

COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE

MAY 12, 2021

A meeting of the Committee on Infrastructure was held Wednesday, May 12, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference.

Chairman O'Brien

As Chairman of the Committee on Infrastructure, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

To access Zoom, please refer to the agenda or the City's website for the meeting link.

To join by phone: 1-929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 872 9269 6604 Passcode: 776033

The public may also view the meeting via Channel 16.

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, through public postings. Instructions have also been provided on the City of Nashua's website at www.nashuanh.gov and publicly noticed at City Hall and Nashua Public Library.

If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting via phone or Channel 16, please call 603-821-2049 and they will help you connect.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting via the methods mentioned above, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

Alderman Schmidt called the roll and asked them to state the reason he or she could not attend, confirmed that they could hear the proceedings, and stated who was present with him or her.

The roll call was taken with 5 members of the Committee on Infrastructure present:

Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman Ernest Jette
Alderman David C. Tencza (arrived after roll call)

Also in Attendance:

Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director
Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

ROLL CALL

Chairman O'Brien

I am present, I can hear the proceedings and I am alone.

Alderman Lopez

I am present, I can hear the meeting and I am alone.

Alderman Schmidt

Alderman Jan Schmidt is here, and I am alone in the room and I can hear everyone.

Alderman Jette

I am here alone and I can hear the proceedings.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Tencza did notify me he is intending to join us but he will be late for the meeting; he has another commitment. Therefore, I do declare, we have quorum with four members present, right to the Clerk?

Alderman Schmidt

Correct sir, thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you. Alright also in attendance will be Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director.

Alderman Lopez

Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

Chairman Lopez

Have we checked with the legal that the Executive Orders governing meetings are still in effect, because at the beginning of all of our meetings we quote them a lot and I thought he ended a bunch of them?

Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development

Not this one.

Chairman O'Brien

No.

Alderman Lopez

OK as long as it is not this one, that's what I care about.

Chairman O'Brien

I don't know what to say, I have a hard time following the Governor myself. So I don't know.

Alderman Lopez

Alright well I will ask Attorney Bolton I guess. I mentioned it last night but I didn't realize I never got an answer so I was like, wait, what are we doing.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you Aldermen, yeah, he would be the better person to answer that question I would say. Alright, anything else? Also in attendance is Alderman Richard Dowd, with us tonight. OK, at this time we will open up the meeting to public comment. I see Mr. Mark McCabe. Do you wish to speak to the Board?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark McCabe Good evening Board of Aldermen, thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Yeah it is your choice, if you wish sir.

Mr. McCabe I am happy to answer any questions. I know my lovely wife Rita has been in contact with some of you already previously regarding our request. And if there are any questions, I am happy to help. She's actually, we are at our store up on Amherst Street, our Sub Zero Nitrogen Ice cream Store and she's doing a science presentation for a bunch of Girl Scouts. So she will jump in here as soon as she can.

Chairman O'Brien

OK. Mr. McCabe are you capable just to give us a brief overview how this will help your business and why you seek these changes?

Mr. McCabe Yes sir, happy to do that. We are moving our location here from Amherst Street down to the corner of Main and Water, across from Enterprise Bank and alongside if you will Darrel's Music Hall. And we have no location where we can receive deliveries of our liquid nitrogen or Cisco trucks. Presently there are two handicap parking spaces alongside the building on the Water Street side and we don't want to impinge on those. If we could have the forward one, which I guess would be furthest east re-designated for us to use as a loading zone, there's a receiving door where we will bring our products in right where the rear of that location is or that parking spot. Our concern is if we asked you to designate the one in spot, we might not be able to or our delivery services might get boxed in by another vehicle and might not be able to provide delivery services and that's why we asked for the one more forward on the hill, if you will of Water Street.

Chairman O'Brien

Alright. That's it? All set Mr. McCabe.

Mr. McCabe

Yes sir, I believe so. If there are any other questions I would be happy to answer.

Alderman Lopez

Another point of order Mr. Chair, did Mr. McCabe give his address.

Mr. McCabe Thank you sir, I appreciate it, that's 83 Main, but the delivery access door is actually on the Water Street side, it's right on the corner of Main and Water.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah I know the address of the business. Typically when someone makes public comment we get their address for the record of them, themselves.

Mr. McCabe I appreciate the correction sir.

Alderman Schmidt

And your home address is?

Mr. McCabe 319 Mammoth Road, Pelham, New Hampshire. Thank you.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you very much.

Chairman O'Brien

And thank you Alderman Lopez. You are going to get elevated in my parliamentarian one of these days, you are gonna do it.

Alderman Lopez

I'm your Vice Chair, I'm watching.

Chairman O'Brien

You are doing a fine job, thank you. I have the best Vice Chair and the Clerk.

Alderman Lopez

I put the "vice" in Vice Chair.

Chairman O'Brien

Alright very good, thank you Mr. McCabe. Anybody else that has public comment?

COMMUNICATIONS - None

PETITIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

O-21-061

Endorsers: Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Patricia Klee

CHANGING THE LOCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACE ON WATER STREET

MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE BY ROLL CALL

ON THE QUESTIONChairman O'Brien

Ok the motion is for final passage. Any discussion on the motion? Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

Alderman Jette did point out that in reading the Ordinance he was not certain that it did what the McCabe's were looking for. So could maybe Director Cummings comment on that?

Chairman O'Brien

Yes, I did have a very brief discussion with Director Cummings, he is aware of that. But Director Cummings, would you like to answer that question?

Director Cummings

Yes happy too and I am going to need to double check what I am about to say. But my belief is that what the thought process may have been is Ordinance 21-050 and/or Ordinance 21-051 as amended what we will refer to as the so-called Jette Amendment, allowed for the Mayor to adjust the location and timeframes of the 15 minute parking and/or add or create additional parking as necessary. I think the thought process was is if they were to move the handicap parking spot back, then you'd be able to create the 15 minute parking on the two upper lots at the corner of what would be Water and Main Street to essentially be able to provide what the business owner would be looking for as well as to create some additional parking for the general public.

Chairman O'Brien

Director Cummings, I do have a questions. Do you see any objections to put that down to pen and ink to paper by making an amendment to that to clearly specify or do you think those other amendments, ordinances or resolutions cover it?

Director Cummings

Well what I would recommend is that you proceed with this current piece of Legislation to move the handicap spot. I think everyone recognizes that the handicap spot needs to be moved back. If for some reason the other adopted pieces of Legislations/Ordinances don't seem to cover or get what needs to be done, then we would file an additional piece of Legislation to create the 15 minute parking.

Chairman O'Brien

Very good. Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

I am somewhat flabbergasted that we somehow missed the fact that we gave the Mayor the opportunity to permanently move parking spaces around and I think we should probably address that. So this works for now because we have the barriers up and it'll definitely get them opening on time and all that kind of stuff. But I was not under the impression that was any kind of a permanent change and I thought that was what the owners were looking for here. In the interest of (inaudible) because I believe Sub Zero is due to open like next month and I want to encourage that, I agree with Director Cummings that we should move forward. But I am actually alarmed that there was that understanding that you could move – especially handicap spaces – I didn't think we could move those around at all.

I have had constituent concerns that we have reduced handicap parking and I basically have been telling people that as far as I count, none of them are reduced and we haven't done anything of the kind. So I agree with ...

(Overlapping conversation)

Chairman O'Brien

Yeah there's another story to that so I will recognize Director Cummings, thank you.

Director Cummings

So just to clarify a couple of things, 1) the Legislation that I just cited that was passed, there is a sunset provision of November 15; 2) no handicap spaces have been eliminated thus far but was has happened, and Alderman Lopez is absolutely correct, we have had to move some of those handicap spaces around so they weren't in the traditionally common thought of handicap spaces. The Legislation before you would permanently move the handicap spaces that are on Water Street back down, a little bit further down the block.

Chairman O'Brien

And Director Cummings, for everybody's knowledge, to have back to back handicap spaces such as we have on Water Street is somewhat of an anomaly. We don't really see that much in the City at all. So by separating them, may entice the public more and grant people of another area more handicap access, correct.

Director Cummings

That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

To your point, Mr. Chair, it's actually pretty undesirable because they are on a hill so people with wheelchairs have to get out and then roll up a hill, I would love to move those. I didn't realize that we were moving them though because I had been telling constituents that they weren't being moved. I did a visual inspection of where the handicap spaces were and I hadn't seen any blocked off, but I personally should never plan on visual anything. Like I said, this is news to me, but that's my oversight; no pun intended. But I think we should probably, at some point and on this Committee just to make sure that we are in the loop on all of this, have a summary of changes that are made when they happen at these meetings. If Director Cummings is willing just to say, for example, like this, we have a restaurant opening we need to move things around, we did this. We initiated this but if it has to happen elsewhere, it would be good to be in the loop on that, just so that we can ahead of any concerns.

Chairman O'Brien

Very good. Alderman Lopez your point is very well taken. I like to make sure that we do take care of members of our community, our friends who are handicapped that they do have parking spaces. But with that in mind, Alderman Lopez, I will charge you to take a look where it is your Ward and I think we can work with Director Cummings going forward with this.

But I think to assist our friend here, Mr. McCabe and to welcome him to the downtown, I think basically I would look to support this as this is written right now, it will free up so that they will be able to receive their supplies for their business. So tonight we can go a little bit farther into solving the problem for them and we can address the other issues at another meeting.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah I 100% agree and I am speaking to my own activity so that the public knows that it was an oversight on my part; I hadn't thought we had moved any of these. So again, if Director Cummings gives us a heads up when he moves them, I am not going to try to take responsibility for noticing that they moved, because I didn't even notice that this had happened. So I'd rather that we are on top of it and that we are working collaboratively. Again, fully in favor of this move particularly and those particular handicap spots, even the curb on that particular area is pretty steep. So probably we can do better moving those handicap spaces to elsewhere anyway.

Chairman O'Brien

Any other members of the Committee have any input? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you Mr. Chairman. As I was preparing for tonight's meeting and looking at the thread of emails that Mrs. McCabe had sent and responses to her. What the McCabe's were looking for, correct me if I am wrong Mr. McCabe, what they were looking for was to provide a loading zone in front of the side door to their building. There's a door on Water Street that provides access to their restaurant and also the Espresso Pizza. And what this proposed Ordinance does it doesn't provide for a loading zone. What it does is it moves the handicap parking space. I also learned that from looking at their emails, I see that the McCabe's looking at the ground, if you look at it, there are two handicap parking spots there with the wheelchair symbol painted on the ground on the asphalt in two spots. The current Ordinance does not provide for two handicap spaces. The current Ordinance only provides for one. So what is marked on the ground is inconsistent with how our current ordinance – the current ordinance provides for a handicap spot between 217 feet from Mechanic and 237 feet from Mechanic Street. When you measure that, the two handicap parking spots that are currently painted on the ground are not within those measurements. That would provide for a handicap spot closer to Main Street than those two handicap spots are currently as painted on the ground.

I spoke to Attorney Clarke who drafted this and she said that Wayne Husband, the Traffic Engineer, had pointed that out to her as well. So I think what this amendment to our ordinance this does it relocates the one parking, the one handicap parking spot not two but the one, it relocates it closer to Mechanic Street and would provide for two metered spaces closer to Main Street. So when Director Cummings says that he thinks because of the authority we granted the Mayor, I think he said that they could provide for 15 minute parking spots, that is not a loading zone and I don't know if Mr. McCabe or the McCabe's understand what we are doing and whether or not providing for 15 minute parking spots which would be available for the public, whether that accomplishes his desire to have a loading zone. A loading zone is not addressed in this proposed ordinance. Loading zones are in Section 71 and they provide for no parking between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. except for people who are dropping off.

I did notice that there is a loading zone provided for on the other side of Water Street, the north side of Water Street along Darrel's Music Store and I don't know if that loading zone would enable the McCabe's to service, you know they'd have to, whoever is delivering would be able to park in that loading zone on the north side of Water Street. I don't know if they'd have to cross the street, you know?

Alderman Lopez

I don't know about that Alderman Jette.

Chairman O'Brien

Excuse me Alderman Lopez, Alderman Jette has the floor.

Alderman Jette

So I don't know if that would accommodate them. I am not saying – I am just interested in hearing all of us Mr. McCabe, what your reaction is.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Jette, that question has to go through the Chair.

Alderman Jette

Yes, through you Mr. Chairman, of course.

Chairman O'Brien

Yeah we will allow Mr. McCabe to speak briefly but right now this is a Committee Meeting so the priority goes to members of the Committee. So Alderman Lopez did you have something you wanted to say?

Alderman Lopez

I do not want to intervene with what Mr. McCabe is going to say. I just would be extremely concerned about having anybody unloading anything and crossing the street repeatedly in that area. That intersection is not our best designed one. It is coming up from the hill, there are people coming around the corner, multiple different directions. So I wouldn't necessarily recommend that. And then anticipating what Mr. McCabe is likely to say, I think while he was describing the loading zone, he doesn't necessarily want to reduce the number of parking spaces that are adjacent to his restaurant. So he may use it as a loading zone and it may be beneficial for example to be like 90 minute parking or something like that so that somebody doesn't park there all day. But I don't think he actually wanted to restrict all parking there because that would potentially hurt the access to his business.

Chairman O'Brien

Yes. Thank you Alderman Lopez. That's really to the heart of the particular matter. Unfortunately it was left out of this current ordinance. It seems to be included into something else. But what are the pros and the cons of a loading zone? Well the pros is it would be a place that a truck could go; but just the truck only to unload materials. It's not meant for the owner of the facility to park their car; it's not meant for even the customers to park there, it is only for the brief loading and offloading. There are other multiple businesses that are there on that particular block. So with parking the way that it is, how can we remove this spot, make it back open again yet keep it to be viable to both the Sub Zero, Espresso Pizza and everything. It's why I think we should probably contemplate looking at the 15 minutes. That would mean that it would be available to a truck that comes in, the driver would be able to go when the spot opens up, do his delivery, take off. A quick customer can go in, 15 minute limit. It would be constantly circular for all to basically use it so why I am kind of leaning to that. So at this particular time, generally we have the open discussion but I will allow – Mr. McCabe are you still there?

Mr. McCabe Yes sir, I am.

Chairman O'Brien

I'll let you speak on to this from what you have heard so far.

Mr. McCabe Yes I appreciate it too. Alderman Lopez points out a very good point. Having handicap spots on a hill does no good for anybody that's handicapped. And because I am a career military guy I will offer this, if you go further west on Water Street on that same line of parking, the very last section has a fire hydrant that is blocked off, but that last spot would be better suited to be the handicap spot, because then anybody in a wheelchair could immediately roll around that fire hydrant and the telephone pole and come up on the curb and utilize the curb there. There is no ramp on that hill for anybody handicapped to access on to the sidewalk sir. So I came with an alternative for you because one of the points I heard was, we don't to minimize handicapped parking. Rita and I, this is one of those things that is kind of dear to our heart, we don't want to impact negatively on the handicapped community by any means at all. We just thought we were requesting because the forward one, the tail of a delivery truck would be basically right at our door. And if somebody was in, had encroached further out of the second one, then the driver could pull forward, just inch forward a little further to the east and still be able to open up their rear doors.

So I appreciate also the consideration of a 15 minute delivery time. I don't know if 15 minutes is enough but I sense from hearing your discussion that 15 minutes is probably something that is in the laws or what not in the writings. And I have to give credit to the local Police Department; I don't believe for a minute they are unreasonable. If there's a delivery truck delivering, I don't think if they are there 20 minutes to 30 minutes, I don't think they are going to negatively impact them. So I give credit to the leadership of the Nashua Police Department as well and the Traffic Control. So we are not necessarily opposed to that either, you know? I appreciate the consideration and it is true yes, Darrel's Music Shop across the corner does have a delivery area there and for the very reason that Mr. Lopez pointed out, it is a real dangerous corner. Even when I have used the one, there's one metered parking spot there, I am always aware of cars coming from across the street by the Library and darting across, dodging cars that are coming off Water. And the ones coming south off of Main onto Water, it is a dangerous corner. But either way, I appreciate the consideration, my wife and I both appreciate the consideration of your Board and I am sure in the end, and quite frankly we appreciate the support of you wanting to see us succeed down on Main Street.

The Greater Nashua, they've wanted us down there for a long time. We really have a wonderful product. We give back to the community a lot. So we try to engage as much as possible. So we appreciate all of your consideration. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you Mr. McCabe and I am going to try awful hard not to let my love of ice cream influence my decision here. But Alderman Lopez in just one second. But it seems, Mr. McCabe you do have a grasp. When we come to the vote it is my hope that we will change the handicap parking with the weather eye of looking in the future, you seem to be in agreement with the 15 minute which will allow and I think I can give you some assurances with Director Cummings that the people that we have working for the City, Parking Enforcement, if they do see a truck actively off loading, I think they will completely understand. If it is a 20 minute off load, I believe nobody from parking enforcement is going to be there with a stop watch. (audio cuts out)

Alderman Schmidt

Oh you went back on mute, sir.

Chairman O'Brien

There we go, it just did it all by itself. But I think it would satisfy your needs and also the needs of your customers in attendance and everything. So thank you Alderman Lopez for patiently waiting.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah no problem. So I wanted to check in with Director Cummings regarding the 15 minute increments, while that is what is provided for in the Jette Amendment. I think there's other products offered in terms of parking zones. And I also wanted to reiterate for Mr. McCabe that the Police are good at a lot of things but Director Cummings oversees the Parking Enforcement Department so talk to him. But Director Cummings the length of time, is 15 minutes ultimately if we choose to amend this into a more permanent form are there other categories?

Director Cummings

If I may, Mr. Chair.

Chairman O'Brien

Yes, you may.

Director Cummings

To Alderman Lopez's point, yes there are other categories we could look at. I believe the best course of action right now is for us to look at this 15 minute scenario; let's test that out. We are going to have to make a permanent solution and if we have the ability to look at this, watch it, see how it is working and then file an additional piece of Legislation maybe for the early fall type timeframe to make this permanent or to, at that time, change it, we will at least have some data to go off of. And I think that was the theory or the thought process behind this. The Legislation before you is a combination of working between the Engineering Department and the Parking Department here in the City because they looked at it. They went out onsite a couple of times to see how best to address this issue and they thought that the language before you was the best way to try to solve everyone's problem.

Alderman Lopez

If I may ask one final question of Director Cummings?

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely.

Alderman Lopez

Regarding the Riverfront Planning I believe it is 2 or 3 years down the road. Some of the plans say that we may or may not address the traffic flow over there; some of them say that we don't. But there's nothing that is going to be happening in the immediate near future that will affect that particular intersection, right? Because for people who are not fully imagining the area, it is also where the Le Parc de Notre Renaissance Francaise comes out, that's actually an active road that is used by Clock Tower residents. And then on the other side, Mechanic Street also dumps onto it. So there's like an informal intersection just before the intersection.

Director Cummings

If I may Mr. Chair.

Chairman O'Brien

Yes absolutely. Excuse me just for one minute. I do see Alderman Tencza has joined us so the Clerk can make recommendations or a note. Director Cummings, excuse me, thank you.

Director Cummings

Yes thank you Mr. Chair, yes Alderman Lopez is correct. We will be thinking about or contemplating implementing a design change on Water Street a few years from now; nothing imminent. And the current design does not call for any type of loss of parking on to Water Street. That's a commitment that we gave to the abutting businesses in and around the area but will it be redesigned and laid out different? Yes there is that tendency; what they are looking at is head in type parking. But that's probably a conversation for another day.

Chairman O'Brien

Alright, further questions by members of the Committee? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So Director Cummings, the current proposed Ordinance would locate the handicap spot, relocate the handicap spot to 155 feet from Mechanic Street to 175 feet so it provides for a 20 foot parking spot. As I try to manipulate my measuring device here on the City GIS thing it looks like that would locate the parking spot so as I am looking at it, it looks like from the hydrant on Water Street, going east from Mechanic, there are driveways and then there is a hydrant. This proposed location of the handicap would be the third spot up going east towards Main Street. What do you think of Mr. McCabe's suggestion that the handicap spot be actually the first spot in line closest to the hydrant which would allow easier drive in access to someone handicapped and it is a flatter area? Do you think that would make any sense rather than two up from there, through the Chairman?

Director Cummings

Mr. Chairman if I may.

Chairman O'Brien

You may.

Director Cummings

I am having a hard time understanding where the hydrant is. I am not seeing where you are referencing the hydrant. But are you essentially saying that moving the handicap parking spot to the most easterly point on Water Street so it would be closest to Main Street. Is that what I am hearing the suggestion is?

Alderman Jette

No just the opposite, moving it further west away from Main Street. So I don't know if you are looking at the GIS?

Director Cummings

Yes, I am.

Alderman Jette

I don't know how to share my screen with you. Are you looking at an aerial view?

Director Cummings

Yes.

Alderman Jette

Could you, yes? OK. So you see where Mechanic Street is. And as you go towards Main Street which would be easterly you can see there are two cars parked off the road in a private parking lot. So the hydrant is located right near there and so the first car that you see there would be the spot that I am talking about, closest to the hydrant. Mr. McCabe made the point about and I think Alderman Lopez did as well, that for handicapped people a flatter area is more beneficial to them for entering and exiting their vehicles. And so the spot that is closest to Mechanic Street which is also closest to the hydrant would be the flattest.

Director Cummings

So I am understanding what you are saying. So I just would want to double check to make sure, is that area currently a legal parking space right now?

Alderman Jette

Yeah, not where the hydrant is of course, you know, there's no parking in front of the hydrant. But yeah as I am looking at the GIS Map. You see the two cars that are off road.

Director Cummings

Yes.

Alderman Jette

Up against the building there. So that car that is closest to the street kind of a gray looking car, just to the left of that, that little yellow thing, that's the hydrant there. Whatever the restriction is from the distance that you have to stay away from the hydrant, wherever that is, that's where the legal parking begins. I think there is a car parked there, that gray car right there.

Director Cummings

So it is essentially where the gray car is, you are suggesting?

Alderman Jette

I think so yes. Whatever the legal spot is closest to the hydrant, make that the handicap spot so for the reasons that Alderman Lopez and Mr. McCabe mentioned. And then the rest of it can be the regular meters or the places closest to Main Street would the 15 minute.

Director Cummings

Yeah understood. I understand what you are saying and I mean, I would want to double check with the Engineering Department here in the City. We have the Parking Department on as well so I just want to take a moment and make sure we recognize Jill Stansfield the City's Parking Manager. Subject to them being OK with that change, I am not foreseeing any issues as to why there would be a problem, again I don't foresee any problems with that as what has been suggested.

Chairman O'Brien

Right and correct me Director Cummings, we can change that as we move along anyways, correct?

Director Cummings

I mean I can look into that if that is the pleasure of the body.

Chairman O'Brien

Right now, the issue at hand is we have a business that wants to open. They need an area designated so they can receive their goods. So therefore I think we need to take care of that. I think we can adjust the parking, the handicap additional space as we move farther down the road.

Director Cummings

So to that point, Mr. Chair, what I would suggest then is we move forward with the current Legislation as is, as we are studying the 15 minute parking spaces a little bit to the east at that area, we will when we bring in the final product piece of Legislation, if it is satisfactory to the Parking and Engineering Departments, we will then finally shift the handicap spot further to the area that Alderman Jette is suggesting.

Chairman O'Brien

Very good. Alright. I think we got it, something we all can vote on unless somebody has something different. Therefore, let the Clerk please call the roll?

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Schmidt,
Alderman Jette, Alderman Tencza 5

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Chairman O'Brien

OK motion carried and good luck to the McCabe clan on the opening of their new business on Main Street. I am sure everybody would love to get a Sub Zero ice cream.

Mr. McCabe We are super excited. We are super excited, thank you so very much everyone.

Chairman O'Brien

Looking forward to meeting you in person.

Alderman Lopez

It sounds really cool.

Mr. McCabe Yes sir, my honor. Have a wonderful evening.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you, you too sir. Alright, new business resolutions?

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-21-135

Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess

AUTHORIZING A FIRST AMENDMENT TO PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT FOR REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 141-143 BURKE STREET (MAP 11, LOT 158)

MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASAGE BY ROLL CALL

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman O'Brien

Ok I am going to recognize at this time Director Cummings. Can you present this to the Board, please?

Director Cummings

Yes, I'd be happy to Mr. Chair. For the record, Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development and if I may I am bringing up my screen.

Chairman O'Brien

Yeah I spoke to Jeff; you should be all set.

Director Cummings

Thank you. So essentially what you are going to see now is my screen that shows the majority of what the amendment before you speaks to which is really creating an easement area that's both beneficial to the future owner of the Burke Street Warehouse Building and then the City of Nashua who is retaining, as you know, some of the original land for the expansion of the Waste Water Treatment Plant. So what the current amendment speaks to is – you have my screen up, you will see this dash line here – this dash line represents an existing, ancient easement that is a cross access easement that really ends right in through in here and terminates basically in what is right now kind of a green field type of area. It doesn't really connect into Saw Mill Road. That has been something that everyone has wanted to address.

And then in addition to that you have this warehouse which the prospective buyer has represented that due to how we laid out this site, they are having some issues with making some turning movements for larger type trucks as they look to – and you can see my cursor – what they are looking to do is to back into the warehouse in a swinging motion like this and this is going to become problematic for them because they don't have the radius necessary to be able to make that swing. So what they have asked for is an ability to essentially encroach in this area of ours which is the City's new land that we subdivided this about 2 ½ acres, this is the property line. So what was developed was what I think are really cool and innovative solution where we are basically, this easement, this ancient easement you get reconnected to back into in the top up here but you basically create a truck route in through here but that will also double as a route for other people to have the cross access easement, particularly our Waste Water Treatment Plant to be able to access through here and be able to go up along through the park. And then they are going to additionally create a municipal parking field for us, which was the original idea of the 2 ½ acres, was to be able to create parking spaces for us up in this area here which would free up some parking spaces to the south that would allow for an expansion to occur for the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

So this is all what has been developed over the last few months as we have been working through the final due diligence stages to hopefully have this property sold and we have a tentative closing date set for the end of May. So I am asking for your approval this evening on this amendment. It is a win/win solution for everyone and it really helps us move one step forward to disposing this property and ultimately moving forward with the overall citywide goals that we have. I'll stop sharing my screen right now. I just wanted to visually show you what it is that is being contemplated this evening.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

I like the cut through for City services. I mean not only for the general sense of cooperative neighborhoodness, but the energy efficiency, it is a little bit fuel efficient. Our natural gas trucks are powered with natural gas, contributed by Alderman O'Brien generation I think. So I see this as a win/win for everybody.

Chairman O'Brien

You are going to miss us boomers.

Alderman Lopez

Thank you for the landfills.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Thank you, through you Mr. Chairman if I could ask Director Cummings?

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely, thank you Alderman.

Alderman Jette

The proposed parking, who is that going to be for, who do you anticipate is going to be parking there?

Director Cummings

That would be for the future expansion of the Water Treatment Plant, exclusively for that use not for the use of the Burke Street Warehouse that we are selling.

Alderman Jette

So you anticipate employees of the Waste Water Treatment Plant parking there?

Director Cummings

I mean I don't know how many visitors that site gets, there may be some ancillary visitor type parking as well. But really, truly it is to move the parking field and the parking that accommodates the Waste Water Treatment Plant employees up a little bit further north so you can expand in and around the Waste Water Treatment Plant right now.

Alderman Jette

OK and if I could ask another question, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman O'Brien

Follow up.

Alderman Jette

So when you shared your screen you showed that the City would be conveying an easement to the purchaser of the property and the purchaser in turn would be granting the City an easement over part of its property. So the resulting, I think it was in red dashed lines, is that going to be a street, is that going to be available to the public? Would anybody be able to drive through there?

Director Cummings

I do not believe it is going to be public it is an easement, it is a cross access easement essentially that was created back when this area was redeveloped with many different owners as I understand it. I don't know if it was one parcel at one time but it has been subdivided over the years and there's an association in place here. And so the members of the association, as I understand it, have the rights to cross the easement in which the Waste Water Treatment plant, i.e. the City of Nashua has that ability.

Alderman Jette

OK so you anticipate the City having the use of that but not the public, it wouldn't be a public street, it wouldn't be accessed by the public. OK. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Dowd?

Alderman Dowd

Yes, just a couple things. One, when we write the easement, if for some reason we ever needed that land for the Waste Water Treatment Plant, does this last forever or are there escape routes if we needed to move that easement? Question through you Mr. Chair to Tim Cummings.

Chairman O'Brien

Yes, Director Cummings?

Director Cummings

Thank you Mr. Chair. As I have learned, nothing is forever in real estate. But I do want to be clear there is no sunset provision, there is no termination date. This is an easement, it is not a license agreement. I am saying all of that to make it clear that it is not going to be an easy effort to change it in the future which is one of the reasons why we really took our time to map out what the municipal parking field would look like so we could accommodate our goals because we know that that was really important to do as we were thinking about the future planning of this area. We are thinking not just 5, 10 years down the road but 50 years down the road. So we think we have preserved the City's interest as much as possible.

Alderman Dowd

Follow up question?

Chairman O'Brien

Yes, you may.

Alderman Dowd

Through you to Director Cummings again, that easement which I assume would be paved, seems to run right through that little building. My question is A) does that building still exist; B) has anyone ever opened that building to see what was inside because when we were originally looking at Burke Street nobody knew what was in there and C) if it is going to be torn down for this right of way who is bearing the cost of tearing it down.

Director Cummings

Thank you Mr. Chair, if I may. All excellent questions. It will be torn down, the cost of that will be on the perspective purchaser. It will essentially, once it is torn down, become an area that will be maintained as an access way, you know, as a driveway for lack of a better description.

Alderman Dowd

And one additional follow up question which I didn't hear answered, do we know what it inside that building and if it's contaminated material who is responsible for getting rid of it?

Director Cummings

Again, it is the perspective purchaser who is going to be demoing that building and the perspective purchaser will be opening it up.

Alderman Dowd

OK.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yeah thank you Mr. Chairman. I would like to point out to Alderman Dowd's question, the easement that we are granting, I am looking at the language, 'the City hereby grants to 141 property owner a permanent, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive easement for purposes of pedestrian and vehicular ingress and egress and right of passage'. So I am not the City's Attorney but I would say that that means that the purchaser is going to have an easement over that property for pedestrian and vehicular ingress and egress in perpetuity. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Further comments, members of the Board? I would just say, Director Cummings, my history on the Fire Department, I remember that property was Ingersoll Rand and IMCO, they used to build air compressors, paper making, milling products, they did a lot of stuff over the years. And Alderman Dowd, yes I have been in that building but we will keep what is in there a mystery. But I used to work out of the Crown Hill Station, been all over the property. Seeing no other further questions, would the Clerk please call the roll?

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Schmidt, Alderman Jette, Alderman Tencza	5
Nay:	0

MOTION CARRIEDTABLED IN COMMITTEEChairman O'Brien

There's been no announcement of anything to take, anything at this particular time, off the table. And I was approached by Director Cummings, that he does have some additional information that he would like to present to members of the Board and to the public. So at this time, I will recognize Director Cummings, if you want to give us updates and some of the goings-ons please.

O-20-004

Endorsers: Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright

ALLOWING PERMITTED OVERNIGHT ON-STREET PARKING ON EIGHTH STREET

- Tabled at 2/26/20 meeting

O-20-006

Endorsers: Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman-at-Large Linda Harriott-Gathright

ALLOWING PERMITTED OVERNIGHT ON-STREET PARKING ON A PORTION OF PRESCOTT STREET

- Tabled at 2/26/20 meeting

O-20-032

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Brandon Laws
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman Skip Cleaver
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderwoman Elizabeth Lu

REDUCING THE FINE FOR OVERNIGHT PARKING VIOLATIONS

- Tabled at 10/28/20 meeting

Director Cummings

Yes, thank you Mr. Chair. I asked for just a few minutes of the body's time here this evening to have an informal, roundtable type conversation. One, to fill you in on the various developments that happened in the downtown area and then also just to briefly talk with the group about some the development that is in the pipeline. So first and foremost, we are still moving forward with the School Street Project. I have actually a meeting with the perspective purchaser of that property and the developer on Friday. He's working towards getting his financing and as I understand it there's no issue there and he's looking to move forward with that project which we are looking forward to.

What has been referred to as the "Indian Head Bank Building" at the corner of Temple and Main Street, an abandoned, 100% unoccupied building as of right now, looks to be converted into about 17 apartments and that's being done by Brady Sullivan. So we are interested in looking forward to see that development occur. We have the Transit Center here in Nashua that is run by the City through Director Marchant, looking to be reconstructed. That's a smaller construction project but nonetheless they are looking to reconstruct the Transit Center sometime this summer. They are going to be looking to hopefully get underway by late summer and August-ish, type timeframe.

Performing Arts Center, I'll give a more formal status update on this to the body in writing but just so everyone knows since I am just doing just a quick update on various things in terms of development in the downtown, the demolition has been completed in the front part of the building, the former Alec Shoe Showroom area. The more historic building, the taller vertical building in the rear of the site that faces West Pearl Street has been demoed as well. Steel construction and foundation work will be starting next week. We will be realigning the construction safety area and the barriers once the demolition is 100% wrapped up which should be completed this week sometime. The project is on time, is on schedule and on budget.

As I continue moving down Main Street, the barriers are working out. They have been adjusted very minimally since what we did last year. We are trying to accommodate for bike lanes this year as some of you may or may not have seen but so far it has been working out well. I think outdoor dining will really kick into high gear sometime around now and I will be looking to have a conversation with the Board of Aldermen, but specifically the Infrastructure Committee, I am thinking sometime in June type timeframe as to if we want to have this type of layout for Main Street for future years. I've heard conversations and people have suggested that this is something that they may be interested in. I think that it would behoove us to have that conversation before we start our full parking study because I would like to give our consultant Desmond clear direction before we start the parking study, which we are tentatively looking to start sometime in August type timeframe. That is something that we were going to do prior to COVID and in consultation with our consultant, they have recommended that they start sometime again late summer / early fall call it an August type timeframe.

We have completed the overnight parking study that we conducted some community outreach on. I am going to be looking to have a meeting with at least this body and maybe the full Board of Aldermen, whatever the pleasure of this group is on the results of the overnight parking study, ideally sometime in the end of May. So maybe it is an Agenda item for discussion either for the Committee on Infrastructure or a Special Board of Aldermen meeting.

But what I would like to is have the consultant who did the report, Andy Hill, who I believe all of you have met, come in and give a formal presentation on the report that has been completed now. So I think just to kind of continue on with the timeline, that would be something that I would be looking for maybe at your next Infrastructure Committee Meeting.

And the finally as I want to round out my comments here and again I just wanted to kind of give everyone a very high level brief overview on the varying aspects within the downtown. I am getting approached more and more by private sector developers about the idea of providing some sort of tax incentive or some sort of tax abatement or tax relief on projects that are underway or being thought of to be going underway. And so I have been resistant to move forward in the direction of providing any type of tax relief. The City of Nashua has only done it once in the program that most people think of which is referred to as RSA 79E; that was for Cotton Mill Square Project done by local developer John Stabile, you know, an affordable housing project of about 100 units where he took an abandoned, 100% vacant factory building and converted into affordable housing units and market rate units along the riverfront.

So we have a couple buildings in the downtown that are nothing like that in terms of size, scale, scope or magnitude. And there are some folks who are suggested that the City should be providing a tax abatement for these folks if they were to develop the project or if they have already developed it as a thank you for them for doing taking that project on. I have counseled a lot of these people that that is not an appropriate usage of the program; it doesn't meet the spirit I believe where you need to have what is referred to as "substantial rehabilitation". I often point to the Cotton Mill Square Project as an example and what you are doing is just using empty space that you are not getting any rent on and you are actually, rightly so, trying to get as much money as you can converting it into useable space where you can get rent. And there is nothing wrong with that but the City shouldn't necessarily be looking to give up tax revenue, future tax revenue because you've decided to take on that type of private enterprise.

So anyway, I just wanted to make sure the group was aware of some of this and had a quick briefing on some of these items. And then I guess finally the Riverfront, we are moving forward with the riverfront design. I believe I was before this body a month or two or so ago giving a high level update. We have finished the preliminary design so I would be looking to come before you with the Engineering Team to give a more formal presentation of the preliminary design in much bigger detail or in much more depth than what I had done about 6 / 8 weeks ago now. And again, that would be something I would be looking to do in a June type timeframe.

So anyway, thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me the opportunity to just provide everyone a high level overview of various things that are happening in the downtown.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you, Director Cummings. We do have a couple questions from members of the Board. Would you be willing to take them.

Alderman Lopez

Yes.

Chairman O'Brien

Not you, Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

You didn't say anybody, I didn't know who you were looking at.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you Director Cummings. First on the list we have a caller from Dave Tencza.

Alderman Tencza

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Director Cummings, can you, on this idea of providing incentives, tax abatements for projects, how much are those developers willing to sort of show us their books or finances into the project to show that the project is not viable without those incentives? Is that part of their offer or are they just looking for the City to give them abatements when we can't really verify that they are needed to make the project economically viable?

Director Cummings

If I may Mr. Chairman? That's a great question. So it really depends on the development group and the developer, I can't speak for everyone. But I can tell you in a couple of circumstances I have had a couple of the developers actually say "no" they weren't going to be providing any type of financial background for me to evaluate to your point which makes it very difficult, because as I point out they are essentially asking us to become a financial partner with them and we should really be able to get a better understanding of the financial situation. So again to answer your question, some of the groups do not and refuse to provide that type of detail.

And then in fairness, a couple of the developers I've spoken to have freely admitted that there isn't a gap or problem making the project pencil, they actually have admitted they are getting a good, reasonable return of somewhere between 15% and 18% on their investment and they just are looking to get a little bit more. And so I pointed out to them that a 15% IRR is very reasonable for the market and if they get a little bit more at 18% they are doing well. But I could not, in good faith, recommend a tax incentive on someone who is already getting a 15% or 18% return. But nonetheless they have represented that to me but that still does not dissuade from doing their job, rightfully so of asking for more. Does that answer your question, Alderman Tencza?

Alderman Tencza

It does, thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

OK next in the queue is Alderman Dowd.

Alderman Dowd.

Yes, I had heard the possibility of considering, not that we are thinking one way or the other on it of tax incentives for people to build affordable housing for younger people. And that was because it is very difficult to make a profit building apartments or condos that younger people, first time buyers can afford. But that hasn't really gone anywhere. My personal opinion is on projects that are completed or already started, too late. If they went into the project thinking they were doing OK or did OK, we are not in a position to be giving tax abatements for that, we need all the tax money we can get based on now the State is pushing everything down to us. So that would be my opinion.

Director Cummings

Thank you Alderman Dowd.

Chairman O'Brien

Alright, next is Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

So I have two different topics that were covered in the overview and then a question for the end so I am just going to try to stick to what everybody else has been talking about and hopefully the Chair will circle back to me when it is more appropriate. But with regards to tax abatement or grants or other types of incentives for development, I am thinking specifically for example 243 Main Street. A whole bunch of empty storefronts in dire need of surface level redevelopment. It represents literally a blight on that area and that neighborhood and as far as the City's gateway to economic activity is. I don't just mean like last year where their front end of their building fell off, I mean there's literally been nothing in those end store fronts for quite a while and the insides really need a lot of renovating. That's one area where the City would benefit from having abandoned or very much underused properties on the street level expanded on.

And then it is no news to anybody but there is a downtown housing capacity shortage. Housing located downtown is walkable to buses, to hospitals, it is a resource to people with mobility issues that might need; elderly people, disabled, that kind of stuff. Same desirability that younger people have who want to live in walking distance of things might represent a necessity. There is some housing stock available for example above Fody's Restaurant and possibly above Martha's on the third floor. Both of those two examples are historic buildings that their full utilization is of benefit. Are we looking at any kind of targeted, how do we encourage these developers to do things and do we have any tools for them to walk through to see how other people are doing things?

Director Cummings

If I may Mr. Chair, thank you. There are some tools available. I would try to stay away from tax incentive, tax abatement type conversation as much as possible. But there are Federal Level Tax Credits for the two particular sites that you mentioned with the Historic Tax Credits where eligible costs can get up to a 20% reimbursement. That might be something that an owner would look at and again that is a Federal Program. At the local level, we are in the early stages of developing a housing trust fund. So if maybe one of these groups were to provide affordable housing and they were willing to make that unit available we could, in theory, use some housing trust fund to help with the conversion. You know, there's a lot that goes into that, you don't want to over subsidize a unit so you really need to be diligent if we went down that path.

My office does run a revolving loan fund which could be used for low interest type loans. The City does receive CDBG funds for HOME Funds which are typically used for affordable housing projects. So to answer your question, Alderman Lopez, there are various tools available. I actually am working with a group of MIT students right now, some Graduate Students under the stewardship of Professor Jeff Levine who is a planning consultant out of Portland, Maine who is again a Professor at MIT's School of Urban Planning actually to speak to this very issue where we are looking at how can we develop a public policy and we are not exactly sure which public policy that may be, or what that strategy is. But what we can do to help convert some of the empty, underutilized space on the second and third floor of buildings on Main Street into residential housing.

We are still a little early in that project but when the time comes, I'd love to bring it before you all and share the work that was done by some of these MIT students. They are going to be looking at some best practices across the country and they may be able to bring something to us that would be innovative and something for us to potentially pursue. So I think it is a conversation that we should be continuing.

Alderman Lopez

Mr. Chair, I can knock off another question if I can continue.

Chairman O'Brien

OK I've got Alderman Jette in the queue.

Alderman Lopez

I know I just want to ...

Chairman O'Brien

I was going to circle back but go ahead, go ahead.

Alderman Lopez

I appreciate it. So with regards to the Simon Street construction that was in the news recently, that's a much, much larger project, that's where maybe they may be able to pitch a better case for a housing fund than say a smaller development but they may also need more money. So where you have pluses or minus decision making, would it be possible with those students to perhaps consider making like a wizard of some type that you could click on, on the City's Economic Development Site as a tool to say which is good, which is bad, which is better, which is worse?

Director Cummings

Yeah we can look into that. I don't know if they have the skillset to do a wizard per se, but yeah we might be able to put something together.

Alderman Lopez

I programmed an app, if I can do it, anyone can.

Chairman O'Brien

We are all proud of you Alderman Lopez. Very good. Alderman Jette, please?

Alderman Jette

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Director Cummings you mentioned in your overview, you mentioned the barriers and when we authorized the placement of the barriers this year we gave the Mayor and we know that really meant you, the ability to make adjustments. I am wondering, I know I have heard, I know that you did make some adjustments down at the Water Street, Park Street, Main Street intersection which I know some of the people in that area were very appreciative of. I've also been contacted by the, and I don't know, I am assuming Alderman Lopez has as well, but retail businesses in the block between the Factory Street and Water Street on the west side of Main Street, that for example, Wingate's Pharmacy, Cardin's Jewelers, Avard's, a number of them there, you know the barber shop basically saying, well last year we understood the restaurants were really in difficult straights and we wanted to support them and so we went along with the barriers but in effect, those barriers have cut us off, I am speaking and quoting them, saying that they have cut off our customers from being able to – like the pharmacy – you know people stopping in front of the pharmacy, going in and getting their prescription. The fellow at Wingate's, Gary Wingate said that he had spoken to several of his neighbors who kind of felt the same way and, in fact, one of the restaurants San Francisco Kitchen said there's a new owner, I didn't know there was a new owner there, but she said that she had more space than she really needed and would be willing to give up some of that space. Have those people approached you, is there anything you can do to provide the retail establishments with more accessibility on the Main Street? Through you Mr. Chairman, of course.

Director Cummings

Thank you and Mr. Chair if I may.

Chairman O'Brien

Yes, you may.

Director Cummings

So the points are very good points that are being made right now and are not new. These are all the same points that we have heard for quite a while. Ultimately it is going to be your decision as to whether you want to continue moving forward with the Main Street laid out differently. I do think there was the time, last year in particular, where the thought process was we need to help the restaurants and help Main Street in general by that point by allowing for more outdoor dining and more space for people to be on the sidewalk or outside and not necessarily indoors. From there it seems to be the conversation has evolved in some areas and maybe not everywhere, that we should be continuing this, putting aside the outdoor dining concept and just moving forward with a narrower Main Street because it creates a more viable and vibrant dynamic environment. And I don't know if everyone has come to that conclusion yet, but as COVID starts to pass and wane, and we get back to somewhat normalcy whatever that may be, we are going to need to have that type of a conversation. And it's ultimately the values that we hold as a community.

I would suggest, from a merchant's perspective and particularly that block and we've made this suggestion and we've offered differing strategies to help but there's a Water Street surface parking lot right in the rear of all those buildings that they would have the best direct access to a parking lot. So when I hear comments about well should they get parking right on Main Street again, I guess I would throw it back and say, well what are they doing to try to enhance their parking on Water Street? And what about the surface street parking lot that is right there behind all of their storefronts? Let's utilize that and that I think would be a more appropriate place of trying to get parking, increasing supply, improving the type of parking, whatever that may be than just to go with the easier or more convenient solution of trying to provide the parking spaces on Main Street.

I think everyone, understandably so, would say that you want to have parking right in front of you. As a good New Englander, I understand that. But I think that block in particular is blessed to have parking right in front of them, it's just not out their front door it is out their back door. And so they just need to maybe think of it a little bit differently and maybe we have an obligation of helping them think of it a little differently. But that's very specific to that block. I think in general, we really need to have the conversation about what type of Main Street we want to have; whether we want a more pedestrian Main Street. And, if so, there's going to be those types of tradeoffs. And I think it is a conversation that I welcome and is one to be had and hopefully we will have it sometime over the next few weeks. I defer to others on when they would like to have it but I'd like to have it sometime before we start the parking study, because the worse thing I could do is mispend City money having the parking consultant study something that ultimately is not implemented. So I am going to need the clear charge as to what folks would want to do before I feel comfortable cutting the parking consultant loose.

Alderman Jette

OK, Mr. Chairman if I could follow up.

Chairman O'Brien

Sure, absolutely.

Alderman Jette

So the other thing you talked about and you just mentioned it again, the future of Main Street and whether or not we want to develop a more pedestrian friendly Main Street. And I don't know the answer, what answer I would give to that without considering what the alternatives would be. But it has occurred to me that it's not just do we go back to the Main Street we had with I think had like 7 lanes and provide a thoroughfare, how do you get from the south end of Main Street to north end as fast as possible. I know I don't think I want that. But the alternative right now is a two lane Main Street with barriers pretty much eliminating on-street parking. Another alternative would be to narrow, instead of having 7 lanes maybe have 4 or 5 lanes, 2 travel lanes and one lane in each direction and a middle lane for turning and then parking lanes on either side of that. And instead of barriers, you know, extend – I know this is a lot more expensive than what we would be doing right away – but eventually extending the Main Street sidewalks out so instead of eliminating the parking lane and a travel lane we would just eliminate a parking lane and extend the sidewalk out there to provide more pedestrian access and possibly restaurant seating.

I think in the future, hopefully after COVID passes, the restaurants won't be so dependent on outdoor dining. So I can envision a Main Street that would be narrow as far as travel lanes, you know, just a north and a south lane but parking on either side so that the retail establishments, other than the restaurants, would be able to provide access to their customers. So I don't think it is a one way or the other, I think there are some variations that we could explore.

Director Cummings

May I Mr. Chair?

Chairman O'Brien

Sure, absolutely.

Director Cummings

I think you are right on Alderman Jette. I think there could be a hybrid approach, I think that's all going to be need to be studied. I think we have some limitations right now just based on the temporary nature of what we are doing. And so if we were to move more towards a semi-permanent type solution, we might be able to study it and do some things right now that we are not able to address like left hand turn lanes so we have some left hand turn lanes in some places that we have to keep right now. But to your point, if we were to maybe look at laying it out 100% completely different in a more semi-permanent type scenario, we might be able to address some of that, as well as there's going to be the big question of do we want to take on this cost. And I think it is a fair point that we really need to kind of ask ourselves, how long can we continue to roll out these barriers, this temporary measure and not move more towards a semi-permanent and then ultimately to a more permanent type of solution.

And there is a conversation to be had with the community on that. And I think it is one that we should have because the one thing I don't want to keep doing and I have had some long conversations with the Engineering Department about this, is we don't want to keep redesigning and relaying out Main Street every year. You know, we can't keep doing that, we have to agree on a layout that works and we are going to have to leave it, hopefully in some way, for a period of time. Because the redesigning of Main Street on a yearly basis I don't think is a good policy that we should be pursuing in the long run. So I really think that we should be looking at – what I suggest is that this is a temporary measure, you know and then we will move more towards a semi-permanent type measure and a more permanent type measure if folks want to change things again moving forward and maybe you assign a certain amount of cost to each one of those projects to kind of slowly move it forward so it is not one big cost all at once. These are all ideas that we really need to have some plan for.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

Just some comments on what was said and then my final topic I guess. So the barriers and the make up of Main Street in the past has been an error to try to do the entire Main Street at the same time. The sidewalks looked great at the end but we almost murdered most of the existing restaurants when we did that. So we would want to be conscious of exactly how ambitious we are at looking at change. We could blow the problem up so large that we cannot find a solution. Additionally, there is timing to consider. It is a difficult prospect to sell to the taxpayers right now that we need to pay more consultants while we are laying off numerous City staff members and taxes are still going up.

We are all about to go through the Budget Process here so that's going to be difficult and we are not going to do Main Street businesses any favor by pitting them against the rest of the City with regards to their needs. If we make moves that impact those businesses like we consider Wingate's to reconsider its space, we also have to consider how we made them do that because if we have them reconsider their space and for example the back door doesn't have the width that you need for wheelchair access, it doesn't have a ramp or accessibility, it's not exactly the same scenario. So there are some areas where we will need that supply of tools that we were talking about earlier in order to help businesses figure out how to make another scenario work as we adapt for it. Because I think that's really what we see when we hear businesses talking about how they don't like the current plan. It's more that they don't have a bridge from where they were to where they want to be so that the current plan worked for them as well.

Those are things that I am sure Director Cummings knows. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention, since we are talking about bridges, that Joanne's still needs the ramp so anytime that would be helpful. Joanne's Kitchens is looking for a handicap accessibility ramp. With regards to the barriers, Alderman Jette is right, I have received a lot of constituent feedback regarding them. There were some orphan barriers I guess, that I've been working with Director Cummings with. There are a couple of them in front of Joanne's Kitchen that Positive Street Art still plans to finish. I talked to Manny about those last week. But for the most part the new barriers that went in in front of Joanne's, Surf and Main Street Gyro, were the new ones that we all saw in the Infrastructure Committee. So they didn't really need to be painted, they look like a stone wall. So I think that is a relief to those businesses that have been waiting pretty patiently for all of these weeks while we drove over the ashes of Alec's Shoe Store.

There are also barriers on Water street, no I am sorry, I am confusing myself on Factory Street that Alderman Jette and I were working on with support from the Mayor and Tim Cummings. And so Alderman Jette and I are also on the Board of a non-profit, Operation Enduring Welcome. Because those barriers are in direct proximity to the Veterans Home, they are not painted yet because we are trying to do something special for veterans, like do an American Flag, Stars & Stripes kind of a theme for them in exchange for Memorial Day. So we do have donations, we do have a bunch of Girls & Boys Club volunteers and an artist that are going to be getting ready to do that. So I know people are kind of wondering how come some of them never got painted and it was more like we were figuring out the right way to do it.

So hopefully I represented everything I was trying to say accurately. If Director Cummings wants to correct anything, feel free.

Director Cummings

No, I think you did a great job, Alderman Lopez, thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

OK I think everybody has had their opportunity I hope. OK. Thank you Director Cummings for the update. As always you are welcomed to my Committee; I know it is one of your favorite. No, but you are always welcome to come before the Committee and do this. I think it is very imperative to get the information out to the public and I appreciate you doing so. So thank you for coming. Alright, at this time, speaking of the public I'll open it up for Public Comment. Seeing nobody still here with us, Remarks by Aldermen.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMENChairman O'Brien

Alderman Dowd?

Alderman Dowd

Yeah I have heard from some of the members of the Budget Committee but I hadn't heard from Aldermen Jette. Has he reviewed the Budget Schedule and is OK with it?

Alderman Jette

If I may answer, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman O'Brien

You may.

Alderman Jette

I have the schedule, I have not had a chance to review it. I don't anticipate any problems but I'll let you know as soon as ... I'll let you by tomorrow.

Alderman Dowd

OK that's good.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you. Like I said last night, looking forward to the Budget process; working with you again Alderman Dowd. Very good. Any other comments by Aldermen? Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

With regards to some of the things I commented on tonight there is a mural renovation I guess underway in French Park basically across Water Street from where Sub Zero will be opening and that is sponsored by Richelieu Club and Involved to Impact. So if anybody is interested in looking for more information on that, it is on WWW.Involvedtoimpact.org. It's the name of the title is in French so I can't remember it off the top of my head I think it's peace and friendship or peace and fraternity, and it features some historic Franco-Nashuans throughout history who have contributed things like Georgie Hippauf, Eric Drouart, the President of the Richelieu Club and actually former Mayor Donnalee Lozeau. So if people want to see a little more about what is going on with that, the project description and information is on that page.

There's also an upcoming series of murals right around the corner from that, that are supposed to be veteran centric and supporting the veterans staying over at Dalianis House. That will be on the same site. And then the most recent project I was mentioning is with Alderman Jette, we will put updates on there just because Operation Enduring Welcome is partnered with Involved to Impact so we kind of ... it's an easy way to put it up.

While you guys are there, check out the Tree Streets Block Party because we are planning it for June 26th, we are looking for sponsors, we are looking for vendors. It's going to be socially distanced, because that's the way Ash Street is anyways, it's like a long street. We are going to be having a futsal tournament where the participating youth will be wearing masks and then their family and friends will be encouraged to. We are encouraging anybody to wear masks so that you don't, if you are sick and you have the flu or anything like that you are not spreading, not just COVID-19 but just because we are going to be in a crowd and people are still getting used to coming back out. We have a lot of good partners on board so far like NeighborWorks and the Health Department, Southern NH Services, a couple bands. So I definitely encourage everybody to check that out because I know we are all a little hesitant to jump the gun, we are watching what is going on in India with outbreaks, there's new variants coming out and the rest of the world is still struggling with this, they don't have the same Operation Warp Speed that we had. But we do also need to have opportunities for fellowship and neighborly activity and that kind of stuff so we are trying to figure out how to navigate that balance.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Lopez could you repeat the date and the times again of that?

Alderman Lopez

Yep, it's going to be June 26th it is on Ash Street between Central and West Hollis. And the street will be closed from 12:00 to 4:00. The actual event is going to be 2:00 to 6:00 because as the event starts to wind down we usually move the activities over to the side, things like Los Amigos Park, the futsal court, the PAL Center's front yards and then that opens up the street for people to start unloading whatever they set up during the day as vendors.

Chairman O'Brien

OK thank you. Anybody else? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Forgive me Mr. Chairman but I must correct Alderman Lopez; it's not the French Park it's Le Parc de Notre Renaissance Francaise. If he wants or needs to shorten it, he can call it Renaissance Park but not French Park. And the sponsors of the painting of the barriers that he mentioned, I should mention them, Welts, White & Fontaine where Alderman Tencza works; Smith-Weiss Shepard and Spony, another law firm and a new restaurant which hasn't opened yet but we are anticipating a September opening called Rambling House. Those are the businesses that have contributed to provide the materials for the painting of the barriers on Factory Street. Thank you Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

And I appreciate both corrections, the Richelieu Club is always on me to make sure I get the name of that but it's hard because everybody knows it by French Park. But as a feature of the mural, right in the middle we are putting the name of the park in giant letters so that people can practice saying it.

Alderman Jette

Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

OK, thank you. At this time I am going to pass out some Committee homework if everybody is agreeable and that is going to be you, Alderman Jette. Can you follow up with your suggestions on that handicap parking please with Director Cummings and follow through with engineering and parking enforcement, Ms. Jill Stansfield. Can you handle that for the Committee please?

Alderman Jette

Yes I would be happy to. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Alright. I think it's worthwhile and I'll let you – and whatever comes out, we bring it back but I think everybody is in agreement with your idea so I think we are looking pretty good there. So without any further comment I welcome again, good job tonight, we welcome Sub Zero for all our ice cream lovers out there. So it's good to see a new business come downtown, we are doing something right. So I think that's very good. Seeing no need for non-public session, I am going to look to my Clerk right now for a motion.

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO ADJOURN BY ROLL CALL

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea:	Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Schmidt, Alderman Jette, Alderman Tencza	5
Nay:		0

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared closed at 8:43 p.m.

Alderman Jan Schmidt, Committee Clerk