

City of Rochester, New Hampshire

Parking Review Group

Parking Review Group

July 20, 2023

Cocheco Conference Room- 33 Wakefield Street

Members Present

Tim Fontneau – Chairman/City Councilor
Keith Fitts – Planning Board
Andrew Swanberry – Police Dept
Mike Scala – Economic Development
Shanna B. Saunders – Director of Planning
Ryan O'Connor – Senior Planner

Members Absent

Ralph DiBernardo – JetPack Comics
Todd Radict – Skeletone Records
Marc Saxby – Collectiques
Kris Ebbeson – Riverstones Framing
Peter Nourse – Dept of Public Works

I. Call to Order

Ryan O'Connor called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

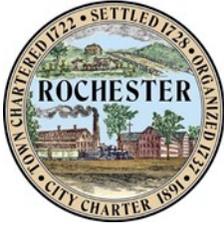
II. Roll Call

Ryan O'Connor conducted a silent roll call.

III. Overview of Parking Review Group Mission

Shanna Saunders reviewed the original goals of the City Manager for the Parking Review Group (PRG) and the action items discussed at the previous PRG meeting.

IV. Revised Action Items Discussion



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S. Saunders reviewed the proposed recommendations to be presented to City Council. Metering of parking spaces downtown was discussed. S. Saunders noted that currently, our public parking was utilized at about 60% and the consultants reviewing the possibility of monetized parking didn't feel metering was needed at this time. S. Saunders recommended the PRG revisit meters once construction of the Union Street parking lot was complete, which is anticipated to be in 2025.

Tim Fontneau said that he was concerned with the amount of new residential units coming into the downtown and the anticipated parking need. He stated that the parking counts show we have enough parking now, but planning ahead for future need is where we should be focusing. T. Fontneau stressed that the PRG recommendations should focus on preventing long term parking on North Main Street which may increase with the new residential units. Metering may be the best option to deter long term parking.

S. Saunders asked, if metering were to be installed, when should it go in. T. Fontneau said that meters should be aligned with the completion of the Hoffman building. Metering could begin in select areas like on No Main and the lot near Lilac City Grill. Mike Scala said he is looking into alternative spots for public parking while the Union Street lot is closed for renovations. T. Fontneau asked who was utilizing the Union Street Lot. M. Scala said that those working downtown were the largest users.

S. Saunders mentioned that economies of scale come into play with metering. Installing them in all the desired locations may make sense to complete at one time. Keith Fitts said that metering by a phone-based app has worked well in other communities. This approach would require less infrastructure be installed. He asked that more research be completed on the possible cost of the different options.

T. Fontneau discussed the possibility of offering parking validation from downtown businesses. The PRG agreed this would be worth exploring. M. Scala stated that validation can be incorporated in some phone-based apps.

S. Saunders said that the recommendations need to be revised to include metering and future proposals will include meter locations and options for kiosk-based systems as well as apps.

S. Saunders reviewed possible parking time limits. The original recommendation with no metering was to regulate parking downtown by having 2 hour limits in the downtown core and 4 hours on the outskirts. Ryan O'Connor stated that if metering is in place, those areas should not have time limits. Usage should be regulated by price in those areas rather than time limit, if that was the wish of the PRG.

The PRG discussed various time limit scenarios and concluded that all nonmetered areas should be limited to 3-hour parking and all metered spaces would offer free parking for the first fifteen-minutes and then charged after that. S. Saunders stated that this would all be reviewed annually to ensure the limits were effective and could be properly enforced. S. Saunders also recommended that



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new residential development be required to provide one on-site short term space for pick-up and drop off parking, the PRG agreed.

S. Saunders reviewed possible permitting scenarios stating that permits could be based on use, for employees and residents, or location based by parking area. The PRG concluded the permits based on use may be more applicable but should include a large geographic area. R. O'Connor suggested the permits apply to all nonmetered area, the PRG agreed. S. Scala said offering permits may promote residential growth downtown. M. Scala said that the PRG should consider permitted about 10% of the available space and recommended a permit cost of between \$20 to \$30. M. Scala is also reviewing winter parking options when on street parking restricted due to a snow emergency.

S. Saunders reviewed the possibility of Site Plan Regulation changes to require one space for all new residential units being built in the Downtown Commercial Zone. She recommended the PRG support an off site contribution that could be paid by the developer if he cannot meet the new ordinance. The consulting firm quote the cost of surface parking to be \$2000 per spot so she recommended the developer pay \$1000 per required space in lieu of the construction of parking to help fund future public parking efforts. The example was given that if these requirements would have been in place, the new Hoffman building would have paid about \$35,000. M. Scala stated his discontent. R. O'Connor reiterated that this would be in Site Plan Regulations and the Planning Board would have the opportunity to waive this expense, if appropriate. The PRG supported this recommendation.

Andrew Swanberry reviewed the current parking ticket prices, which are currently at \$15. The PRG agreed that this needed to be increased to be effective and recommended at least \$25.

S. Saunders discussed revisiting the wayfinding effort and implementing the previous wayfinding plan that was developed for the City. It was not fully or correctly implemented. The PRG agreed this is necessary. S. Saunders also reviewed the need for better mapping of public parking. Accessibility was discussed stating the walkability study being completed by SRPC, future completion of the River Walk, and expanded bike routes. Safety is also a priority to promote walkability as parking utilization pushes drivers to the outskirts of the downtown core.

The group agreed that a parking garage is not recommended at this time.

S. Saunders stated the tracking utilization of spaces on a yearly basis will be important. Time limits, permitting, meter cost must all be adjusted to ensure effective use of public spaces in relation to the business and residential locations downtown.

S. Saunders said that one final PRG will be needed to finalize recommendations prior to moving forward to Council. T. Fontneau asked that staff solidify permitting and possible cost of different metering systems. M. Scala will work to get these figures. K. Fitts asked that phone-based app options also be explored.



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The Parking Review Group adjourned at 5:42.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan O'Connor
Senior Planner

DRAFT