

**CITY OF NORWICH
NORWICH PUBLIC PARKING COMMISSION**

The following are the minutes of the regular meeting of the Public Parking Commission held at 5:15 p.m., September 16,2008 in the Buckingham Memorial Bldg.

PRESENT: Ms. Olive Buddington, Co-Chair, Mr. Alan Bergren, Mr. Mark Bettencourt, Mr. William Nash and Mr. Robert Zarnetske.

ABSENT: Mr. Jeffrey Lord and Mr. Sean Ryan

ALSO: Mr. Christopher Lawton and Mr. Robert Murphy

At 5:20 p.m. Ms. Buddington called the meeting to order, noting a quorum was present.

MINUTES:

On a motion by Mr. Bettencourt, it was voted to accept the minutes of the May 20, 2008 meeting as recorded. Motion seconded by Mr. Zarnetske. Motion passed unanimously

FINANCIAL REPORTS & BILLS TO BE PAID:

A motion was made by Mr. Bettencourt, seconded by Mr. Zarnetske to accept the financial reports and accounts payable reports for May, June, July & August 2008.

During discussion of the financial reports, Mr. Bettencourt asked how we went over the budgeted expenditure amount for 2008. Ms. Rizzuto stated that the additional expenditures were due to the lighting upgrades and the increase in salary rates. Both of these items were unforeseen at the time the budget was comprised and both of these expenditures were authorized by the Commission.

Mr. Bettencourt made it understood that the total amount budgeted for expenditures should not be exceeded. It is the amount that is legally authorized for spending throughout the year. Line item amounts may be adjusted to reflect the additional items, but the total amount must be adhered to.

The motion to accept the financial reports and accounts payable was voted on and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Christopher Lawton attended the meeting to protest a summons issued in June 2008. Mr. Zarnetske made a motion to waive the penalty, but upheld the original ticket. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bergren, voted on and passed unanimously.

Mr. Robert Murphy also attended the meeting to protest his summons issued in April 2008. Summons was issued for parking in a "restricted, No Parking" zone, with a handicap permit. Discussion was made of the signage in the area. There was a question as to whether the State statute allows a person with a Handicap permit to park in any legal space or whether their privilege is limited to timed zones. It was also questioned whether the Traffic Authority has the right to restrict parking with signage or markings. A motion was made by Mr. Zarnetske, based on the interpretation of the statute, to waive the summons. Mr. Nash seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-2, with Mr. Bettencourt & Ms. Buddington voting against the motion. Ms. Rizzuto was asked to contact Corporation Counsel and seek his opinion on the State statute relating to Handicap parking and also the Traffic Authority rights.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A motion was made by Mr. Zarnetske to accept the correspondence. The motion was seconded by Mr. Nash. Voted on and passed unanimously.

Regarding the communication to Corporation Counsel, Ms. Rizzuto was directed to send information to Mr. Karl Sternlof. Mr. Sternlof is acting as Corporation Counsel during Mr. Driscoll's absence.

Ms. Rizzuto was also directed to get information from the 350th Committee relating to the actual usage of the tent in June 2009, before a formal response is made to their request.

OLD BUSINESS:

NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

The idea of increasing the fine for overtime was discussed. Mr. Bettencourt started the discussion by mentioning that he had requested from Mr. Bergren a copy of the NPPC mission statement. The mission statement as it stands should be reexamined for improvement/update.

The perception of the Commission was discussed, with Mr. Bettencourt stating that “we are seen by some as an impediment to the downtown.” Ms. Buddington stated that perception has always been an issue. Receiving a parking ticket is never a pleasant experience and very few take responsibility for being in violation. Ms. Buddington went on to say that the employees that we have now seem to be very calm, personable and professional and we have had very few complaints. The change from uniforms to casual clothing has also made a difference in how people view the PEO’s. The intimidation factor has been removed.

Mr. Bettencourt suggested that we consider a “free” ticket....when a vehicle is in violation of overtime, a “warning” ticket be issued for the first violation. The registration info would be stored in the handheld and if a second violation occurs, a valid summons would be issued. Mr. Bettencourt stated that we should be helping the downtown businesses. Mr. Nash stated that he has accompanied the PEO’s on their routes and they do “forgive” a lot of violations. He was impressed with their judgment and people skills.

Mr. Zarnetske suggested that we do something similar to UNH’s “monster ticket” It is a warning ticket, and explains that this is the only warning ...any further violations will be cited.

The discussion centered on raising the overtime violation to \$10/\$15, but using a warning ticket. The warning ticket would be issued once per calendar year. Additional violations during the year would be cited at the fine set for the overtime violation. It was also decided to try and use the “Rose of New England” as a basis for the warning ticket. It would need to be large enough so people would see it and bright enough so they would read the information and be aware that they received a warning.

A motion was made to work on a “package” which would incorporate a rise in the overtime violation, along with instituting a “warning ticket”, once/year. The motion was made by Mr. Bettencourt, seconded by Mr. Zarnetske. It was voted on and the discussion will continue next meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the removal of the NCDC designation from the spaces in the Main Street garage. Ms. Rizzuto explained to the members that the designation was done to accommodate employees as a courtesy. The individuals are no longer involved with NCDC, so the need for special designation is over.

A motion was made by Mr. Bettencourt, seconded by Mr. Zarnetske to remove the NCDC designation. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

The final item on the agenda was the request by the 350th Committee for usage of the Waterfront Lot during the month of June 2009. The Commission members started the discussion by saying that supporting the event is very important and all members agreed to allow the Committee and other groups to use the lot. It was also noted that the intent to save money by the involved groups was a great effort.

The members asked if we charged a fee for use of the lot by groups holding events at the Waterfront. Ms. Rizzuto responded that the Commission has not charged anyone for usage of the lot in prior years. Through discussion, the members decided that if the lot is to be used by vendors, there should be a fee assessed to the sponsoring group. If the lot is used for displays, the Commission would forego fees. Each sponsoring group would be required to submit detailed information as to the usage of the lot before approval is given. Ms. Rizzuto was asked to get information from surrounding areas, such as Mystic & New London, regarding the charge for festivals paid to the City.

ANYTHING ELSE BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSION:

Mr. Nash brought before the Commission the possibility of monitoring more than the downtown area by the Commission staff. He stated that he would like to have a meeting with the administrators of NFA and the people in the immediate surrounding neighborhoods. The signage in the area limits the parking to 2 hours, which is impossible for the students to adhere to while in school. Mr. Nash was told that the signage in the area is the responsibility of the Police Department, under direction of the Traffic Authority (Chief Fusaro). Any change to the existing signage would have to be done through the Traffic Authority. The Commission can suggest that changes be made, the ultimate decision rests with the Police Chief. Mr. Nash also suggested that the State minimums be painted on curbs, along with the No Parking zones as is done downtown. The other members of the Commission explained that we have been working on expanding our monitoring area for quite sometime and have determined through legal opinion, that we are not restricted to the downtown area. The Commission staff has the ability to monitor parking throughout the City, but cannot make parking rules or establish violation fines without approval by the City Council. Mr. Nash stated that he will bring the issue of signage before the Public Safety Committee for review.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a motion by Mr. Bergren, seconded by Mr. Bettencourt, it was unanimously voted to enter into executive session at 7:10 pm, to discuss personnel matters.

On a motion by Ms. Buddington, seconded by Mr. Zarnetske, it was unanimously voted to exit executive session at 7:32 pm.

No action taken/ No votes taken in executive session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made to adjourn by Mr. Nash, second by Mr. Bettencourt. Voted on and passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith A. Rizzuto, Administrator
Norwich Public Parking Commission