

Special Board of Public Works Meeting Meeting Minutes May 19, 2020

A special meeting of the Board of Public Works was held on Tuesday, May 19, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. via WebEx Conference Call.

Mayor Donchess stated as Chair of the Board of Public Works, due to the state of emergency declared by Governor Sununu as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with Governor Sununu'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 as 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 via telephone with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means. We are utilizing WebEx through the city's IT Department for this electronic meeting. All members of the Board of Public Works have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform and the public has access to contemporaneously listen in to this meeting by dialing the following number 978-990-5298 and using the access code 273974. The public may also view this meeting on Comcast channel 16. Secondly, providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting; we previously gave notice to the public for accessing the meeting for public posting. Instructions have also been provided on the City of Nashua's website at www.nashuanh.gov and have also been publicly noticed at City Hall. Thirdly, we have also provided a mechanism for the public body to alert us if there are problems with access. If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting via phone or channel or 16, please call 603-821-2049. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting via the phone number mentioned, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes taken shall be done by a roll call vote.

We will start the meeting by taking a roll call for attendance. When each member states their presence and why they are not physically present for the meeting, they will also state whether there is anyone in the room with them during this meeting. This information is required under the Right-to-Know law.

Mayor Donchess, Chair, declared the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and called the roll.

Members Present:

Mayor James Donchess, Chair

- I am attending remotely due to the emergency order and the social distancing and I am in the Mayor's Conference Room with Cheryl Linder.

Commissioner G. Frank Teas, Vice Chair

- I am attending remotely due to the emergency order and the social distancing and I am alone in my office.

Commissioner Tracy Pappas

- I am attending remotely due to the emergency order and the social distancing and I am alone in my room at my house.

Commissioner Kevin S. Moriarty

- I am attending remotely due to the emergency order and the social distancing and I am alone in my office.

Commissioner Shannon Schoneman

- I am attending remotely due to the emergency order and the social distancing and I am alone in a room in my house.

Also Present:

Ms. Lisa Fauteux, Director, Division of Public Works
Mr. Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development
Attorney Steven A. Bolton, Corporation Counsel
Attorney Celia K. Leonard, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr. – Aldermanic Liaison
Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Board of Aldermen
Alderman Elizabeth Lu, Board of Aldermen
Alderman Ernest A. Jette, Board of Aldermen
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright, Board of Alderman
Alderman Jan Schmidt, Board of Alderman
Alderman Patricia Klee, Board of Aldermen

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Commission Pappas made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Mayor Donchess, Commissioner Teas, Commissioner Pappas, Commissioner Moriarty, & Commissioner Schoneman	5
Nay:	0

MOTION CARRIED: Unanimously

Administration

A. Informational: Narrowing of Main Street

Mr. Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development

I am here this afternoon to have an informational briefing for you about the narrowing of Main Street. I believe everyone on the Board should have received a communication from me which I will not read at this time but more eloquently it probably expresses the sentiment I am about to now.

Essentially, over the course of the last two weeks, once we understood what the guidance was going to be from the state on how restaurants would need to re-open, we started an internal conversation locally in the City of Nashua about how we could assist some of the restaurants based off of this guidance. It became relatively clear early on that a narrowing of Main Street would need to occur should the restaurants and foodservice establishments, particularly along Main Street were going to be able to open up in any type of fashion.

Understanding this, I had a conversation internally with the department in preparation for the plan that you are about to see. We then developed a proposal during a conversation with downtown stakeholders last Friday and now have continued to work on the plan and hopefully, we will have it before the Board of Aldermen for a special meeting later on this week for their consideration. It goes without saying that time is of the essence.

Essentially, my plan is to share my screen with you and walk you through the proposal as it's been developed.

Commissioner Pappas

If I turn on Channel 16 will I be able to see the plan?

Alderman Michael B. O'Brien, Sr. – Aldermanic Liaison

The meeting is being broadcast live.

Mayor Donchess

Commissioner Pappas, if you have trouble please speak up.

Commissioner Pappas

Sure, thanks.

Mr. Cummings

We are not seeking any recommended changes for the Library Hill area at this time, however, there has been a request from the Riverwalk Café to use potential parking spaces in and along this area. Fody's will be looking to use something along Clinton

Street. We are going to need to continue to work through those options. We also have a couple of restaurants in through here that will be looking to use some parking spaces as well. We still need to develop that and it doesn't really have anything to do with the main roadway and it doesn't really affect traffic volumes but, nonetheless, it is something I wanted to make the group aware of in this conversation.

Where you will start to see the narrowing of Main Street is actually when you cross over the bridge at the Nashua River because the area of Main Street, Canal Street, and Franklin is a heavy traffic volume area and the temporary nature of what we are suggesting; you wouldn't want to bring on the expend of making any type of a change here, especially when it's not necessary when you have the length of span that you do here to actually safely transition the cars. That is what we would be looking to do. Looking southbound on Main Street you have a transition into essentially one lane. Throughout the plan you will see a purple and green coloring. Purple represents the outdoor dining that would be occurring and the various colors you see on the roadway are different types of obstructions, barriers or traffic calming measures that may be taken to safely create the conditions necessary to move the vehicular traffic and the pedestrian traffic.

Commissioner Pappas

I am able to see the plan on the t.v. Can you give us landmarks to see where the concrete barriers you plan on starting and where you plan on ending them?

Mr. Cummings

I will highlight them as I go through. Again, this would be a concrete area, anywhere there is purple. Anywhere there is purple would be protected by a concrete barrier and that's the outdoor dining. The orange would be a traffic barrel of some sort, some sort on non-concrete barrier to narrow the roadway. You will see this condition repeat as we go along...

Commissioner Pappas

I can it on the screen but does it go like from the Peddler's Daughter through Michael Timothy's?

Mayor Donchess

At the top of the screen now you can see the river running under the street and just north or above the river or near the edge of it, the purple on the right side of the street is the Peddler's Daughter.

Mr. Cummings

Main Street here and the Peddler's Daughter...we are going to start the narrowing of the Main Street condition here, moving down the roadway you'll start to see, where Espresso Pizza is and the San Francisco Kitchen down here and along this roadway you would

have the outdoor dining in purple and the green represents curbside type pick-up. Those would be parking spaces with a 15-minute time limit free of charge but there would be an enforcement ticket taking place to curtail any type of abuse.

Here we are at Factory Street, and as you can see, Factory Street will continue to narrow and right where the San Francisco Kitchen you see green which represents curbside pick-up. In this block, from Factory to High Street you are going to have outdoor dining opportunities. Across the street there will be a narrowing of the street for public safety reasons but there would be no outdoor dining. I would take an opportunity to note that if you see red anywhere along the way on this map it highlights a handicapped parking space. The thought process is, as much as possible, to create a one-lane flow of traffic both north and south but we are still creating a condition for turning lanes as much as possible which will increase roadway capacity.

At High Street and Pearl Street along the northbound lane there will be outdoor dining and again, just as a reminder, this is a concrete barrier and you will see that as consistent throughout the proposal and the green is the curbside take-out type of parking. Relative to High Street it should be noted that you cannot make a left from High Street onto Main Street, it's a right-hand turn only.

Continuing on trying to narrow or taper the Main Street condition we are at Pearl Street, both East and West. I want to take an opportunity to note that we have not done anything on West Pearl Street but we are starting to receive some interest expressed in doing something on West Pearl Street but we haven't been able to focus on that yet as we just started to focus on Main Street. On Main Street and East Pearl Street there will be outdoor dining which supports Fratello's, Cravings Café, and Stella Blu. We have some take-out curbside parking to the rear of those food establishments further east.

Then we have Alex Shoes, Surf, MT where we will be creating outdoor dining opportunities, curbside parking, and the narrowing of Main Street to keep the condition focused. We did not do anything back here as it gives a long enough runway to be able to safely transition the cars into the narrowed way.

We have started to receive some requests from other food establishments, one is on Temple Street but we haven't been able to focus on those side streets yet but we are aware there is a need for it. One of the things that are in the legislation that is being contemplated is upon the recommendation of the city engineer and the parking manager, giving the Mayor temporary authority to be able to make these adjustments along the way, including changing any of the layout presented as need be. I think it goes without saying that we don't know what the future demand is going to be for the outdoor diners or the vehicular traffic but we know adjustments are going to be necessary and as long as we plan for that accordingly we should be in good shape.

I will conclude my comments by saying the proposal before you take into consideration all of the department's requests and concerns. It has been vetted by them and has taken into consideration all of the various business owners concerns or issues from when this was originally discussed a couple of weeks ago up until last Friday and continuing on this week I've had a lot of individualized conversations with all of the various business groups

to get an understanding as to what their needs may be or what concerns they may have. This plan addresses the concerns, I believe. The last point I wanted to make is we know that this is something that the temporary condition will remain through mid-November and the city's engineering staff has reviewed the plan as well.

Hopefully, I have provided some good information, there is a better understanding, and this is good preparation for the Board of Aldermen meeting which we are hoping to have later on this week.

Commissioner Teas

Mr. Cummings, would you please zoom in on Fratello's for a moment. Do the yellow dashes represent actual concrete barriers?

Mr. Cummings

That is correct.

Commissioner Teas

Secondly, you mentioned all departments that are impacted or involved had been apprised of the plan, does that include all life and safety areas as well and are these restauranters available or allowed to bring out any gas-fired heating instruments or electricity and has that been properly vetted as well from a safety standpoint?

Mr. Cummings

Yes, our Safety & Management Emergency Departments have been consulted on this proposal and relative to electricity or heating, the heating is prohibited through the Fire Marshall's outdoor dining rules and regulations and electrical would not be allowed through extension cords or anything like that. If someone wanted to go through the cost of pulling an electrical permit and doing it safely I guess that would need to be discussed. Again, this being a temporary condition I don't know if anyone would do that so I would say that the temporary use of extension cords is not allowed.

Mayor Donchess

Mr. Cummings, can you elaborate on the meetings you held with the downtown businesses leading up to this, the group meetings? There were at least two meetings with 50 to 60 participants where you went over and took input on the different ideas.

Mr. Cummings

Certainly, Mr. Mayor. In preparation and doing the due diligence necessary to move this forward we conducted two virtual zoom meetings. One was an initial meeting, an assessment with various downtown stakeholders and that was a good conversation where we learned initial concerns and heard initial thoughts. We then took that and massaged it into the plan you are seeing before you. Of course, it's subject to additional

tweaks and improvements along the way. We took that and we incorporated it based on input that our various departments and divisions have within city government and then we had a second meeting and that second meeting had about 68 participants and that was last Friday. We went into detail like I am now on the various components and walking through how this would actually occur and we made sure we addressed any individual issues that were raised; where deliveries would occur, whether takeout or curbside could happen in the rear or the front of the respective businesses. I would like to say that it was positively received by all, and, of course, in between the two larger meetings that I just mentioned I had many individual conversations...a majority of the food service (inaudible) I think we did a good job in terms of our due diligence in preparation for this and that's why you see the product that you do before you right now.

Commissioner Pappas

How many restaurants will be participating?

Mr. Cummings

I can't give you an exact number but all of the businesses I spoke to which was the majority of them on Main Street have expressed a desire to participate. Whether they start their participation right away or do something in June, they all have expressed an interest in doing some sort of outdoor driving.

Mayor Donchess

There is space in front of all restaurants and eating and drinking establishments. Every one of them has some extra space in front of them.

Commissioner Pappas

So, those concrete barriers will go in whenever the plan is approved and be up until November?

Mr. Cummings

Correct.

Mayor Donchess

I think it's until November 1st.

Mr. Cummings

Mayor, I believe it's November 15th.

Commissioner Pappas

How will emergency vehicles handle getting through the downtown area?

Mr. Cummings

Just as they would right now.
Commissioner Pappas

Because I do notice sometimes that it's pretty hard to get out of the way with the four lanes but with just two lanes...do they believe there is enough room to get fire trucks through?

Mr. Cummings

Correct.

Commissioner Pappas

Before you put this plan into place, did you think in terms, for example, Concord, NH, is shutting down their Main Street? Did you think of perhaps Thursday through Sunday starting at 4:00 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. to close down Main Street and give alternative routes to people to get around downtown and that way it's almost like a festive sort of atmosphere?

Mr. Cummings

Two points, if you were eluding to it with your previous question, which is we want to make sure we maintain from a public safety perspective for access for emergency management to travel north and south through the city. In addition to that, we also have a hospital in the downtown area that we need to make sure we maintain access to. So, closing the Main Street roadway completely for a significant portion of a week may raise an issue. We did look at it but that was one cautionary tale. The second cautionary tale is relative to the cost and the resources that it would take to constantly be putting in and removing the various types of conditions to safely provide the outdoor dining. I would suggest that any of us want to waste public resources constantly redoing when we could leave it up in a semi-permanent fashion as we are suggesting now and it would be a more efficient approach.

Commissioner Pappas

Who is going to be putting these concrete barriers up?

Mr. Cummings

It is my understanding from the Department of Public Works that there would be a contractor.

Commissioner Pappas

Where is that money going to come from?

Mr. Cummings

Ultimately I believe it will come from a reimbursement from the COVID-19 funding but at least initially it would come from the City of Nashua.

Commissioner Pappas

So we are not sure if that overtime will be reimbursed or not?

Mr. Cummings

I never mentioned anything about overtime so I can't speak to that. Again, this is an eligible reimbursed cost and it is something that we anticipate being reimbursed for.

Commissioner Pappas

I will say that downtown does mean a lot to me. I really do enjoy going to the restaurants down there and as a parent of two teenagers who really felt welcome down there...the Riverwalk Café and all of the other café's the kids can go there and get a drink and sit there and study and they don't throw them out of there, which is very different from how a lot of us were treated as teenagers. It is something that means a lot to me that we really should be making an effort to help out with the outdoor dining and that's why I had asked about just shutting down Main Street. My fear is...no matter how much we try to plan in advance we always have digging on all of our major streets. We are lining some sewer pipes on Main Street and the utilities are always doing work downtown and I think that people might get angry when traffic is being backed up seven days per week. Furthermore, we have tried to make an effort to make it more bike-friendly and bikes are not supposed to go on the sidewalks. I think if you have one person biking down Main Street that might further back up traffic if there's no bike lane there and if it's going to be tight lanes I really think that it's going to be a safety issue for people who might bike downtown. I know that a lot of families are using Main Street to go to the trails over at Mine Falls Park. How did you plan to deal with the bikes?

Mr. Cummings

I would disagree with that sentiment. It is not going to be less safe. I would actually argue that it would be safer to ride a bicycle along Main Street because the traffic will be calmer and slower and the bicyclist will feel more at ease with being on that type of roadway. Having a condition where a bicycle shares the road with vehicular automobiles is not an uncommon road condition, although I would say not the most ideal, of course, having a dedicated bike lane is the preference but with limited geometry and what we have to work with so long as you create the road condition where it is safe and I would suggest what we are doing here it is, it actually won't be as problematic as one may think.

Commissioner Pappas

Well, it doesn't look like we are taking a vote anyway. We got something from Corporation Counsel, which obviously if something involves an ordinance, it will fall under the Board of Aldermen's jurisdiction. As I said, I really find when we rush through things we don't always end up with the best work product and this is very important. This is more cautionary but if I had to make the decision I'd say geez, let's see how many people show up and let's try to shut down Main Street and start off by doing it on a weekend later in the afternoon and see what happens and see how many people come out so we can iron out some of the hiccups.

I think narrowing Main Street to two lanes might be pretty problematic and I think that you may get some more push back than you expect but that's just my opinion.

Mr. Cummings

Thank you, Commissioner Pappas. All I can say is that we are going to stay on top of the balls of our feet and we are going adjust as we see something that needs to be corrected. None of us have a crystal ball and we don't know what it's going to look like when it unfolds but what we do know is when we see something we will react. We will be constantly making adjustments as best we can to accommodate the current situation that we are in.

Commissioner Pappas

I don't know if you can get some kind of a pulse from the gas company who has been doing an awful lot of work downtown but I think that the two-lane road with a bunch of utility work is kind of a recipe for disaster. I think people are going to get upset and the other comment I would have is just to really be aware of signage for the public to give everyone a heads up because if you happen to say start going to the dentist at 280 Main Street, you are probably going to need an extra 15 to 20 minutes to get there. I think people are going to need a heads up and if you do decide to change the pattern from time to time, again, when you change patterns you don't want people to get confused and I certainly would hope that you would give motorists enough of a heads up through signage.

Commissioner Schoneman

What is the distance from say the entrance of the restaurants to the concrete barriers?

Mr. Cummings

That's probably different for every food establishment (inaudible) For example, the Peddler's Daughter is right here on the sidewalk edge and whatever the length of the sidewalk is would give you an idea as to what the distance would be from their front door, maybe 8 to 10 feet or something of that nature.

Commissioner Schoneman

Okay, so in that space, the entrance to the restaurant to the concrete barrier will need to fit tables at 8 to 10 feet distance from table to table as well as space for pedestrians all within that space. Does that seem feasible?

Mr. Cummings

Yes.

Commissioner Schoneman

You might get one table within that width.

Mr. Cummings

No, we need to leave on the sidewalk here space for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance which is 5 feet. There really isn't an opportunity in this area, again using the Peddler's Daughter as an example, to put...at least on the sidewalk in front of the Peddler's Daughter, the tables...you might be able to do it along the side here but it would be tough to meet the social distancing requirement of 8 feet from tables edge to tables edge and leave the 5 feet that is necessary here. You are looking at probably using this area here for outdoor dining. Does that answer your question?

Commissioner Schoneman

How wide is the purple area, the parking space, and driving lane? What's the approximate width there?

Mr. Cummings

This is maybe 10 feet this is maybe 12 feet so you are looking at from here to here somewhere between 20 and 25 feet.

Commissioner Schoneman

So it's tables and chairs and 8 to 10 feet table to table, depending on which document you are looking at. That's not an awful lot of space for the restaurants to use.

Mr. Cummings

How many tables do you think could fit there I guess is the question?

Commissioner Schoneman

That's what I am asking. Is this actually going to increase their space significantly?

Mr. Cummings

So it looks like we will be creating an opportunity of 76 feet or nineteen tables. I would suggest that is significant. Granted, this is a concept and we would need to prove it but it gives an order of what could be accomplished.

Commissioner Schoneman

Okay so those calculations have been done and that's helpful.

My other question is for other dining...on a regular basis, yearly restaurants have to apply by submitting a plan for a permit to be approved for outdoor dining. Is that right?

Mr. Cummings

Correct.

Commissioner Schoneman

Will they also have to submit those plans for permits according to this plan?

Mr. Cummings

Yes.

Commissioner Schoneman

What is the turnaround time you are looking at from the mission of issuing a permit?

Mr. Cummings

That's hard to answer because we are dependent on the applicants applying the appropriate information. They need to be able to submit a complete package but there is not going to be any significant delay in turning around an application. In leading up and in preparation for this I would suggest that everyone thought that somewhere between a 48 and 72-hour type of turnaround time was more than feasible.

Commissioner Schoneman

What about other restaurants that are not in the downtown. Are they going to have the same consideration?

Mr. Cummings

It's a different process and yes we have worked through what would need to be done. There is a separate piece of legislation on file with the Board of Aldermen that would allow the Community Development Director to temporarily approve site plan adjustments to allow for outdoor dining. In the meantime, while that is being done, so long as they meet all of the other standards and the rules & regulations of the various departments, the issuance of the permit could be provisionally given. That is in place.

Commissioner Schoneman

Are they looking at the same time period of 48 to 72 hours?

Mr. Cummings

Correct.

Commissioner Schoneman

Could you clarify what you were saying about the Mayor having the authority to change this plan all by himself?

Mr. Cummings

Well, it wouldn't be all by himself. It would be predicated on a recommendation both out of the Parking Department and the Department of Public Works. Then the Mayor would have the ability to change this proposal and make the adjustments as I was talking to a little bit earlier. We are going to need to tweak it to adjust to what we see out in the field. In addition to that we know that there are areas. For example, right now we are going to need to look at potentially putting in some outdoor dining in this area here and it would allow the Mayor, once a recommendation has been received from the Parking Department and the Department of Public Works, would be able to do that without having to go through this process all over again. Again, this would be temporary in nature and to be as expedient as possible due to the times that we are in.

Commissioner Schoneman

Okay, so to clarify you are saying that the committee deems it important that if something is changed then the Mayor can change it without coming to the Board.

Mr. Cummings

Well, it would never come to your Board to be clear, it would go to the Board of Aldermen for approval to make the adjustments. But, yes, we need to be able to react timely and we need to be able to make additions or subtractions based on the recommendations from a public safety perspective, and with those considerations in mind we would be able to address it accordingly.

Commissioner Schoneman

Suppose something happens, it's been known that accidents occur, and injuries happen to patrons of the restaurant or pedestrians. Who is liable, the restaurant, or the city?

Attorney Steven A. Bolton, Corporation Counsel

Probably the driver but in order to be liable one has to be negligent. If the restaurant is somehow negligent then the restaurant might be liable. If a driver is negligent in their driving by going too fast, making unsafe turns, or being inattentive, then it would be the driver and potentially the restaurant. Who cannot be liable is the city because if it happens on a roadway or a sidewalk we have immunity.

Mayor Donchess

Does anybody else have comments or questions?

Commissioner Moriarty

I wasn't sure if I am clear on this. Will there be dining tables on the sidewalks or will it all be for pedestrian travel?

Mr. Cummings

That's a great question, Commissioner. The answer is it depends on where you are on Main Street. There definitely will be some places along Main Street where tables will be on the sidewalk but, really it's going to be...the priority needs be maintaining ADA compliance so where you are not going to be able to fit the table and have the sidewalk you will see the tables more out onto the street right-of-way area.

Commissioner Moriarty

City Planners throughout the country have been advocating for narrowing Main Streets throughout America for that reason so I'd like to see how this works as an example to see if we can go any further. I'd probably be in favor of this. When you mentioned before about the Mayor having the authority and bypassing this Board, I think that may be in violation of the City Charter where this Board has jurisdiction over streets and sidewalks. I don't know if I would be in favor of that.

Attorney Bolton

I think there was a memorandum sent from this office to all of you that explains the jurisdictional limits between the Board of Aldermen and the Board of Public Works. That explains that the Board of Aldermen (inaudible) ordinances which control the roadways. The proposal that is being worked on and what will go before the Board of Aldermen does contain a delegation to the Mayor of authority to make changes. We believe that does not violate the City Charter.

Commissioner Moriarty

Well, I guess my opinion is that it might. I'm not an attorney but in the past...

Attorney Bolton

I don't opine on chiropractic; I think you better not opine on the visions of the City Charter. It's quite clear that it's subject to ordinances passed by the Board of Aldermen.

Commissioner Moriarty

I'll tell you one thing Attorney, things got passed without our approval in the past has been a violation and I guess it just skirted your office.

Attorney Bolton

Since I've been in this office I am aware of no such thing being overturned.

Mayor Donchess

Are there any other members of the Board of Public Works who have additional questions or comments? There were none.

Are there any members of the Board of Aldermen that are participating in the meeting have question or comments?

Alderman Ernest A. Jette, Board of Aldermen

At Friday's meeting, Mr. Cummings, I asked you about the narrowing of the southbound lanes of Main Street where they intersect with Water Street. Number one, I think this is a great opportunity to experiment with the narrowing of Main Street and if it is successful I think it might go a long way in our reconfiguring Main Street permanently. One of the things is I think we should be thinking of making Main Street a destination and not a through street. I think it would help this whole matter and make the dining experience better if we could allow traffic to avoid Main Street altogether. I had mentioned the narrowing of the southbound lanes of Main Street near Water Street. In front of Darrell's there are three southbound lanes currently and one of them is a right turn only lane which permits traffic to go down Water Street. I'm wondering if you have had a chance to explore that any more to somehow configure that so that the right turn onto Water Street could be maintained to discourage traffic from continuing down Main Street and whether or not something could be done at East and West Hollis Streets to discourage traffic from continuing down Main Street.

Mr. Cummings

If I may, Mr. Mayor, I understand Alderman Jette's concern and it is definitely going to be one of the things we are evaluating as we move forward but, we just don't know what it may look like. Of course, if it makes sense to provide that relief valve then we would do that but at this time the recommendation, especially from a public safety perspective, that we provide length in transition as we are showing here to occur for the narrowing of Main Street.

Alderman Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.

In speaking from my experience in the Fire Department and working with Mr. Paul Shea from the Great American Downtown's Holiday Stroll and one of my special duties was to look at shutting down Main Street and discussions about the Water Street Ramp. One really has to take into account that at the top of Library Hill there is a very important station house which is Engine & Ladder Company 1. Part of their route and area that they serve is through the Water Street conduit. What Director Cummings has marked off seems to be adequate, it's not blocking it, and it will be able to add a public safety for that area, particularly Clocktower and the lower Tree Streets that Station 1 does provide a second or third engine company response. It seems to meet the goals as far as safety.

Mr. Cummings

You will still be able to make a right turn so there will be no loss in the loop.

Alderman Patricia Klee, Board of Aldermen

I love this idea. I've been in on a lot of those meetings so I appreciate all of the work that's gone into this. I can tell you that I have spoken to a number of downtown restaurants as well as shops that are kind of looking to this. I would have anxiety about closing the entirety of Main Street so I am glad there will still be some traffic flow.

I can't disagree with what Alderman Jette said about that Water Street turn as I too have concerns. I'd like that to be a turn but I also know how horrible it is to try to cross that street from Main Street. I think everyone will be looking at it appropriately.

As part of this project, maybe in the future, we could consider the changing of direction on West Pearl Street. I think that would help when people are coming off of the circle and it would allow them to go into the Elm Street parking garage. I think we should really give some true consideration to that. It would provide relief from Main Street as it would allow people to go onto Water Street to where Factory Street is around that circle and then possibly come onto West Pearl Street in the opposite direction. I know right now they could go down Walnut or one of those other ones and do that but those streets are a little bit narrower. I would just like some consideration to be given to that as this is going on but not before we get it initiated.

Mayor Donchess

Certainly, one of the issues that we will be looking at very carefully is the issue that Alderman Jette has raised concerning the calms and the narrowing of the street. The two issues are do you want to leave the turn lane completely open and then have people potentially come up against kind of a stone wall so to speak or do you want to narrow the street before they get to the intersection. It seems like it could work better with some other configuration of the cones as that is something that can be and adjusted.

Does anyone else have questions or comments? There were none.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Pappas

I have a question that I wonder if the Director could look into for our regularly scheduled meeting.

Since people have been home folks have been cleaning out and a lot of people who were never interested in getting a landfill permit are now interested in getting one. I am trying to think if we can figure out a way, even if by mail....someone could mail in a \$5.00 check and send a copy of your car registration and a permit could be mailed to them. I think that's important and I say car registration and not a tax bill because sometimes people own properties in Nashua but they may live elsewhere and obviously, our landfill space is worth a lot.

The second sold waste issue is the weather is getting nicer and windows can down in trucks and I know that we have more than one person per truck and if we might be able to start a program of the oversized pick-up. People are home and people are cleaning out and I think that's something that people have paid for. I think if people are masked, it's a decent sized truck and you keep the windows down in the truck I am wondering if we can examine how that could be done safely also.

Director Fauteux

I'm glad that you brought that up, Commissioner Pappas as I was going speak to both of those issues at our next meeting. We have resolved both of those issues. We were not selling permits for a while but now residents can pull up on the scale and hand the scale operator their registration and then they will be instructed to go to the parking lot adjacent to the scale house and the scale operator will issue a permit and will walk it out and hand it to them.

Commissioner Pappas

Are we taking cash or does it have to be a check?

Director Fauteux

We will only accept checks or credit cards for now.

In the case of a credit card, the scale operator will take the credit card right away, swipe it, and then give it back to the resident but they will hold onto the registration so they can fill out all of the information they need. The scale operator would then return the registration to the resident along with their new permit.

As far as oversized items, we will begin taking calls on June 1st for pick-up the following week, June 8th. We usually try to pick up the oversized items on the same day as the regularly scheduled trash pick-up but it doesn't always work out that way, sometimes we are a few days off. We do tell people to put the oversized item out the day that they would normally put out their trash and we will get it as soon as possible.

Commissioner Pappas

Are they allowed two or three per household?

Director Fauteux

Three per household.

Commissioner Pappas

For the year?

Director Fauteux

That's correct.

Commissioner Schoneman

Director Fauteux, are you going to be providing that information on the public works social media site?

Director Fauteux

Yes, we are. It will be posted on the city's website, the solid waste website, and Facebook. Ms. Lauren Byers will be taking care of that if she hasn't already.

Commissioner Schoneman

At our April 23rd meeting which was not accessed by the public and rescheduled, we spoke about how we can incorporate public comments into our virtual meetings as long as we are still having virtual meetings. The Mayor commissioned me to come up with a proposal which I have done. I would like to propose that public comment be sent via e-mail to the city's website which is bpwcommissioners@nashuanh.gov and that submit their comments, no longer than one 12.5 standard page and that those comments be printed and included in our agenda packet or included in our digital agenda packet so they can be read by the Board during what would be the usual comment period toward the beginning of the meeting.

Mayor Donchess

We did and what we said we would do is that you, Commissioner Schoneman, would give us a written proposal on the possibility of public comment. It doesn't sound like it would be very difficult to write that up and we said that we would then include it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Commissioner Schoneman

Okay.

Commissioner Moriarty

Just to reiterate, Mr. Mayor, I am strongly in favor of narrowing the streets as I think it will be a good trial period but I do want to emphasize that I am opposed to the Mayor's Office or the Community Development Division circumventing the Board of Public Works on matters regarding streets and sidewalks. I really think this is a really good check and balance system and I think we deserve to be informed and have a say in what happens.

Mayor Donchess

It's should be clear what is being proposed. The Board of Aldermen, according to the City Attorney, has the authority and it's not me that is going to pass this plan, it's the Board of Aldermen. The Board of Aldermen needs to adopt this, I can't do that as a Mayor unilaterally. What is being proposed, as I understand it, within the proposal that's being considered by the Board of Aldermen is adjustments to the basic plan adopted by the Board of Aldermen can be made in the short-term by me as the Mayor. I am not particularly looking for that authority but we've agreed that this is a fluid situation and we are under unprecedented conditions and we want to help these businesses that are struggling so if there are adjustments that can be made without having to wait and schedule a meeting, that would be given to me as the Mayor and with the City Attorney to do that. The Board of Aldermen could always come back if they didn't like the changes they could switch it back.

One thing we want to consider is the side streets should someone else get some street space on West Pearl Street. Things like the things that Alderman Jette has raised. Maybe the cones would be better served if they were placed differently than what is in the plan and we want the ability to make changes rather than having to go through a long procedure to make obvious corrections. In any event, to go back to the beginning, it's the Alderman that have the authority and they are ones who would defer to me in terms of these short-term changes if they wish. Any change has to go back to them, it's up to them.

Director Fauteux

I wanted to alert the Board that normally our packet would go out on the Monday before our meeting and that Monday is Memorial Day so we will be sending out the packet this Friday, May 22nd. We would need the proposal by the 21st in order to get it in the packet.

Commissioner Schoneman

I can do that.

Adjournment

Commissioner Pappas made a motion to adjourn.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Mayor Donchess, Commissioner Teas,
Commissioner Pappas, Commissioner Moriarty,

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& Commissioner Schoneman

Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED: Unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.