

**Northampton Parking Committee MINUTES**

(Subcommittee of the Transportation and Parking Commission)

Thursday: March 6, 2014 5:00 pm

Northampton City Hall, Room 10, 210 Main Street, Northampton, MA

**Members present:** Holly Mott, Chair; Adam Novitt, citizen; Marc Warner, citizen; Susan Timberlake, citizen; Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability for the City of Northampton. **Absent:** None. (2 current vacancies).

**Guests:** Alisa Klein, City Councilor (Ward 7), Vice Chair of the Transportation and Parking Commission.

1. **Meeting called to order** by Holly Mott, Chair, at 5:04 pm.
2. **Audio Video Record of Meeting:** She also announced that no one has asked to record or video tape this particular meeting. Susan Timberlake offered to take minutes at this meeting. (In the past, the Committee has rotated the minute takers, so that all committee members can participate equally in discussions.)
3. **Introductions and review of ground rules:** All members of the committee and guests. Adam Novitt is the newest member of the Parking Committee, appointed by the TPC at their most recent meeting. The Parking Committee, while now reaching sufficient membership to meet, is still short 2 business representatives. The Chair took a moment to describe the committee's standard operating procedures. General guiding principles are that the Committee will loosely follow Roberts Rules of Order, that the public will be asked to speak in the Public Comment section, but that on a given topic, the Committee may invite follow up clarifications and discussions as the Chair deems necessary to fully understand the comment. Any topic to be discussed will be on the posted agenda so that all Committee members and the public will know, in advance, and to be in compliance with the Open Meeting Law of MA.
4. **Approval of Minutes** of November 6, 2013. Susan Timberlake made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Wayne Feiden, seconded and the minutes were approved with one abstention by Adam Novitt, who was not yet a Committee member at the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.
5. **Public Comment.** No one was present for public comment. Alisa Klein, as a member of the sponsoring commission (TPC) and as a sitting City Councilor was invited to comment and add to the discussion/clarification during each of the topics for the evening.
6. **Review of the formal Charge for the Parking Committee.** The Committee reviewed the 2/19/13 Order creating the Parking Committee under the Transportation and Parking Commission (22-120E). When the Committee last convened in November, they were awaiting a written guidance from the Mayor's Office about the Executive Branch initiatives and clarifying what the areas the Parking Committee would be involved in. The TPC is the parent organization of the Parking Committee, and with the changes in personnel, it would be good to receive updated guidance from the TPC. Since the Committee's winter hiatus due to lost membership, several City initiatives have rolled forward. Wayne Feiden described the catastrophic failure of the garage equipment and the necessary emergency actions taken by David Pomerantz, Director of Central Services Department.
  - a. Director Pomerantz has issued an RFP for payment mechanism equipment (Pay and Go) for the large lots, Main Street and garages. He expects delivery in the spring of 2014.
  - b. Director Pomerantz has a directive to start the process of starting a Comprehensive Parking Plan after the equipment purchase is accomplished. The parameters have not been established. It is not clear if it includes the Round House Committee, the Parking Committee or others in the process.
  - c. Wayne Feiden does not believe the Mayor's Capital Plan currently includes parking hardware.
7. **Update on Parking Committee's progress to date.**
  - a. **Membership.** One citizen has been added to the Committee. There are still two spots that will represent businesses of Northampton. A short discussion ensued about which businesses (day retail, night entertainment & restaurants, downtown vs. Florence business district.) Alisa Klein suggested that a member of the Parking Committee go to the televised City Council meeting and describe what is needed. Susan Timberlake offered to make that announcement at the City Council meeting and to inform the Florence Civic and Business Association as well. Alisa Klein mentioned a section on the City

web page where postings about needed applicants for Board, Committees and Commissions She will find out if Corrine in City Hall can post it. Other members of the Committee will approach the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District organizations.

b. To be credible, the Parking Committee needs full representation of Northampton businesses.

8. **Review of the Parking Reform Package and Committee's related strategy.** Holly Mott directed the Committee to the Parking Reform Package (late 2013- but not dated) as drafted by Owen Freeman-Daniels.

- a. Turbulence. Susan Timberlake gave an overview of the past year of political turmoil between TPC, City Council, Mayor, various City Departments struggling over responsibilities and changing authority lines. The Parking Committee discovered that there wasn't much solid historical data to be found.
- b. Data Collection. Mark Warner took issue with the idea that there wasn't data and reminded everyone that the Parking Committee actually offered to collect some different types of data on several occasions. (ref. MW survey instrument handed out last year, Holly Mott's write up of Amherst Parking; Sam Welson's information on the type of metering equipment in Northampton; Susan Timberlake's calculation of the average dollar value of a parking meter head by month/season). Wayne Feiden had also offered interns to collect some of the data at that time.
- c. Identifying problems to work on. Adam Novitt asked if we had specific tasks as a Committee, or was it a broad spectrum. Wayne Feiden said it is more of an issue of what problems are we trying to solve, have we been given to solve, or should we just focus on do-able things (low hanging fruit).
- d. Other, but related topics. Visions of Northampton: Adam Novitt: Make Northampton more "Northamptony" narrowing King Street, extending downtown down King Street. Are there complaints? Is there data somewhere? How will passenger rail affect the downtown? Desirable parking vacancy rates (15%), Business and customer feelings about the 1 hour meter limit on Main Street. First 2 hrs free in Saratoga, motorcycle parking at UMass. Hanover NH, hodgepodge downtown, or systematic parking system? Do you limit parking by time or rate?; Do you have enough parking and how do you know? Public hearings on what topics, Depends on plans of Mayor, and so on. Mark Warner said, maybe we should just grab and do. He thought his firm could do some of the ground work for about \$5000- \$6000. Councilor Alisa Klein suggested a 3 phase approach: a) Take items on Charge, b) collect identified data, c) conduct needed public hearings for findings.
- e. Assigned tasks. Looking at the reform package as a basis, the Committee had completed several tasks- such as Holly Mott's summary of Amherst's parking adventures. Holly Mott directed the Committee to reread the Official Order (Charge to the Committee), and then the Reform Package line by line. **Each member should come back to the next meeting prepared to discuss the pros and cons, data requirements, obstacles and advantages of each item in the Reform Package, keeping in mind our official direction.** It is not required that it be written. The Committee should also think about the desired role from their perspective and skills: convener, data collector, traffic consultant, grant writers, liaison to public, prescreen issues for the TPC, run a Charrette on parking topic etc.)

9. **New Business, other.** Meeting Schedule. After discussion about members conflicting schedules, the third Thursday of the month was chosen for standing Parking Committee meetings. It was discussed whether to have a second meeting in March given our long hiatus and that actions are moving along rapidly. The next meeting will be in two weeks: **Thursday March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014**. Then the next meeting will be April 17<sup>th</sup>, then May 15th. Rooms and times to be determined. (Note: the City Council meetings are scheduled for the first and third Thursdays of the month and start at 7 pm.)

10. **Adjournment:** Susan Timberlake made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 pm, Adam Novitt, seconded and it was approved unanimously.

Approved: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Holly Mott, Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

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