

**Parking Committee of the
Transportation and Parking Commission**

City of Northampton

www.northamptonma.gov/tpc

MEETING AGENDA & MINUTES

Thursday, March 20, 2014

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Room 10, City Hall, 210 Main Street, Northampton



MEMBERS

Holly Mott - Chair
Citizen

Wayne Feiden
Director of Planning and
Sustainability

Marc Warner
Citizen

Susan Timberlake
Citizen

Adam Novitt
Citizen

1. Members present/absent:
Present: Wayne Feiden, Holly Mott, Marc Warner, Susan Timberlake, Adam Novitt
2. Meeting Called to Order by Holly Mott at 5:10 PM CTO
 - Announcement of Audio/Video Recording of Meeting
3. Public Comment
 - none
4. Approval of Minutes of March 6, 2014
 - Approved as amended
5. Time lapse photography
 - Adam brought up the use of a time-lapse camera to record parking demand in downtown at different times of day. He said he has received permission from the mayor's office to mount the camera on City Hall.
 - Susan recommended getting TPC or City Council permission.
 - Holly said she would notify Councilors O'Donnell and Klein.
 - Adam will then set up the camera and he and Marc would check the results, and would compare the findings against utilization data from the garage and pay-on-foot machines.
6. Parking reform package
 - The committee considered the parking reform measures first proposed by Councilor Freeman-Daniels.
 - Item 1--eliminate the 1 hour time limit on Main Street and surrounding streets
 - Susan suggested a two hour limit.
 - Wayne said he was a strong proponent of using pricing to ration spaces, and that this was preferable to imposing a time limit.
 - We unanimously agreed to recommend item 1, but concluded that we would need more data to set an upper limit.

(Wayne left at this point to go to another meeting.)

 - Item 2--raise the parking fee for Main Street and surrounding streets to \$1 per hour.
 - Marc commented that the new downtown parking pay-on-foot machines would accept credit cards, thus eliminating the need for parkers to search for coins. The easy reversibility allowed by the new machines also suggests that the city could test a change without a significant fear of making a bad situation worse.
 - Adam suggested that the parking fees are a very minor issue for people who patronize the generally high-end shop and restaurants in downtown.
 - Marc added that we not be too concerned about equity or pricing people out of downtown. Closer, more desirable spots should cost the most, and that people should have the option of walking further to find a cheaper spot.
 - Holly noted that the Round House lot has poor lighting and many people do not perceive it as a safe alternative. She suggests that city improve lighting and signage at this lot.
 - Holly, Adam, and Marc supported the proposal to raise the fee on Main Street to \$1 per hour, perhaps even more. Susan supported lowering the rate to \$.50.

March 20 parking committee minutes--continued

- Item 3--change the hours of downtown meter enforcement from 8AM-6PM to 8:30AM to-8:30 PM
 - We agreed that parking enforcement should not be to raise revenue, but rather to help as needed with balancing parking demand with a limited parking supply. Thus, the city should not seek to raise parking revenue when parking demand is generally below capacity.
 - We suspected that demand on Main Street is below capacity until 10 AM on weekdays and that parking enforcement should probably be delayed until this time.
 - Marc noted that parking meters near Blue Back Square, the dining and shopping area of West Hartford , CT are in effect until 10:30 PM.
 - Holly questioned whether Northampton should continue to exempt enforcement on Sundays. She suggested this is a legacy of outdated blue law conditions. We agreed it was worth considering.
 - All agreed that the data collected through the time-lapse photography would help to determine the time periods when parking demand exceeded supply and thus the period when the meters and enforcement should be in effect.
- Item 4--dedicate 15 percent of parking revenue to technology and parking upgrades
 - There was a suggestion that 15 percent may be low.
 - Marc suggested that options could include dedicating new revenue for parking benefits. This would be money raised from meters or enforcement beyond the amount obtained from these sources in 2013 or some other base year. He also suggested that downtown merchants might support higher fees if the money were used as a substitute for the current direct assessment formula used by the BID. This approach would ensure that all businesses contribute in closer proportion to their actual customers.
 - We did not make any formal recommendation on this item.
- Item 5--adopt a parking pass program for nearby residential streets
 - Wayne returned at this point. He said parking passes run the risk of wasted curb space. He suggested a "hybird" plan of putting meters on these streets, while giving residents stickers that would exempt them from having to pay.
 - We generally agreed with this idea. Susan dissented on residential parking permits.

7. Adjournment

- Holly Mott made a motion to adjourn. Susan seconded. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:00.