSPECTIVE. A discussion about the Mayor's direction ensued.
  - i. Wayne Feiden is meeting next week and will keep us posted. He commented that, in the past, Northampton went with new technology (European style meters) and it was a failure because we were on the bleeding edge of technology. There is an 1989 vacancy study. We don't yet know what tools are in our box.
  - ii. Terry Masterson said data is key, the Mayor is hot on getting data and that the Mayor and City Councilor Owen Freeman- Daniels just met. A conversation with ODF (who drafted the reform package that was referred to us) would probably help guide us. Consultants can help frame the policy issues: setting the table for the discussion.
- d. LOW HANGING FRUIT. Holly Mott said we should look at low hanging fruit. Where are the vacant spaces. Each neighborhood has a belief that their issues are unique, but there are some standards and best practices for these issues. There is a role for the Parking Committee to reach out to groups and collect their opinions, but a parking expert would know the rules of thumb. Danny Guzzo represents restaurants and other business perspectives. Our committee should hear from all the stake holders. Mayor, DPW, City Council, Taxpayers, city employees, residents, landlords. She thought we have a 3 month window to define and collect and produce our "report".

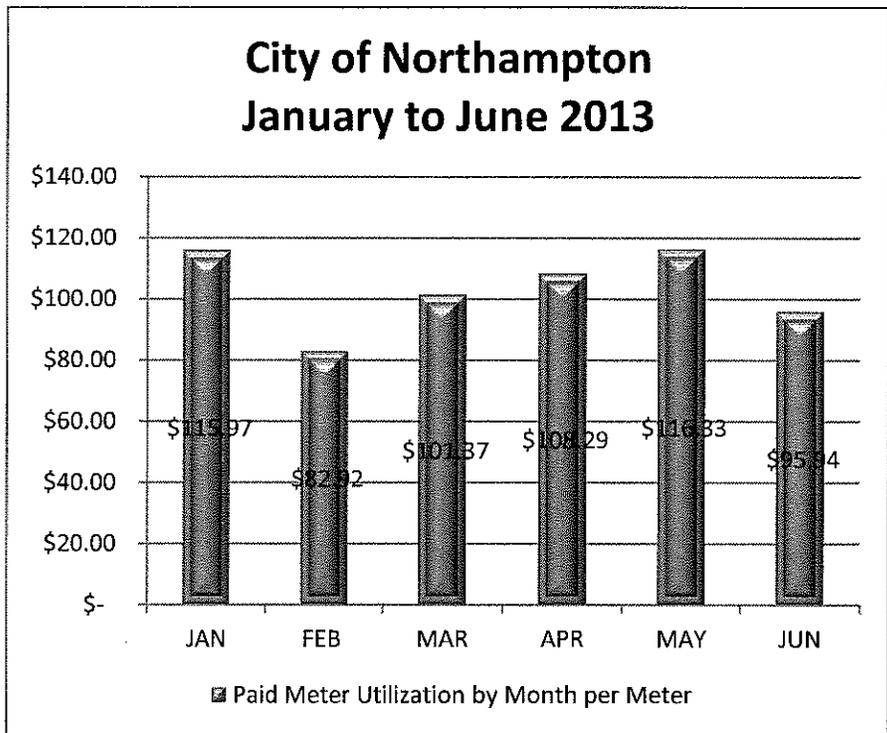
- e. **PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.** Wayne Feiden mentioned the value of public private partnerships, the TD Banknorth letting their employees park at Verizon, evening parking at the commercial parking lot next to Sierra Grill private lot for \$5.00, the Spoletto lot (on Bridge Street) and others. His consultant is looking at whether Main Street should be one lane with turnouts for turns. They are looking at Market Street, King Street Bridge Street area. Parking spots are assets: In NYC a parking spot is worth \$300,000 per year in business to the city.
8. **New Business:** ST went to the Ad-Hoc Round House Lot Development Committee Meeting on 9/3. Mass Dev was there and they retained Tim Love from Utile Consulting to begin the analysis for Northampton. Tim Love framed the development possibilities using the limitation of parking at the site (current 182 plus 22 owed to neighboring occupants) and then backed into uses and ways to get more parking there (2 levels). The front of the site needs to be public interacting with Pulaski Park happenings. There will be a public meeting 10/1/13 to begin the discussion of possibilities for that site. ST asked if a free standing parking garage was considered/ could be considered. The response: free standing parking garages are no longer considered financially feasible in the current economics unless you have an unusual spot with high demand.
9. **Next meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month 6:00 pm October 2<sup>nd</sup>, November 6<sup>th</sup> and December 4<sup>th</sup> in Wayne Feiden's Office. (Susan Timberlake expressed a desire to meet City Council Chambers because it is more accessible to people. City Council Chambers are not available those evenings at that time.)
10. **Adjournment.** Holly Mott made a motion to adjourn, Susan Timberlake seconded, the meeting unanimously adjourned at 8:15 pm.

#### HANDOUTS:

1. FINAL REPORT, City of Boulder Parking, Best Practices Review 67 pages, 11/7/2005 (source: Marc Warner)
2. BAR CHARTS: City of Northampton January to June 2013 chart: Paid Meter (head) Average per Metered Hour, and companion chart: Paid Meter Utilization by Month Per Meter (head). (Source: Collector's Office Sept. 2013) Charts prepared by ST. Disparate data sample: 1985 Report: 725 meters minus P & D= 544 deployed meter heads. 2009 Report meter list table: 861 meters plus 677 P & D= a high estimate of over 1300 total metered spots in Northampton.
3. 2009 TABLE "Meter List" 2 Hour, 10 Hour, 1 Hour and .15 MET and locations.(Source: David Pomerantz Sept 2013)



1981= 725 meters, minus the meters converted to centralized Pay and Display= estimated 544 deployed meter heads.  
 Meter Revenue data provided by the City Collector's Office 8/29/13 (just individual meter heads' revenue)  
 Chart produced for Parking Committee 9/4/13 S. Timberlake



2009

METER LIST	2-hr meters	10-hr meters	1-hr meters	.15 met
Round House Lot	14-2hr meters			127
Hampton Ave. Lot P&D				97
James House Lot P&D	58 spaces @ .25			
South St		12-10hr meters		
State St.	22-2hr meters	11-10hr meters		
Belmont Ave.	11-2hr meters			
West St.	24-2hr meters			
Green St	17-2hr meters		15-1hr meters	
Elm St		43-10hr meters		
Masonic St	17-2hr meters			
Masonic Lot	53-2hr meters			
Center St.	37-2hr meters			
Crafts Ave.			10-1hr meters	
Old South	9-2hr meters			
Old South Lot P&D				112
Main St upper			26-1hr meters	
Main St. lower			19-1hr meters	
Main St pay & Display			66-spaces	
Under bridge-Main St	14-2hr meters			
Pleasant St	53-2hr meters	11-10hr meters		
Pearl St.	9-2hr meters			
Strong Ave.	26-2 hr meters	12-10hr meters		
Strong Lot	34-2hr meters	29-10hr meters		
Merrick Lane P&D	8-spaces			
King St.	47-2hr meters	18-10hr meters		
Gothic St.	22-2hr meters	15-10hr meters		
Depot Lot	12-2hr meters			
Hawley St.	6-2hr meters			
Bridge St.		6-10hr meters		
Market St.	16-2hr meters			
Armory St.	6-2hr meters			
Armory Lot P&D	85 spaces			
Bedford Terrace		26-10hr meters		
Union Station Lot P&D				71
<b>Total</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>407</b>