

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE

OCTOBER 4, 2023

A meeting of the Committee on Infrastructure was held Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 6:18 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Chairman O'Brien

We are calling the meeting to order because allegedly it has been stated that we can verify that we were going to immediately follow the Joint Meeting of Infrastructure and the Board of Public Works. So with that said, can my Clerk please call the roll.

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

Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr., Chair  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman Alex Comeau  
Alderman Tyler Gouveia  
Alderman Ernest A. Jette

Members not in Attendance:

Also in Attendance: Alderman Klee  
Alderman Thibeault  
Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director  
John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector  
Patti Barry, Deputy Treasurer/Tax Collector

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ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

Chairman O'Brien

Can I please have a little executive privilege? We are expecting Mr. Griffin and I'm sure for members who do have questions. So without objection, can we go out of order and discuss O23-060.

Alderman Comeau

Absolutely.

Chairman O'Brien

Without objection, we're going ahead. Thank you.

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

**O-23-060**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman John Sullivan  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons

Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman Alex Comeau  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman Tyler Gouveia  
Alderman June M. Caron  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderman-at-Large Gloria Timmons  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**AUTHORIZING FREE HOLIDAY PARKING AT METERS IN ZONE III WHICH INCLUDES THE ELM STREET AND HIGH STREET PARKING GARAGES FROM DECEMBER 11, 2023 THROUGH JANUARY 1, 2024  
MOTION BY ALDERMAN COMEAU TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Jette

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I know we do this every year and it's been a traditional thing. I know we're probably going to do it again this year but out of curiosity, does anybody know how this works out as far as how much money we lose as a result of this and does it really attract business? Do more people come downtown? Also in the past there have been complaints by some of the merchants that some other merchants fill up the spaces – employees fill up the spaces and potential customers can't get downtown. Is anybody able to comment on that or have any information about those issues?

Alderman O'Brien

Director Cummings would you like to take a stab at that?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I'd be happy to Mr. Chairman. For the record Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director. As you all know, Director Hannum now oversees parking. She couldn't be with us this evening. Since I had a couple of meetings on the docket tonight, I graciously said I would do my best imitation of her. With that being said relative to the questions at hand, I believe that the fiscal note on the legislation before you and that's accompanying every piece of legislation. I'm pretty sure in years past they have identified the loss of revenue that is projected to occur. I will double check that. I don't recall what that figure is off the top of my head.

Alderman Klee

\$4,600.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I'm sorry is it written?

Alderman Klee

Yes. It said estimated \$4,600 or less in lost meter revenue.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

So hopefully that addresses the first concern raised.

Relative to the policing of this and the potential abuse, I think that's a fair observation that's made. I know the parking staff diligently looks at the area and does the best it can relative to enforcement. I know during this time of year they are particularly aware of people who stay maybe longer than they should. All I can say is on this particular piece of legislation, I know the merchants warmly embrace this piece of legislation. I hear about it at Downtown Improvement Committee in particular as well as other small businesses on Main Street that they look forward to it. So I think the anxieties can be relaxed relative to that front as well.

So I would ask for your recommendation this evening. This is a piece of legislation that in years past actually was done at a first and second reading. Because we had some more time this year, I was glad to see it actually get put through the

Committee process but by the amount of endorsers and sponsors of the legislation, I believe this is a piece of legislation that is warmly received year over year and I would like to make sure we continue on that trajectory. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

Further questions for Director Cummings or on the matter? Alderman Dowd.

Alderman Dowd

I would just think that it's self-regulating because if the businesses allow their employees to park there, their customers can't park, they're not going to make money. So you know I think they understand that they shouldn't have their employees parking in these spaces so the customers can come in. I think we've done it every year for many years as a benefit to the people so they can go down, shop, and not have to pay for parking in the holiday tradition. I've never heard a complaint from any business.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you Alderman Dowd.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you Alderman Dowd. Further comment, anybody?

I'll have to say Director Cummings this is timely. This is I think the earliest. Some times we were behind the preverbal Christmas ornament and pushing this forward. I'm glad we're handling it in a timely manner this year. It's sort like in a way our little gift to people so it's a good thing. So hopefully support our downtown with the shops and everything and enjoy the Christmas spirit. We'll have it soon decorated I'm sure and it will look just grand like every year.

If I could give a shout out, let's not forget the potential for the Holiday Stroll. Something I personally do look forward to every year. My family enjoys it. I'm sure yours do too. Okay, I'll call for the vote.

## **MOTION CARRIED**

Chairman O'Brien

At this time, we're going to go back into the agenda. If I may Mr. Clerk before we get into it. After we read it by title, we're going to have some brief discussion on it. I want the Board to keep in mind this has to do with family's personal finances and the like. If you put yourself into those people's shoes, do you really necessarily want it to be discussed in the open format? So therefore, I did include on the agenda the possibility to go into a non-public type of session but I will present the question. We'll present it openly. I think once you hear the brief explanation of why we're doing this, I think hopefully we may be able to avoid but I'll let that be the Committee's call. So with that I'll welcome Mr. Griffin and Ms. Barry up forward and can the Clerk introduce the Ordinance please.

## **NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS**

### **R-23-164**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman John Sullivan  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman Alex Comeau  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman Tyler Gouveia  
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons

### **AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF A TAX DEEDED PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1 EDWARDS STREET**

## **MOTION BY ALDERMAN COMEAU TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

## **ON THE QUESTION**

Chairman O'Brien

Mr. Griffin you heard the recommendation for final passage. Can you give us a brief explanation please - you or Miss Barry please?

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman. John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector. With me is actually Miss Barry, Patti Barry. She's the Deputy Treasurer/Deputy Tax Collector. She has worked very hard on this piece of legislation with Corporation Counsel. So I'm going to let her describe what we're trying to accomplish here. Thank you.

Patti Barry, Deputy Treasurer/Deputy Tax Collector

Thank you. So this was a property that was taken by tax deed back in April for non-payment of property taxes. The goal was to try and work with the former owners to repurchase and keep them in their home. We have been working with this family since July on getting a mortgage and repurchasing. So we need approval to repurchase to resell to the formers owners. There's one change in this though that it was the husband who was on the prior deed and the person that is getting the mortgage is the wife. So we would have to put the property back into the wife's name. So that is what this legislation is asking for permission to do that.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. Questions on the motion or the discussion that was presented? Seeing none. Oh yes Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Just for clarification. My understanding is that the property is being purchased by the wife of the previous owner and she's paying us whatever taxes are owed and whatever expenses we've incurred.

Patti Barry, Deputy Treasurer/Deputy Tax Collector

Correct.

Alderman Jette

So the City ends up getting repaid everything that is owed and the property owner gets the property back. Just want to clarify that. That's fine as far as I'm concerned. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Okay. Further comment or discussion? Seeing none.

**MOTION CARRIED**

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector, Patti Barry, Deputy Treasurer/Tax Collector

Thank you.

Patti Barry, Deputy Treasurer/Deputy Tax Collector

Thank you.

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

L Deerwood Drive – Lot H-103

- tabled at 6/28/23 meeting

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Alderman Jette

Thank you. I did want to say that I reviewed the parking ordinance very quickly and I see it only pertains to Zone 3, correct? So Zone 3 is not Main Street. It's not the prime parking spots and the controversy I was thinking of in the past had to do with different merchants resenting other people's employees parking on Main Street. This has nothing to do with Main Street. It's just Zone 3. Just to clarify to the public, the free parking is Zone 3. Through you could I ask someone to come up and remind us where zone 3 is what that consists of?

Chairman O'Brien

Absolutely. Director Cummings would you be so kind.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Thank you. Yes Mr. Chairman. For the record, Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director. So Zone 3 could be thought of as the most outer areas of where we have for paid parking in the downtown - Maple Street, Elm Street, Pine Street, Pine Street Extension, part of Cottage Street. So if you think about the furthest outskirts areas, that's really the Zone 3 parking areas. I'm sorry? Quincy Street. So that kind of gives you a snap shot as to the area that we're talking about.

To Alderman Jette's point, we are not talking about Main Street per se because that's Zone 1. Yes that is where we typically have heard about the concerns of abuse happening on Main Street relative to employees or owners of businesses parking on Main Street for maybe a little too long so thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

While we have you here Director Cummings, I think there is a follow up coming. Yes, Alderman Jette.

Alderman Jette

Does it include the garages?

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

I believe it does, yes. I'm going back from memory but I believe Zone 3 does include garages.

Alderman Jette

Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

While we have you there Director Cummings - just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water - but to Alderman Jette's point if somebody wanted to bring it up, this is on the City website with the zones and the parking zones.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

Absolutely.

Chairman O'Brien

So somebody could explore this hopefully easy enough that they could see the different zones.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

You could. Right on the parking web page there's a zoning map. I'm sorry Alderman Klee did I take your thunder?

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Klee.

Alderman Klee

No you did not. I was going to say exactly what you said. If you go into the government, parking, and it says “downtown parking map”. It’s quite clear. It gives all the different colors of Zone 1, 2, and 3 and 3 is the green Zone. It’s the library lot over by that are too.

Tim Cummings, Administrative Services Director

And I think our Chairman very astutely knew this and he did a wonderful job teasing it out for the public’s benefit.

Chairman O’Brien

Thank you. Okay anything else? Seeing none.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

POSSIBLE NONPUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN COMEAU TO ADJOURN  
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 6:35 p.m.

Alderman Alex Comeau, Committee Clerk