

**PUBLIC WORKS AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 24, 2021, 8:00 A.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

A. Meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m. by Chairman Ben Wenograd

B. Attendees –Mayor Shari Cantor, Chairman Ben Wenograd, Councilor Mary Fay, Councilor Lee Gold, Town Manager Matt Hart, Director of Public Works John Phillips, Director of Plant and Facilities Robert Palmer, Acting Director of Community Development Duane Martin, Police Chief Vernon Riddick, Assistant Police Chief Lawrence Terra, Deputy Corporation Counsel Gina Varano, and Operations Manager Brooke Nelson.

2. Business Items

A. Meeting Minutes May 27, 2021 – The minutes were approved without objection.

B. Ordinance Amending the Prohibition on Overnight Parking – Mr. Hart reminded the attendees about the Ordinance, including its origin, which dates back to the 1950s. It has been looked at a few times over the decades but has largely remained in its current version since the 1980s. There was a request at the last meeting to pull together some key data and statistics and speak to, conceptually, what a residential parking permit program could look like. Mr. Hart went over a PowerPoint presentation regarding the relevant data and statistics that were pulled together, as well as the elements of what a residential parking permit system could look like. Mr. Hart started with data that was pulled from the police department and parking spanning 2017 to 2020 with the concession that 2020 was an anomaly with the pandemic and the ban was lifted for most of the year. That data pulled relates to the number of tickets that were issued in each year, as well as the revenue collected from that. In 2019, almost 4400 tickets were issued that year with a revenue of just over \$87,000. These numbers were much lower in previous years. The just over 21,000 OMITs were submitted in 2019 for just over 32,000 nights.

Mr. Hart mentioned that one of the reasons Council may want to consider providing an overnight parking permit is to alleviate the need to expand driveways or to create more impervious surface cover as that contributes to the drainage and stormwater problems. An individual driveway or property is not significant but dozens of these year after year can add up. There were 62 driveway expansion permits in 2020 and there are already 31 for this year. Mr. Martin believed the spike in 2020 was due to the pandemic, which is also being experienced this year. It is unsure if the trend will go away or continue. The vast majority of the driveway expansions vary from a sliver widening on the driveway to a full doublewide driveway. In some cases there are expansions into backyards. There are some restrictions and zoning regulations regarding that but that is permitted as well.

Mr. Hart went over a concept of what the residential parking permit could look like. The purpose would be to provide residential parking areas around what would be considered traffic generators. Another goal would be to balance and prioritize the use of curb spaces. Some areas that need to be considered would be what type of qualifications should there be for a residential permit, what type of exceptions would be considered, what would the permitting process look like, what would be the violation penalties? Those are details that need to be developed.

Ms. Nelson went over what the permitting process would be including applying online and providing proof of residency, the staff would verify and approve the application and issue the permit. The staff would provide some kind of credentials that are easily recognized; a permitted vehicle as opposed to a vehicle parked without authorization. The process would be followed up with enforcement. The permit is an agreement between the permit holder and the Town. The permit holder would agree to specific terms and conditions for the privilege to park on the Town's right-of-way. The terms and conditions would include maintaining a valid registration, no outstanding parking tickets or unpaid taxes, there would be no inoperable vehicles and the permit holder would follow all Town parking ordinances. Those requesting a permit would need to provide their name and address, proof of identification and residency, and vehicle information; make, model, VIN, and plate number. Other factors to be considered include where should there be residential parking overnight, the number of permits per household, application fee, renewal frequency, and revocation.

Ms. Nelson went over two types of credentials; tangible and virtual. The tangible would be a sticker or a hanging tag that could be transferrable between vehicles, which could possibly be duplicated. The virtual would include a license plate number. Currently, paid parking is managed by license plate and the residential parking permit could be managed on the same platform.

Mr. Hart went over possible indicators of success including the number of permits and citations issued, comparing the trends between permits and citations, and the number of complaints received. There was no contemplation of allowing the permit based on a seasonal basis; however, during a storm event a parking ban would be issued and someone who has a permit to park on the street, they are going to have to find another place for their car for the duration of that ban. The cost of the permit has not been identified yet, but something relatively modest. Whether or not the OMIT system would still be in place in conjunction with the permit needs to be reviewed. It is possible it would remain in place, but if it is found over time there was not enough capacity on street it may need to be modified in certain areas of town.

Mr. Martin went over a map, which was also loaded on BoardDocs, regarding roads with curbs/sidewalks. The streets that were highlighted are in the grid transportation area and more densely populated areas. Mr. Hart mentioned many of the apartment complexes in that part of town have struggled to provide sufficient parking for the residents. Mr. Martin stated on Farmington Avenue, for example, there were approximately 500 units that would fit within that criteria. Chairman Wenograd requested further details as to which streets and how limited the parking would be, as well as what the zone would be and the length of time for

the pilot. Mr. Hart stated he would get the team together and present the requested information at the next meeting.

3. Communications

Nothing was indicated for communications.

4. Staff Reports

A. Public Works – Mr. Phillips went over the monthly report, which was attached in BoardDocs that touched on the work volume. The Department is currently focused on the core work assignments including town road resurfacing, infrastructure maintenance of assets, MS4 responsibilities, and summer maintenance. Traffic safety is working with Engineering in improving fixtures and LED lights in the Timberwood neighborhood and West Hill, as well as installing road diet signage and installing new cameras and signals that include Fire pre-emptive technology, which allows the fire trucks to have an intersection go red to help their safe passage through an intersection. The parking division is seeing improvements on the revenue side, but are currently at approximately 77% of pre-COVID numbers; however, May was one of the best months this fiscal year, so it shows progress and the economy coming back to the central business district. Parking supports a lot of activities specific to the Center, the Town Hall common areas and the Delamar Hotel is also seeing an uptick in business over the last month, so there is support there due to parking agreements the Town has with the hotel and the municipal parking services provided. Mr. Phillips provided stats regarding work orders. Last month there were over 700 work orders with a 75% closeout rate.

Regarding the Town Hall lot, they need the assistance of software technology. They are working with the Revenue Collections Department, who handle revenue collections for tickets from the citations, and they are working on finalizing a contract to a more user-friendly, both on the parker and administrative, parking and citation program. Once that contract is in place, they will be able to move the Town Hall lot forward to a kiosk program. Town employees would be permitted to park on the lot and self-manage their vehicles within that system. People attending the Town Hall would have to register their vehicle all other uses of the lot would be subject to pay-to-park.

B. Plant and Facilities – Mr. Palmer reported there were no problems encountered in all of the school and Town buildings. There was a transition from heating to air conditioning with the spring and there were no major problems. The staffing levels continue to be tabled regarding custodial and maintenance staff. Mr. Palmer highlighted some capital projects that are going to RFP and being developed including the replacement animal control facility and the public safety facilities (Police and Fire). On the Town side, there will be some paving this summer at Veterans Memorial Skating Rink and Fire Stations 1 and 4 will also have substantial portions of the driveways replaced with the assistance of the engineering staff. The main Town Hall sign will be replaced. Additionally, shortly after the completion of the elevator controls modernization on the main elevator in the building the main piston failed, so they are waiting for the repair parts to come in. On the Board side, they are into the

summer projects including roof replacements, auditorium seating at Hall and King Philip, playground equipment replacement at Wolcott and Norfeldt, paving at Bugbee Playground and Webster Hill, and security improvements at Whiting Lane.

The bidding atmosphere has been challenging. Material availability has been an issue. Several projects will be postponed a year because contractors cannot get the materials to complete the projects by the end of August before school resumes. Additionally, contractors have been very busy. There were some projects with no bidders due to contractor unavailability and material issues.

Mr. Palmer provided a Utilities update through May's bills. Both the Town and Board of Education will come in under budget. Originally when COVID hit and the recommendations came out for increased ventilation for the schools and office buildings, it was anticipated there would be a deficit on the utilities bills but with some lower pricing and doing quite a bit of maintenance on the systems they were manageable and will come in under budget. There is an expected increase usage in electricity and natural gas because the systems are running longer and bring in more fresh air, which has to either be heated or cooled. There is also an increase in water, which is in part due to the drought last summer and fall for irrigation as well as increased handwashing within the buildings.

C. Town Manager – Mr. Hart provided a brief update on the acquisition of 100 Mayflower Street, the former St. Brigid School. Several months ago there was a vote authorizing the Town Manager to execute the real estate contract for the acquisition of the school subject to certain conditions, one being due diligence with the other being a favorable report from the Town Planning and Zoning Commission. Nothing has been found that is particularly surprising, although there are some contaminants, which is not unexpected due to the building's age and construction. There was a favorable report from TPZ seeing the potential acquisition of the school as consistent with the Town's plan of conservation and development and there is a plan to bring a recommendation to the Town Council at their July 13 meeting.

Atty Varano went further into the due diligence condition of the contract, which included review of title. The title search revealed a few things, which they are taking a look at. One is a deed restriction from the time the Church took possession of the property. Civil defense was a priority for the country at that time and the deed allowed the federal government to step in and use and occupy the building during the time of a presidential declaration of emergency and/or a declaration from Congress. It is not unusual to see that, particularly during the 1950s. It is a deed restriction and unless it is removed or released it would apply to the municipality as well if purchased. The seller is endeavoring to have that restriction released, but it is hard to get someone in the federal government to release this.

The Engineering Department conducted a survey of the property, which reviewed two anomalies. The property holders on Elmhurst have sheds in their backyard that encroach on the church property. The sheds would not interfere with the Town's use of the property, it is a little wooded back there, so no particular concern about property use. The seller is working on a resolution of that, which could include the seller make demand upon the property owners to have the sheds removed or moved or to enter into a license agreement that allows

the sheds to stay in place for the property owner's use until a later date and the later date is usually if the shed needs to be replaced. If so, it would require the property owner to place it entirely on their property. The other piece of the due diligence is building inspection and environmental. Conversations are ongoing with outside consultants about potential contaminants that may exist in the building and surrounding area. It is being evaluated and then we will proceed with next steps, and also identifying if any of those contaminants would interfere with the immediate use of the building or would there be some remediation required.

The purchase and sale agreement does have a restriction of if the Town Council were to approve the purchase of the property. The property's use would be restricted for five years from the date of recording the deed for municipal purposes including a community center, a cultural center, a senior center, a fitness center, a teen center, library, government offices, public assembly, educational programs, and indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities.

5. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items were indicated.

6. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

/axb