



CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 212 MAIN STREET  
Northampton, Massachusetts  
October 19, 2023

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the City Council was called to order by Council President Jim Nash at 7 p.m. Upon a roll call, the following City Councilors were physically present:

- |                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| At-Large Councilor Marissa Elkins     | At-Large Councilor Jamila Gore    |
| Ward 1 Councilor Stanley Moulton, III | Ward 2 Councilor Karen Foster     |
| Ward 3 Councilor James Nash           | Ward 4 Councilor Garrick Perry    |
| Ward 5 Councilor Alexander Jarrett    | Ward 6 Councilor Marianne LaBarge |
| Ward 7 Councilor Rachel Maiore        |                                   |

Announcement that Meeting Audio/Video Recorded

Council President Nash announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.

Public Comment

Public Comment

Councilor Nash explained the procedure he would use in conducting public comment and opened the floor to comments.

**Jackie Ballance** said she hopes to see all councilors at the October 30th presentation of the new historic preservation plan (HPP). The exciting news is that the HPP supports neighborhood conservation districts (NCD's) as a useful tool to preserve historic neighborhoods without the onerous restrictions of traditional historic districts. The HPP also indicates that all of their older neighborhoods have historic value, including historic working-class neighborhoods where gentrification has threatened the traditionally affordable housing for working and middle class residents. The HPP finds historic value that needs assessments in every single ward. She wanted to talk to them before the presentation to hear their thoughts and question,, but Councilor Maiore has suggested that conversation after the presentation may be more fruitful. The HPP mentions in a footnote that, in 2019, the Massachusetts Land Court invalidated a Brookline NCD bylaw but a representative of the Massachusetts Historical Commission has told them that the Brookline ordinance "went too far," including NCD guidelines that went beyond the purview of usual zoning regulations. No other established NCD in the Commonwealth has been challenged, and Cambridge is in the process of establishing its 5<sup>th</sup> NCD. Her friends and she are looking forward to having conversations with each of them in the near future.

**City Clerk Pamela Powers** gave a pre-election public service announcement publicizing early voting hours and advising residents where to find the most accurate information regarding citizen initiative petitions. The City Clerk's webpage has a direct link to the Attorney General's website which contains information on petitions known to be circulating. All petitions must contain a summary of the proposed law or amendment and she encouraged residents to turn the document over and read this legal language so as to be fully aware of what they are signing and not inadvertently misinformed. The summary at the top of the petition provides the best description of the ballot question being proposed.

And, early voting begins Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, and will be held weekdays and Saturdays in City Hall until November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The last day to register for the November 7<sup>th</sup> municipal election is Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> and the office will be open until 5 p.m. that day. Anyone interested in working the polls in November can contact the City Clerk's office for further information.

**Jacqueline McCreanor of Northampton** stated for a fact that, on planet earth, without the existence of healthy mature trees, people die. Unfortunately trees cannot speak for themselves. Trees provide so many benefits like producing oxygen, sequestering carbon and providing wildlife habitat and sustainable building materials and are spectacularly beautiful. A study showed that over a 10-year period from 2011 to 2021, 133.3 acres of mature tree canopy were lost in Northampton due to new construction and development, averaging out to a loss of 13.3 acres per year. To tree and forest experts, that is an alarming rate which should no longer be ignored. Whether it's Planned Village zoning, zero lot line, reduced lot line, form-based code or the Main Street redesign, the city is deprioritizing healthy mature trees. Decimating healthy

mature trees with an aging tree canopy is not wise as it takes saplings decades of growth to begin providing the same benefits as a healthy mature tree.

They need to start prioritizing the protection of their healthy mature trees now, including the public shade trees on Main Street.

**Benjamin Spencer, Rust Avenue**, said he fully supports the redesign project for Main Street. He has lived in Northampton for over 30 years and wants to see downtown thrive. There are many reasons to love this plan and mental health is one. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimated in 2021 that 40% of high school students experience poor mental health, feeling hopeless, persistently sad, social anxiety, stress from school, etc. A recent study involving middle school students reported on NPR demonstrated the benefits of biking on teens. The best way to support mental health is to provide a safe and supportive environment. They are fortunate that Main Street is a nice wide street that can easily accommodate automobile traffic and separated bike lanes. They need to think of the greater good and the world they're building for their kids. He thanked Councilor LaBarge, Councilor Jarrett, Councilor Nash and Councilor Foster for the resolution.

**Martha Ebner of Northampton** stated she too supports the Main Street redesign project and its goal of a safer, more walkable, cyclable and accessible downtown for all.

**James Lowenthal of 181 Crescent Street** spoke on behalf of Northampton City Lights, a citizens' group that supports responsible outdoor lighting at night in Northampton. Northampton is one of more than 50 cities and towns in Massachusetts with some sort of zoning bylaw or policy that governs outdoor lighting but theirs is woefully out of date and predates LED's. They believe it's possible to have all the light needed to feel safe, comfortable and reassured without dangerous glare, blue light bad for human health and wildlife and without blotting out the stars. The revised zoning ordinance goes a long way toward that goal and is a big improvement. Overall, they support it, but they have some suggestions for more improvement.

He also spoke in support of the resolution. His family walks and bikes downtown regularly and he appreciates making Main Street even more welcoming.

**Randy Sailer, Florence**, also expressed support for the Picture Main Street project, which he described as a 'once in several generation' project. Reading about all the time committees and departments have spent preparing for the project, it has taken almost a generation to get it all done. It is incredibly well-vetted and well-planned. He thinks they need to support businesses during construction, but he strongly supports it, appreciates the resolution and encourages all councilors to support it.

**Adele Franks** reiterated what Randy said, adding her voice in support of the Picture Main Street redesign and saying she hopes the council will unanimously approve the resolution.

**Kyra Anderson, 42 Main Street**, joined voices in support of the Picture Main Street redesign. She echoed what was said about the really thoughtful process with a lot of opportunity for public input. The thoughtful design addresses the critically important need for a vibrant, thriving downtown while taking climate change and other future needs into consideration.

There being no other comments, at 7:19 p.m., public comment ended.

Announcements

Announcements

Councilor LaBarge reminded residents of the Halloween parade in Florence on October 31<sup>st</sup> starting at 6 p.m. from Trinity Row Park. Costume judging begins at 5:30 p.m.

Councilor Jarrett encouraged people to come to the unveiling of the historic preservation plan Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in council chambers and on Zoom. The Northampton Fire Rescue Department will host an open house Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with face painting, food, fun and fire trucks, Mayor Sciarra announced. And, the city is accepting gently-used winter clothes and personal care items for a municipal winter clothing drive until October 26<sup>th</sup>. Drop off locations include City Hall, Forbes Library, the Senior Center and the lobbies of the police and main fire stations.

In conjunction with this, on Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 to 3 p.m., the Division of Community Care (DCC) and Manna are hosting a Fall Festival at Pulaski Park featuring festive activities like gourd painting and outdoor bowling. At that time, they will distribute the collected items to people in need. Any leftover items will be donated to community partners such as Manna, the Northampton Survival Center, Cutchins Programs for Children and Families, etc.

And, October 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> from 2 to 8 p.m. is Fall Weekend at Look Park, featuring food trucks, live music, lawn games, face painting, adult beverages and haunted train rides. The festival is free to enter with the \$10 per vehicle park entry fee. This year, Parks & Rec is operating a special 'kids land' area accessible with a \$10 wrist band where children can enjoy a bouncy slide, carnival games, lawn sports and arts and crafts. Costumes are encouraged.

Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12 to 2 p.m., the Ward 3 Neighborhood Association (W3NA) will hold its annual meeting at Lampron Park, Councilor Nash reported. The meeting will include the election of officers and light refreshments will be served. Councilor Nash thanked the sheriff's office for providing a tent in the event of inclement weather and Parks & Rec for the use of the park. Any candidates running for elected office in the city will be given the opportunity to speak for five minutes and are also welcome to hand out literature and meet with residents.

Finally, it appears that the worst of the Damon Road construction has been completed, he observed.

**Presentations**

**Presentations**  
**FY2024 First Quarter Financial Report**

Councilor Nash announced that the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter financial report by Director Nardi will be presented at the next meeting.

**'A Stone's Throw' Exhibit Preview**

Veterans' Services Department Director Steven Connor announced that there will be a Veterans Day Parade Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> from the area of the VFW to the ceremony at Trinity Row Park.

Next, he gave a preview of the activities and special events taking place as part of "A Stone's Throw," a month-long series of exhibits and performances in Northampton November 3 – 30, 2023 illuminating the experience of military veterans and their families.

**Resolutions**

**Resolutions**  
**23.389 A Resolution in Support of Picture Main Street - 1st reading**

With the council's permission, Councilor Nash took the resolution out of order since the mayor had made a number of department heads available to answer questions. He read the resolution into the record.

Reminding those present that she was first elected in 1998 and sworn in in 1999, co-sponsor Councilor LaBarge recounted her involvement in discussion and approval of plans and policies reflected in the Picture Main Street project as outlined in the resolution, including endorsement of the Municipal Transportation Plan in 2005 and adoption of the Sustainable Northampton Plan in 2008. Having been present throughout the entire process, she is honored this is happening with her here and proud to support the Main Street redesign, she professed.

Councilor Jarrett said he likes that the resolution shows the policy decisions made by elected and appointed officials over time that have led to the Picture Main Street design seen today and believes that the design is entirely consistent with those policies. He also voiced support for the design process with its many opportunities for engagement and even for the ongoing debate; it's a valuable debate and they are listening and responding to that input, he assured. Although details still need to be worked out, the broad plan is finished, he confirmed. What he and other sponsors are asking is for community members to come together around that broad plan and focus on moving forward.

Councilor Foster echoed Councilor Jarrett's comment, noting that the resolution's framing of the process that brought them here shows that the design is not the product of a whim. She also

reiterated his point that decision-makers have been listening by pointing out that compromises based on resident requests are reflected in the 25% design. It's important to recognize that since it has been a community conversation, plans aren't necessarily going to meet any one person's ideal vision since they're trying to meet the vision and needs of about 30,000 people.

She shared her experience over the weekend of visiting Wiscasset, Maine, a picturesque town whose main street underwent a transformation years ago through a similar community process. After removal of on-street parking and the widening of sidewalks, it is now a pedestrian hangout with parking a block away.

People will still be able to drive downtown, but the more who don't, the more parking spaces will be left for those who do, she pointed out. "Every day that my bike is chained to a bike rack, there is a spot available for somebody else."

With regard to concerns that the plan won't work for people with mobility issues, she thinks that takes a fairly limited view of what it means to have mobility issues. Individual mobility issues and ways to address them vary as greatly as the people affected. There are people living downtown who use wheelchairs and are not driving downtown and parking. The different parking options proposed as well as the increase in accessible spaces and wider sidewalks have an incredible ability to increase mobility for a lot of the population, she suggested.

She knows there is a lot of concern for businesses but the truth is that the retail landscape is changing, she added. More and more, people come downtown for the experience and things they can't get somewhere else. They want to make it a place where people want to linger and wider sidewalks and easier access to stores will actually support businesses.

He doesn't think he has been as excited about a piece of legislation in his whole time on council, Councilor Nash shared. So much of the council's work has to do with developing policy and plans and this project is the culmination of over two decades of those efforts. The Municipal Transportation Plan, Sustainable Northampton Plan, 2013 comprehensive zoning package and complete streets ordinance were all unanimously approved. For the record, he read aloud the names of some of the supporters, including Alex Ghiselin, Paul Spector, Jim Dostal, Bill Dwight, David Narkewicz, David Murphy, Jesse Adams, Rita Bleiman, Pamela Schwartz, Ryan O'Donnell, Gina-Louise Sciarra and Marianne LaBarge, one of the co-sponsors tonight.

Referring to projects and initiatives that ended up on the cutting room floor, Councilor Nash cited the 2015 Walker parking management study, Pleasant Street/Pleasant Futures, the redesign of King Street, construction of the multi-use path network, etc. as collective things the city has done to support its downtown; big initiatives that all tie into the idea of creating a vibrant, accessible downtown with pedestrian amenities.

This council itself has done a lot of this work, adopting character-based zoning, bridge lighting, purchasing outdoor furniture and staging, suspending regulations to allow outdoor dining and approving funds for the resilience hub and affordable housing right next to City Hall, among others.

We stand with previous councils in continuing to do this work, he asserted. It's time to let go and start moving forward, he proposed.

He expressed his confidence that, although construction is really bad, it is temporary and the project itself will be really good for the business community. He pointed to Pleasant Street and King Street reconstructions as examples of successful transformations that increased vibrancy. "I think it's going to be so cool when our downtown is rebuilt and it's as vibrant as those two places," he concluded.

Councilors Maiore, Moulton, Gore, Elkins and Perry each in turn echoed the support of fellow councilors.

In saying it's time for them as a community to come together, it doesn't mean they all have to agree, Councilor Maiore stressed. What frustrates her most is misinformation, hearing the

project couched in ways that are not factually accurate. The FAQ and this process as well will hopefully go a long way to address that, she suggested.

Councilor Moulton named the plan's alignment with so many important initiatives as one of the many compelling reasons he supports it. "It is in alignment with transportation goals, sustainability goals [and] accessibility goals," he shared. While alignment with all these initiatives is quantifiable; he feels the project's timing is also particularly fortuitous because it coincides with a certain synergy downtown reminiscent to him of the mid-70's when the first revitalization of Main Street occurred. He cited the creation of new housing, the redevelopment of 33 King Street, the coming back to life of the Iron Horse and the Calvin - two iconic buildings that have been dormant – and the transition of the Baptist Church to a community resilience hub as examples. "This Picture Main Street really complements all of that going on," he observed.

Councilor Gore said she is glad the project is finally open for discussion among them since there has been so much back and forth in the community in the last few months. She first became familiar with the design after becoming involved with 'Main Street for Everyone' while running for office. She has been on board from that time on especially since, as a pedestrian, she sees Main Street as unsafe sometimes, especially going up towards Forbes Library. "That intersection can be really treacherous for a person on foot."

Picture Main Street is a prime example of Northampton's unique ability to make good policy and proceed to act upon it, Councilor Elkins volunteered. "That's what's so thrilling about this city and makes it so great to live here." She couldn't be more optimistic or confident that the end result will be the realization of a lot of hard work and thought, diligent process, public input and intelligent design.

To him, this is a community vision, Councilor Perry commented. This is his ward and he has spent most of his adult life becoming the person he is in downtown Northampton. "We're not erasing anything; we're celebrating what Northampton was, what it can be and what it can become," he assured.

Nearly every councilor and the mayor stressed the need to work with the downtown business community to make the three-year construction period as painless as possible.

Following the enthusiastic expressions of support, Councilor Nash opened the floor to questions for department heads.

### Councilor Questions

Councilor LaBarge said she had six questions from a resident in her ward who claimed not to be getting a response from the mayor's office. Among other things, the resident expressed dissatisfaction with accident statistics from 2015 to 2017 cited in a newspaper article (reported by him as 167 accidents: 82 signalized, 74 unsignalized and 11 'bridge underpass'). He voiced concern that accident statistics for a single time period need to be put into perspective by comparison to prior years and to the most recent years (2018 to 2022).

The resident is requesting data from 2010 to 2022 and asked that it be in place for tonight's meeting, Councilor LaBarge advised. He also felt that selecting data that was over six years old was misleading.

Mayor Sciarra clarified that her office received this request this morning. It is a lot of data to pull and analyze and responding to such requests requires a huge amount of city resources, she pointed out. Police Chief Kasper may have some data and certainly for the next reading they can target those time periods. Data during the pandemic is not going to be the best data, she cautioned.

Chief of Staff Alan Wolf noted that Office of Planning and Sustainability (OPS) Director Carolyn Misch did respond to the constituent's requests for information. Councilor LaBarge confirmed she had been very helpful in addressing his questions.

The volume of data Councilor LaBarge's resident asked for is not possible for her department to produce in a day but she was able to run a five-year lookback, Chief Kasper advised. From

January 1, 2017 to today (a five year, 10 month period) she presented the following accident statistics for Main Street:

- ❖ Motor vehicle accidents (MVA's) with damage over \$1,000 – 114;
- ❖ MVA's with damage under \$1,000 – 200;
- ❖ MVA's with injury – 17;
- ❖ Vehicle vs. pedestrian – 17,
- ❖ Vehicle vs. bicyclist – 7

She pointed out that road conditions haven't changed in that time. If there hasn't been a significant roadway change, there's no reason to believe the data would change.

Her resident also feels that bicyclists are very dangerous and says that they speed through town, do not slow down for crosswalks and ride on the sidewalks, Councilor LaBarge continued. He asks why they can't be stopped and ticketed when they don't stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, run red lights, etc.

They don't get a lot of reports of people bicycling on the sidewalks and city ordinance does prohibit it, Chief Kasper responded. A contributing factor might be that cyclists don't feel safe riding behind cars backing out. Police generally look at the three E's: education, enforcement and engineering. They could always take enforcement action but the best solution might be engineering. Making changes to the roadway to provide cyclists with a safe place to ride could well improve the problem, she indicated.

Councilor Foster thanked Chief Kasper for the five-year lookback, commenting that 300 plus accidents over the last five years is significant.

Councilor Elkins noted that bicycle enforcement is a real equity issue as it is an opportunity for police to make warrantless stops on an individual level. If they were to get down to the nitty gritty of who would have those kinds of encounters with police, it is probably people who are younger and possibly more people of color. It is asking for a police encounter where one is not necessarily needed and something she sees in other communities as a real vehicle for racial profiling. "I don't want to see that happen here," she said.

Councilor Maiore asked Chief Kasper's reaction to the parking plans in terms of safety.

A new law – 'dooring' – gives drivers the responsibility when parked in a parallel position to check the mirror to make sure a bicyclist is not passing before opening the door, Chief Kasper advised. The majority of streets in the city have parallel parking and it is not a common problem. She doesn't have any more concerns on Main Street than she does anywhere else and actually finds backing up much more concerning. Drivers actually have a better view if parked parallel.

On the subject of separated bike lanes, Councilor Moulton asked Director Misch what her reading of the research shows about separated bike lanes increasing ridership.

She does not have numbers, but, anecdotally, there was a tremendous outpouring of positive response when the city installed protected bike lanes in the summer of 2020, Director Misch said. Separated bike lanes presently exist on Pleasant Street and King Street. It's comparable to having a landscaped or tree buffer between sidewalks and parked cars. Cyclists and pedestrians generally feel more comfortable walking and riding with that little bit of a buffer from moving vehicles.

Northampton Fire Rescue Chief Andrew Pelis and DPW Director Donna LaScaleia responded to questions and concerns about access for emergency vehicles and snow removal. Chief Pelis said he's thoroughly confident that all of the department's vehicles will be able to maneuver through Main Street and make all the side streets as well. Director LaScaleia reminded those present that the DPW runs snow operations for over 160 miles of city roadway. Main Street is the only street in the city where plow drivers pile snow in the middle of the street. They do that because they have space to do it but, in typical, normal snow operations, they remove the snow. Once constructed, Main Street will be like any area downtown. It is not anything extraordinary and will be folded into regular snow operations like any roadway reconstruction project.

In response to a question from Councilor Maiore, Director LaScaleia said the city expects a much healthier greenscape as a result of the reconstruction since plans will address current problems with public shade trees along the route such as inadequate soil and insufficient root space. Tree Warden Rich Parasiliti, Jr. has been very engaged in the project in terms of tree selection and replacement, she confirmed.

Mayor Sciarra said she is grateful for the council's support and the work that has gone in for decades to bring them to this remarkable moment. It feels like a renaissance and she feels incredibly privileged to be part of it.

At Councilor Foster's invitation, Mayor Sciarra highlighted accessibility improvements embedded in the design. Accessibility is one of the four areas this project will address, she reminded. Everything the project touches will be brought into ADA compliance. Director Misch reviewed plans for a section of upper Main Street, pointing out new parallel and angled accessible parking spaces and noting crosswalk improvements such as shortening overall length and relocating the Crafts Avenue crosswalk so that it is no longer on a downhill cant.

Sponsors hope to bring the resolution back to council a month from now with the hope that it will foster community engagement and hopefully garner more support in the weeks ahead, Councilor Nash advised.

See minutes of November 16, 2023 for final reading.

Recess

Recess

At 9:29 p.m., the City Council recessed briefly. The council reconvened at 9:39 p.m.

Public Hearings  
Announcement of  
Tax Classification  
Hearing  
Announcement of  
Public Hearing on  
23.377 National  
Grid/Verizon Pole  
Petition for Water  
Street (Petition  
#30817064)

Public Hearings

Councilor Nash announced the following upcoming hearings:

Announcement of Tax Classification Hearing

Per M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 56, the Northampton City Council will hold a public hearing on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 7 p.m. in hybrid format in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA to discuss the percentages of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of real and personal property within the City of Northampton for FY2024. Information regarding this hearing will be available for public inspection on line at [www.northamptonma.gov](http://www.northamptonma.gov) on or before Tuesday, October 31, 2023 after 12 p.m. Instructions for accessing the hearing remotely will be posted on the November 2, 2023 City Council agenda on [www.northamptonma.gov](http://www.northamptonma.gov) no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Announcement of Public Hearing on 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064)

Per M.G.L. Ch. 166, Section 22, the Northampton City Council will hold a public hearing on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 7:15 p.m. in Council Chambers, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA on National Grid/Verizon's petition to relocate Pole #15 on Water Street. (Petition #30817064). Instructions for accessing the hearing remotely may be found on the November 2, 2023 City Council agenda to be posted on [www.northamptonma.gov](http://www.northamptonma.gov) no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. The City Council will hear all persons who wish to be heard thereon.

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda

Councilor Nash reviewed the items on the consent agenda. There being no requests for removal, **Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Councilor Jarrett seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.**

The following items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

- A. Minutes of October 5, 2023
- B. 23.384 An Order to Appropriate \$15,000 to Hire Stantec to Evaluate Parking Fee Structure - 2nd reading

For the text of financial orders approved as part of the consent agenda, see Financial Orders (on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading) below.

Financial Orders  
(on 1st reading)  
23.388 An Order to  
Rescind \$690,000  
Borrowing to  
Acquire Property  
on Sylvester Road -  
1st reading

Financial Orders (on 1st reading)  
23.388 An Order to Rescind \$690,000 Borrowing to Acquire Property on Sylvester Road -  
1st reading

The order is to rescind a \$690,000 borrowing authorization to purchase 229 acres in the Saw Mill Hills as the planning department received a \$400,000 state LAND grant and Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for the acquisition, Director Nardi explained.

Although suspension of the rules was not requested, Councilor Elkins questioned how much discussion there could possibly be on the city *not* borrowing money.

Councilor Elkins moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Jarrett seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

Councilor Elkins moved to approve. Councilor Jarrett seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

The following order passed final reading:

City of Northampton  
 MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council* \_\_\_\_\_  
 October 19, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Upon recommendation of the Mayor

23.388 An Order to Rescind \$690,000 Borrowing to Acquire Property on Sylvester Road

*Ordered, that*

the City Council rescind the following order because such borrowing authority is no longer necessary:

Order 22.097: \$690,000 of borrowing authority authorized under the loan order approved on May 19, 2022 to purchase 229 Acres (Map ID 41-001, 003 and 012, Barbara Pomeroy) on Sylvester Road to add to the adjacent Saw Hill Greenway as the Russell Pomeroy Trail at Saw Mill Hills.

Rules suspended, passed final reading and enrolled.

Orders

Orders  
 None

Ordinances  
23.387 An Ordinance  
to Make Sunday  
Parking Free in  
Gothic Street Garage  
- 2nd reading

Ordinances  
23.387 An Ordinance to Make Sunday Parking Free in Gothic Street Garage – 2nd reading  
 Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the ordinance in final reading. Councilor Moulton seconded.

Councilor Jarrett clarified that while parking is free on Sunday, parking rates will apply beginning after midnight. Councilor Foster explained that her initial hesitancy to commit to approval at the last meeting was related to qualms about making parking free to support attendees of First Churches without consideration of making parking free for other places of worship such as the Christian Science Reading Room.



She needed to think about it more, but bringing parking at the garage in line with other surface lots makes sense to her.

Mayor Sciarra stressed that anyone can park for free in the Gothic Street Garage on Sunday, it's just that parishioners of First Churches were the ones who brought it to their attention.

The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by roll call vote.

**The following ordinance passed final reading:**

**City of Northampton  
MASSACHUSETTS**

**In the Year Two Thousand Twenty-Three**

Upon the Recommendation of Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra

**23.387 An Ordinance to Make Sunday Parking Free in Gothic Street Garage**

*Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Northampton, in City Council assembled, as follows:*

An ordinance of the City of Northampton, Massachusetts providing that the Code of Ordinances, City of Northampton, Massachusetts be amended by amending section 312-36E Parking Meter Locations and Regulations to allow free parking on Sundays in the Gothic Street Garage. Edit as follows:

§312-36E Parking Meter Locations and Regulations

E. Whenever any vehicle shall be parked adjacent to a parking meter, or within a zone where payment is required at a pay station, the owner or operator of such vehicle shall park within the space designated by pavement marking lines and, upon entering such space, shall immediately deposit in a meter, kiosk or electronic service the required coin or payment of the United States for the maximum legal parking period or any incrementally proportionate period thereof, both as indicated or shown on the meter and if so required set the mechanism in motion.

[Last amended 3-22-2023 by Administrative Order No. AO.2023.001]

(1)

The fees for maximum parking time in on-street parking zones and off-street parking areas by time span shall be as follows:

Class	Time Limit	Span	Fee
5C	N/A	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., Monday –Friday, all day Saturday <del>and</del> Sunday	\$0.75/hr

**Rules suspended, passed final reading, ordained and enrolled.**

**Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)**  
**23.349 An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 350-12.2 Outdoor Lighting - 1st reading**

**Ordinances (Not Yet Referred)**

**23.349 An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 350-12.2 Outdoor Lighting - 1st reading**

The proposed amendment before them will replace the existing lighting ordinance, Director Misch presented. Updates include defining terms more clearly and introducing different specification requirements particularly for commercial lighting and bigger projects. The text includes more details about light output, glare and uplighting factors to better regulate and make sure lighting for larger projects meets goals and objectives the city has had for years. The last update in 2007 was prior to the market flood of LED products, so this ordinance addresses LED technology as well as imposing color/temperature regulations, bringing the ordinance to where it should have been several years ago.

The ordinance was brought before the Northampton Energy and Sustainability Commission (NESC) in July where it received additional feedback and has now been officially introduced so it can go out for public hearing before the Planning Board and Legislative Matters.

Councilor Jarrett said he thinks there would be great value in a joint hearing if possible.

In response to a question from Councilor Nash, Director Misch confirmed the current ordinance was 'Dark Sky' compliant when adopted in 2007, meaning no 'uplighting,' or light directed above the horizontal plane, is allowed. The new language adds more specificity. 'Dark Sky' simply means lighting is capped so there are no impacts to the night sky.

As LED technology has progressed, planners have noticed dark sky compliance doesn't take care of all light-related issues. This ordinance tries to get at some of the other impacts to adjacent properties from lights such as the glare that comes out from the side of lights.

Councilor Foster expressed her understanding that the regulation does not apply to state-owned office buildings.

Director Misch confirmed that local zoning cannot regulate what state or federal agencies put on their buildings. The ordinance does apply to Smith College and new projects.

Councilor Jarrett moved to refer the ordinance to the Planning Board and Legislative Matters. Councilor Moulton seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote.

See minutes of November 16, 2023 for final reading.

Financial Orders  
(on 2nd reading)  
23.384 An Order to  
Appropriate \$15,000  
to Hire Stantec to  
Evaluate Parking Fee  
Structure - 1st  
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Financial Orders (on 2nd reading)  
The following order was approved as part of the consent agenda:  
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reading

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

*In City Council* October 5, 2023

Upon recommendation of Mayor Sciarra

**23.384 An Order to Appropriate \$15,000 to Hire Stantec to Evaluate Parking Fee Structure**

*Whereas*, in early 2023 City Council adopted a modification to pricing of parking and management for the public parking spots in downtown; and

*Whereas*, these changes included an alteration of fees on Main Street and the side Streets in order to increase turnover of parking spaces on Main Street with a targeted goal of achieving around 85% occupancy; and

*Whereas*, these changes also specified that the Mayor's office would regularly evaluate the pricing to determine if it was achieving the goal of 85% occupancy; and

*Whereas*, the City implemented those new parking changes in April of 2023; and

*Whereas*, it has been six months since implementation and the Mayor's office would like to have the first analysis of the effectiveness of these changes be performed by the same consultant who recommended these and who can also evaluate how the new pricing structure has changed parking patterns and whether we should make any adjustments; and

*Whereas*, the City would further benefit from this outside consultant to create a tool so that the City can, on its own, conduct periodic evaluations of how the parking system is working and whether adjustments are necessary.

*Now, therefore, be it resolved that*

the City Council appropriates \$15,000 from the Parking Receipts Reserved Account (2312) for the purposes of hiring Stantec to conduct the first official evaluation of the new parking management pricing system and provide us with a tool to use in the future.

	<u>Passed final reading and enrolled.</u>
<u>New Business</u>	<u>New Business</u> None
<u>Adjourn</u>	<u>Adjourn</u> Councilor Maiore moved to adjourn. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 9:0 by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.  Attest: _____, Administrative Assistant

## EXHIBIT A

List of Documents Reviewed at October 19, 2023 Northampton City Council Meeting:

1. October 19, 2023 Agenda
2. October 5, 2023 City Council minutes
3. 23.377 National Grid/Verizon Pole Petition for Water Street (Petition #30817064) together with DPW Recommendation – Memo from Greg Newman, PE, DPW Senior Engineer to Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director dated October 11, 2023 re: National Grid-Verizon #30817064 to relocate utility pole #15 on Water Street, Leeds
4. A Stone's Throw Poster1
5. FY2024 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Financial Report: 5 spreadsheets entitled:  
Cannabis, Meals, Hotel- Motel- Short-term Rentals FY24  
Enterprise Fund Expenses.093023  
Enterprise Fund Revenue.093023  
GF Expenses.093023  
GF Revenue.093023
6. 23.384 An Order to Appropriate \$15,000 to Hire Stantec to Evaluate Parking Fee Structure
7. 23.388 An Order to Rescind \$690,000 Borrowing to Acquire Property on Sylvester Road
8. 23.349 An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 350-12.2 Outdoor Lighting
9. 23.387 An Ordinance to Make Sunday Parking Free in Gothic Street Garage
10. 23.389 A Resolution in Support of Picture Main Street

Record of City Council Votes for October 19, 2023		Elkins	Foster	Gore	Jarrett	LaBarge	Maiore	Moulton	Nash	Perry	Total
Roll Call by Council Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler @ 7p.m.		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	9 Present, 0 Absent
Approval of Consent Agenda:					Second	Motion to approve					Motion carried
Minutes of October 5, 2023 City Council Meeting	Consent										9:0; voice vote
23.384 An Order to Appropriate \$15,000 to Hire Stantec to Evaluate Parking Fee Structure - 1st reading	Consent										
23.388 An Order to Rescind \$690,000 Borrowing to Acquire Property on Sylvester Road - 1st reading	Suspend rules	Motion to suspend			Second						Motion carried
	1st reading	Motion to approve	Yes	Yes	Second Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Motion carried
23.387 An Ordinance to Make Sunday Parking Free in Gothic Street Garage - 2nd reading	2nd reading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Motion to approve	Yes	Second Yes	Yes	Yes	Motion carried
23.349 An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 350-12.2 Outdoor Lighting - 1st reading	Refer to PB/LM				Motion to refer			Second Yes			Motion carried
23.389 A Resolution in Support of Picture Main Street	NO ACTION TAKEN										
Adjourn							Motion to adjourn			Second	Motion carried
											9:0; voice vote