



*Parking Committee of the  
Transportation and Parking Commission*

*City of Northampton*

*www.northamptonma.gov/tpc*

**MEETING AGENDA & MINUTES**

**Monday, July 15, 2013**

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Hearing Room 18, City Hall, 210 Main Street, Northampton

**MEMBERS**

William Collins - Chair  
Citizen

Wayne Feiden  
Director of Planning and  
Sustainability

Judith Fine  
Citizen

Holly Mott  
Citizen

Sam Welson  
Citizen

Marc Warner  
Citizen

Susan Timberlake  
Citizen

1. Members present/absent:

Present: William Collins, Wayne Feiden, Judith Fine, Holly Mott, Sam Welson, Marc Warner, Susan Timberlake

Guest presenter: Sue Timberlake

2. Meeting Called to Order by William Collins at 5:33 PM CTO

3. Announcement of Audio/Video Recording of Meeting

- MAY BE RECORDED

4. Approval of Minutes of May 2013

- Sue Timberlake amendment to minutes for May meeting to include who was present and who voted where appropriate
- Sam SW comments on recommendation re: free parking discussion from May meeting and our voting procedure, specifically regarding allowing the public to weigh in
- Clarifications by WC and JF about the recommendation that was voted, and that it is limited to what was in the minutes and not the equipment, what should be purchased, signage, etc. – that left to Pomerantz (ie. Out of our purview)
- Motion passes to approve the minutes with changes

5. Public Comment

- Dwight Beebe – North Street renovation: happy with reconstruction but concerned with narrowness of the new street. Some curbs have moved 3-4' out into the street; tightened turn radius of corner North/South corner making intersection "dicey"; parking along the street is limiting the width of passable vehicles
- JF asks if there is parking on both sides: WC responds that there's no parking signage exists yet, it's still legally closed
- DB says he missed the part of the planning session documents that indicated this decreased width
- #1 concern is safety
- ST asks whether the engineers explained uniform codes? DW says he doesn't think this is a code issue, but doesn't recall that this was explained/discussed.
- Other guest David Newton (old Twin Cleaners building) explains that primary testimony by DPW engineers was that the renovation was to slow down the traffic, there will be sidewalks, speed bumps, and crosswalks are meant to traffic-calm.
- Parking: the issue is how are the needs of residents with tight drives going to be met while maintaining the level of safety and the parking availability
- Parking delineation needs to be clearer

- DPW/BPW is the primary party here
- David Valetta, chief engineer for planning/DPW (?) said he would look into it
- They have a question as to who makes the call regarding where and how much parking can/should be allowed: who designs the parking?
- WF says unless there has been a change in the parking ordinance it's the DPW, otherwise it's PTC
- First concern: feeling of security when they cross the crosswalk AND that pedestrian traffic around the parked cars
- WC says that we can review the plan and make recommendations to TPC as we see fit

6. Approve Minutes from last meeting (See #4)

7. Presentation from Northampton Dispatch about parking calls and how they are handled (print materials on file with Mary Midura)

- Kelly Woods – explains how parking dispatch is contacted:
  - 911
  - interdepartmental referrals
  - handled 2568 total parking violations (828 officers answer these calls: parking enforcement and NPD)
  - broken meters, parking garage issues (something is broken or doesn't work), fire lane blockage
  - WF asks what kind of situation requires NPD if it's not after hours: KW responds that these are potentially difficult situations, need for a tow, etc.
  - 256 calls from garage alone last year
  - Questions from citizens: Smith College parking, holiday parking, towing (private towing as well), fire truck fit concern
  - Also answer all parking complaints and dispatch officer
  - Generally call is coming through 911
  - 2 dispatchers on at a time (3 sometimes on weekends depending on staffing)
  - SW asks about turnaround time re: customer service – KW explains how dispatch handles these calls. They triage based on emergency and urgent need.
  - Mark asks whether there are things we can do to improve:
    - No clear chain of command or organizational chart (for intercity departments or for the public)
    - No clear communication to the public around this issue
    - Under old organizational structure it was much more clear
    - "We are the communication hub for the public"
  - Kelly is under Public Safety department and says they're very customer service driven
  - 587-1100 is the parking dept phone
  - Staffing questions about garage – should we look at this?
  - DPW has a very clear matrix for call questions and referrals
  - DPW complaints are far fewer than for parking
  - No recourse if no one answers at the garage – they have to send an officer over there
  - New parking personnel who are still learning and using poor protocol with radios
  - Smith garage doesn't bring calls through N'ton dispatch
  - Mentions that dispatch doesn't have any information on the new NPD parking garage

8. Watch Video of TPC meeting and presentation from Nelson\Nygaard

- Could not watch video so William Collins summarized the meeting
- Highlights: figuring out zones for the city and charging for them without time limits
  - Charging prime rate for highly desirable spaces: don't use time to deter use \$\$
- Debit/cell use? Yes, but not as revenue generator, for ease of use
- Don't look at a meter as a revenue generator: in a good city ticketing is low
- Variable rates based on time of day

- WF spoke with someone in Salem and found that increased rates and 4-hour time limit – they’re very happy with new technology; they also lowered the rates in the Parking Garage and only push back is from downtown residents who need parking; they expanded what is metered; biggest pushback was in residential/business outer ring where they went to 2-hour parking
- Salem signage change to more positive parking signage (similar to us with high traffic Thurs-Sunday parking; unlike us with commuter rail service to Boston)
- SW asks about communication around changes in Salem: WC says they had a rack card rate map of the parking changes
- Centralized communication in city: Through mayor’s office, robo calls, etc.
- Just an informational meeting/no results outside of due diligence/calling Salem/etc.
- Salem hired a consultant to address the rollout of the parking BUT they did it all at once

#### 9. Update on Gothic Parking Deck

- WC emailed director Pomerantz and has not had a reply
- When will we see meters
- Free to public after 5PM but no signage 5PM-6:30AM
- TPC referred to council the recommendation to open and announce the opening of free parking on Gothic until something changes there

#### 10. Discuss Recommendation for Main Street Parking Time Limit

- Marc feels we need more information to make an informed recommendation
- WF had a conversation with Owen and Nancy: we know the vacancy rate is close to zero on Main St: three things they are considering for Main Street: 1. Change hours for meters (from 8-8:30AM) and then extend evening to 8:30PM, 2. Extend time limits, 3. Increase rates to gain 10-15% vacancy rates, 4. Sending a clear message to business owners that this isn’t a revenue generator, it’s revenue neutral the goal being and that we put money into meter technology and a fund for structured parking
- ST states that she has ideas: motorcycle parking; having a free day other than Sunday; suggests meeting where we brainstorm and bring our ideas to the table
- Judith asks about status of city appointing a Parking Director – answer at this time is no information
- WF says we don’t have data on parking availability with on-street meters

#### 11. **NEW BUSINESS** – *Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed*

- WF requests information needs be brought to next meeting for him to prioritize intern assignments
- Expanded session on parking recommendations
- JF asks for guidelines for public comment
  - i. Time limit
  - ii. Do we respond or not? Does that open it up to more discussion?
  - iii. WC will have this conversation with one other person and follow up with us as to how he would like to proceed
- Marc asks about our feedback on abuse of handicapped parking spaces, indicates a UC Berkeley report that this is abused in San Francisco rampantly; we agree it’s not a priority
- WC notifies us that he will more than likely be moving to Long Meadow and will no longer be part of the committee: elect a new chair at next meeting
- SW also suggests limiting topic area of each meeting as another approach
- Also a one-minute check-in at each meeting for each member at some point in meeting (like City Council)

#### 12. Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn by WF at 7:16
- Seconded by JF

Submitted by  
Holly Mott