

**CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JUNE 27, 2019**

The Committee Chairman, Councillor James Johnson, called the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall. Committee members Councillors Karen Hardern and Edward Gravel were present.

Other Officials present were Deputy Chief of Police James Trifiro; City Councillor Nathan Boudreau; and, City Clerk Alan Agnelli.

Residents of Ash Street in attendance and participating were Norman Webb; Raymond and Sharon Lashua; and, Richard Jalbert.

Minutes of Prior Meeting(s).

On a motion by Councillor Gravel and seconded by Councillor Hardern, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the May 28, 2019 Public Safety Committee Meeting, as printed.

#10130, An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 275 Thereof, Entitled "Traffic Commission," to Change Commission Membership (In City Council and Referred to Public Safety, 6/17/2019).

Chairman Johnson noted that the Director of Code Enforcement, Jennifer Dymek, has been actively participating in Traffic Commission meetings and that the position's inclusion was an oversight when the Ordinance was adopted. He suggested that the Committee vote to recommend that the Council pass the Ordinance amendment.

On a motion by Councillor Gravel and seconded by Councillor Hardern, it was voted to recommend to the City Council to Order the following Ordinance amendment to First Printing:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GARDNER, CHAPTER 275 THEREOF, ENTITLED "TRAFFIC COMMISSION," TO CHANGE COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP.

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Gardner as follows:

Section 1. Subsection B. of § 275-1 of the Code of the City of Gardner is hereby amended by inserting the words "Civil Enforcement Director" immediately following the words "Director of Community Development and Planning."

Section 2. Effective date.

This ordinance shall become effective on passage and publication as required by law.

#10131, An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Gardner, Chapter 600 Thereof, Entitled "Vehicles and Traffic," Article V. Parking Meters and Article VI. Stopping, Standing, and Parking (In City Council and Referred to Public Safety, 6/17/2019).

Chairman James Johnson introduced the following Ordinance for discussion:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GARDNER, CHAPTER 600 THEREOF, ENTITLED "VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC," ARTICLE V. PARKING METERS AND ARTICLE VI. STOPPING, STANDING AND PARKING.

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Gardner as follows:

Section 1.

Section 600-18 A. of Chapter 600, Three-Hour Parking Meters, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by adding the following:

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Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	From Connors Street to Nichols Street (6 spaces)
Knowlton Street	South	From Connors Street to Nichols Street (4 spaces)
Connors Street	West	From the corner of Knowlton Street northerly for a distance of 238 feet (10 spaces).

Section 2.

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by deleting and repealing the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	Entire Length

Section 3.

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by adding the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Ash Street	West	From the southerly property line of 164 Ash Street migrating in a southerly direction to the intersection of West Street and Monadnock Street.
Knowlton Street	North	From Pleasant Street to Connors Street.

Section 4.

This ordinance shall become effective upon passage and publication as required by law.

With several residents of Ash Street in attendance, Chairman Johnson called for discussion of Section 3 of the proposed Ordinance amendment, the Ash Street Parking restriction as follows:

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by adding the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Ash Street	West	From the southerly property line of 164 Ash Street migrating in a southerly direction to the intersection of West Street and Monadnock Street.

Deputy Chief of Police James Trifiro informed the Committee that the Traffic Commission responded to a parking complaint from a resident of Ash Street. Consequently, the Commission consulted the City Engineer and the Public Works Director and they reported that the width of a majority of the roadway was less than the Code requirement of 28 feet.

Councillor Gravel said that sidewalks were removed on the right side of the street up to Allen Street and that there is currently a parking restriction on the same side of the street as the Hen House. He added that he has to take into consideration the parking needs of those tenants of rental units that do not have off-street parking.

The Deputy Chief informed the Committee that the Commission's recommendation arose from a complaint from an Ash Street resident and that its recommendation complies with the street width requirements delineated in the City Code. He explained that the width of Ash Street is 24

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feet, 4 feet less than the requirement. In addition, the Code requires a minimum width of 8 feet for parking spaces and a width of 10 feet for each travel lane for safe passage of motor vehicles.

Councillor Gravel asked whether the Traffic Commission considered a one-way traffic pattern.

The Deputy Chief responded, saying that in theory, it appears to be a good idea; however, there are not enough crossroads to accommodate public safety vehicles in an emergency, as Little Street is the nearest crossroad off Ash Street and is a great distance from the beginning of Ash Street at Monadnock Street.

Councillor Gravel stated that the City has two options – to either ban parking on a length of Ash Street or to institute one-way travel.

Councillor Johnson suggested that perhaps a provision for waiving the width requirement could be added to the Code, adding that widening the street is not a viable option.

Councillor Hardern expressed concern about disabled persons needing to park on the restricted side of the street in order to access their houses.

Deputy Chief Trifiro reminded the Committee that the Traffic Commission recommended the parking restriction based solely on street and vehicle width requirements presently defined in the City Code.

Councillor Hardern noted that she encountered a similar problem with a resident of Greenwood Street, where vehicles park in front of a resident's walkway because there is no parking on the opposite side of the street.

Chairman Johnson cited comments from an extract of an e-mail from DPW Director Dane Arnold concerning the Departments investigation of the parking situation on Ash Street.

Ward 3 Councillor Nathan Boudreau informed the Committee that, in January, he received the parking complaint from a constituent of Ash Street and referred it to the Traffic Commission. He noted that letters from two residents of Ash Street were passed along to the Clerk for the record (Scott M. and Christine Graves, 92 Ash Street and Matthew Hudson, 120 Ash Street).

Councillor Hardern questioned whether the Ward Councillor, Councillor Boudreau, had a recommendation for the Safety Committee.

Councillor Boudreau stated that he understands the concerns of people on both sides of the issue and that from soliciting the opinions of residents of Ash Street, they are "50-50" concerning the proposed parking restriction. He added that he would like to hear from the residents of Ash Street first before making a recommendation.

Chairman James Johnson noted that there was a similar parking problem on Bennett Road directly across from Holy Spirit Church.

Norman Webb, a resident of Ash Street, informed the Committee that he is aware that there have been many traffic accidents near the Hen House at the bottom of Ash Street at Monadnock,

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which he described as a “bad intersection.” He suggested that some action be taken to alleviate the problem at that intersection and that perhaps a trial one-way traffic pattern be implemented for Ash Street and that parking be restricted to one side only.

Raymond Lashua, a resident of Ash Street, informed the Committee that he and his wife have been residents of Ash Street for 45 years and that there have been traffic problems since then. He said that he has photographs of vehicles that are parked on the street by tenants that have available off-street parking and their driveways are open. He said that he stopped his home mail delivery because the postal carrier could not access his house due to snowbanks and vehicles parked in front of his walkway and on sidewalks. He added that the City could force residents to park their vehicles to use off-street parking if “no parking” restrictions are implemented. Sharon Lashua scolded landlords for not clearing snow from driveways so that their tenants have access to off-street parking.

Richard Jalbert, an Ash Street resident, concurred with comments made by his Ash Street neighbors, and pondered whether a flashing traffic signal could be installed at the crest of Ash Street in order to warn approaching motorists of the potential danger of oncoming traffic. He added that, in winter, motorists will speed up Ash Street from Little Street in order to make the crest of the hill.

Mr. Webb remarked that the two-way traffic pattern “is the problem.”

Mr. Lashua added that he has no objection to implementing the proposed parking restriction on his side of the street since everyone has a driveway.

Mr. Webb suggested that the City impose the ban on a trial basis. If it does not work, he said, then try something else, such as one-way travel.

Councillor Gravel read aloud a statement from Councillor James Boone, attached hereto.

A resident added that Councillor Boone owns 6 houses on Ash Street and the multiple garages at the end of Monadnock Street.

Deputy Chief Trifiro informed the Committee that there were approximately 7 to 8 reportable motor vehicle accidents on Ash Street in the past 10 years.

Chairman Johnson questioned the Committee’s intentions – whether to refer the proposal back to the Traffic Commission to consider a one-way travel option, or to request more time on the referral.

On a motion Councillor Hardern and seconded by Councillor Gravel, it was voted to request more time for study and report.

Chairman Johnson called the Committee to address the proposal for metered parking on Connors and Knowlton Streets, as well as the provision to allow parking on the North side of Knowlton Street from Connors Street to Nichols Street (6 spaces), as follows:

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Section 1.

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Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	From Connors Street to Nichols Street (6 spaces)
Knowlton Street	South	From Connors Street to Nichols Street (4 spaces)
Connors Street	West	From the corner of Knowlton Street northerly for a distance of 238 feet (10 spaces).

Section 2.

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by deleting and repealing the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	Entire Length

Section 3.

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by adding the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	From Pleasant Street to Connors Street.

Chairman Johnson opened the discussion by noting that under City Code, parking is currently prohibited on the northerly side of Knowlton Street from Connors Street to Nichols Street; however, there are no signs informing motorists that parking is prohibited along this stretch of 6 spaces. He said that the stretch of this section of Knowlton Street is wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides of the street from Connors Street to Nichols Street. He suggested that the Committee vote to recommend to the City Council to adopt the following elements of Section 2 and 3 of the Ordinance amendment:

Section 2.

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by deleting and repealing the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	Entire Length

Section 3.

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by adding the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	From Pleasant Street to Connors Street.

On a motion by Councillor Gravel and seconded by Councillor Hardern, it was voted to recommend to the City Council to Order the following to First Printing:

Section 2.

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by deleting and repealing the following:

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Name of Street	Side	Location
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Section 3.

Section 600-24 of Chapter 600, Parking Prohibited on Certain Streets, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by adding the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	From Pleasant Street to Connors Street.

Chairman Johnson opened the discussion relating to Section 1 of the Amendment, the creation of metered zones on Knowlton and Connors Streets, as follows:

Section 1.

Section 600-18 A. of Chapter 600, Three-Hour Parking Meters, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended by adding the following:

Name of Street	Side	Location
Knowlton Street	North	From Connors Street to Nichols Street (6 spaces)
Knowlton Street	South	From Connors Street to Nichols Street (4 spaces)
Connors Street	West	From the corner of Knowlton Street northerly for a distance of 238 feet (10 spaces).

Chairman Johnson, referencing the Mayor's correspondence, stated that the Mayor suggests that the areas proposed for parking meters be designated for Two-Hour Parking.

Deputy Chief Trifiro informed the Committee that the provisions of the City Code relating to Two-Hour Parking were repealed in 2011, since it is not an enforceable option.

Chairman Johnson said that he sees metered parking as the most enforceable option for parked vehicle turnover, which would help customers of the Hair Salon and patients of the Health Center find parking near the establishments. He said that Two-Hour parking is difficult to enforce, since an officer would have to be present and record the times that certain vehicles park, the locations, and the specific times that each departs. He added that Downtown merchants want metered parking for customer turnover.

Councillor Gravel stated that he isn't a fan of parking meters and that metering the various spaces would be a detriment to the neighborhood.

Councillor Hardern agreed, adding that she is concerned about elderly needs.

On a motion by Councillor Gravel and seconded by Councillor Hardern, it was voted two (2) in favor, Gravel and Hardern, one (1) opposed, Johnson, to recommend to the City Council that Section 1 not be adopted.

Adjournment.

On a motion Councillor Gravel and seconded by Councillor Hardern, it was voted to adjourn at 7:41 p.m.