

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH & TRAFFIC

June 20, 2022 at 6:15 PM

Chairman Barry called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Barry, Long, Stewart, George-Kelly, Sharonov

Messrs.: W. O'Reilly, A. Easterly, T. Zamoyski, Sgt. Donahue, Lt. DiTullio, K. Clarke

1. Presentation on the upcoming Manchester Arts Festival by Warren O'Reilly from the the Palace Theatre and Laura Zorawowicz, Festival Director.

Warren O'Reilly, Palace Theatre, stated unfortunately Laura is out of town so she was unable to make it. I am an Assistant to Peter Ramsey and one of the things we are doing this year is working with Laura and the Palace staff and the City on a city-wide arts festival. I will just briefly go through the packet being handed out. One of the things Peter Ramsey wanted to do and one of the recommendations made in the 2021 Manchester Master Plan was to engage the arts community and the Opera Block. It is a week-long celebration of the arts from September 12 through the 18. The events will take place in downtown Manchester with some of our local partners and civic partners. The festival will culminate in a two-day fair on Saturday and Sunday, the 17 and 18, on the Opera Block of Hanover Street. The event application is currently in the City Clerk's Office. We will be asking to close Hanover Street from Chestnut Street to Elm Street from 10 AM until 4 PM on Saturday and Sunday. The mission is obviously to offer unique and meaningful points of contact in the Greater Manchester community. It will help us in our upcoming season. We will be able to work with common partners. We are working with The Bookery, the Currier Museum of Art, Manchester Music School, and Studio 550 to offer programming that is already existing that week. We will culminate them all together and do a pull-out Hippo supplement. The plan is that in the first year or two the Palace will be the stewards when it comes to insurance and the public process and then hopefully...after the festival this year I would be happy to come back with the rest of the people and answer any questions and talk about how it went. We have a rain delay plan. We have been working with various City departments. We have had meetings with the Economic Development Office and spoken to the Manchester Arts Commission. We applied for the CEAG grant. We are very excited about this. The closing of Hanover Street is probably the most pressing item for this committee but we have been working with a lot of the Palace staff and alumni. This will coincide with the opening of our first show of the season which is The Little Mermaid. . Like I said we will have food trucks and some public performances and some live art. We are working with James Chase and other established Manchester artists. We are very excited.

Chairman Barry asked did you already put in a request to close down Hanover Street.

Mr. O'Reilly answered yes. We filled out the special event application.

Chairman Barry stated I don't see any problem with that being approved as the event gets closer.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I just want to say thank you for putting this on. I think this is a great event and I think it is an awesome contribution to our city so I really appreciate you coming to share this with us and I look forward to attending.

Mr. O'Reilly replied thank you. I will let Peter Ramsey and everyone else at the Palace know.

Alderman Stewart stated I want to echo Alderman George-Kelly's thanks for putting an event like this on. The arts community is thriving here in the city I think working in different pockets so it is nice to see this big collaboration. I was curious if you might be able to talk a little bit about some of the actual events that are going to be taking place.

Mr. O'Reilly stated we started by meeting with six primary art groups in the area whether it was the Manchester Music School or the Currier or Studio 550 or The Bookery. They are all going to be doing their own events so simultaneously they will have their own programming. This was an idea to get all of the programming that will happen during that week and put it under a banner and use our combined forces to advertise and let everybody know and have the Hippo who are really doing a great job helping us with a pull-out supplement. The advertising that the Hippo generates will help us pay for most of the events. That being said, there is also going to be a large art component. We have accepted artwork from various people from the city and state and beyond. We have a great group of local artists. We are also going to have live performances. The poet laureate of the state of NH will be performing with his drum circle. We are going to be doing events on Hanover Street and will have gallery showings in our Spotlight Room. We will be working with the people in the area like Diane Crespo and other gallery artists on that street for them to be able to publically display their stuff during the week. We will also have live performances during the week, not just at the two-day festival. There will be programming at the Currier and we are in talks for them to offer free admission for arts week as well. That is a conversation that is ongoing for some limited portion of that week. The Palace will be offering discounted tickets to shows also. To answer your question, there will be specific programming for that week. It is going to be in the form of public performances by all of these said artists but they will take place typically in their own locations. There will be a pull-out supplement in the Hippo hopefully in the next month or so that will let you know what the events will be. The plan is to have it be affordable and accessible to everybody. The street fair will be free and the events at the street fair like the gallery exhibitions will be free.

Alderman Stewart stated I appreciate that and am looking forward to all of this coming to fruition in September.

Alderman Stewart moved to authorize the Police Department to the two-day closure of Hanover Street. Alderman Long duly seconded the motion. Chairman Barry called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Mr. O'Reilly stated thank you very much. I appreciate your time. You have my information if there are any questions.

2. Crash Data for Maple and Beech Streets between Bridge Street and Cilley Road.
(Note: For informational purposes only; no action is required.)

Alderman Stewart stated I am aware that this is just for informational purposes but I wanted to thank Kristen Clarke and the Department of Public Works for putting together this analysis of Maple and Beech Streets south of Bridge Street. As the committee may be aware, a few years ago north of Bridge Street on both the Maple and Beech Street corridors as well as Pine and Chestnut we were able to really get some enhanced traffic mitigation measures including going down to one lane and the inclusion of a bike lane and it really has made a difference for safety and quality of life and crash reduction. The folks south of Beech Street are working with Alderman Heath who is sitting in the audience, Alderman Fajardo, School Committee Member Want and Alderman T. Sapienza who has been involved as well to see what we can do in the center city. I know that the recommendations made here are definitely a great first start in the short-term mitigation measures to help bring those traffic crashes down. I am looking forward to working with the department further to come up with some longer term solutions that might have even more of an impact. Thank you Kristen and the entire Public Works team. Also thanks to the Police Department for putting together all of the crash data to be analyzed. I am looking forward to seeing more to come on this.

3. The Traffic Division has submitted an agenda which needs to be addressed:
NO PARKING ANYTIME
On Circular Drive Connector, both sides, from Reservoir Avenue to Circular Drive
On Reservoir Avenue, north side, from Circular Drive Connector to Reservoir Avenue
On Beech Street, west side, from Orange Street to a point 100 feet north
Alderman Stewart
NO PARKING LOADING ZONE
On Grove Street, north side, from a point 150 feet east of Wilson Street to a point 40 feet east
Alderman Sapienza
30-MINUTE PARKING
On Somerville Street, north side, from a point 20 feet east of Norris Street to a point 40 feet east
Alderman Heath
RESCIND NO PARKING ANYTIME
On Beech Street, west side, from Myrtle Street to Orange Street (ORD 2631)
Alderman Stewart

On motion of Alderman Long, duly seconded by Alderman George-Kelly, it was voted to approve the traffic agenda items.

4. Communication from the Queen City Bike Collective requesting the placement of bicycle racks throughout the city.

Chairman Barry asked do we have someone from the Queen City Bike Collective here.

Abby Easterly stated I am a volunteer with Queen City Bike Collective and the Executive Director at the moment.

Tammy Zamoyski stated I am also a volunteer with the Queen City Bike Collective and the regional planner for the Southern NH Planning Commission.

Chairman Barry asked where are the bicycle racks going to be placed throughout the city.

Ms. Easterly answered we have proposed some of them but we are still planning on getting more input. We don't have all of the exact locations yet. I guess we are not quite clear when we need permission. That is why we are here. Before we put in the proposal for the grant we did talk to the Parking Division and they are open to the idea of us renting parking spaces in the lot and even in the garage and using those for bike parking. We would like to try to get two spots at Hartnett and perhaps also in the Victory Garage.

Chairman Barry asked are these going to be outside the garage or inside.

Ms. Easterly replied theoretically I think we like the idea of inside the garage to provide some weather protected parking and see if that is useful to people. When I stopped by there they did say that they might be very useful outside the garage near the courthouse. It might even be both.

Chairman Barry asked and do you think you are going to need to take up parking spaces.

Ms. Easterly responded we would like to take up parking spaces. If it is really unpopular we don't absolutely have to. In order to get the protection in the garage, we would have to. I don't think there is any other space in the garage to do that. I think the idea of protection has some value. There is also this structure that is in the documents we submitted that we can borrow. It is a covered bike parking structure that you can put in parking spaces. This would be a demonstration. This is deliberate to use parking spaces. If you think we can't afford using those then we would welcome your input.

Chairman Barry stated I think what we will need from you specifically for the Hartnett Lot and the Victory Parking Garage is to coordinate with our Parking Manager and our Traffic Division to see where you are going to place them and how many and how much room they are going to take. As far as City Hall Plaza, Market Street, Veteran's Park and West High School tennis courts, that wouldn't take up any parking spaces and will just be in those areas so I don't think anyone will have a problem with those. Could you coordinate with city staff and come back and let us know what is going to be done in the garage?

Ms. Easterly answered the garage would be very easy to put off because I think that is more important in bad weather and we were thinking about trying it over the winter if possible; doing a demonstration there. As far as the Hartnett Lot, if we can coordinate with them...we have access to this covered structure for July. If we don't move on that, then that season will be gone. It is possible we could then find a private parking lot to

use. This belongs to the Concord Lake Sunapee Rail Trail. They own the covered structure and would loan it to us. They have been trying to get in the Market Basket parking lot to do a demo but they have been reluctant. Maybe we could find a private lot.

Alderman Stewart stated I am fully in support and want to thank you, Abby, for your leadership and the QC Bike Collective. You sold yourself a little short because you are the driving force behind this organization and more for its creation. Thank you to you and all of the volunteers that are here with you and supporters. I appreciate what you are doing and I love seeing bike infrastructure multiply here in the city and in no small part that is due to the QC Bike Collective efforts. I am fully in support of getting more bike racks which will encourage more riders as do additional bike lanes. I will say for the record that I don't have a problem with racks going in all of the garages that we have here in the city. I don't think the parking garages are at capacity most days so to the extent that we can have one or two spaces to be utilized for bike racks...we can put a lot more bikes in one space than we can one car. If we want to encourage greater usage of non-motorized transport, this is a good way to do it but letting people leave their bikes outside of the elements. I think that is a great idea. Thank you for your leadership and thank you to the entire organization.

Alderman Long stated thank you. The Hartnett Lot may be under construction so I don't know if you are taking that into consideration. Alderman Barry are you recommending that she speak with Parking and...

Chairman Barry interjected just in reference to the Victory Parking Garage. I don't think anyone has a problem with any of the other locations.

Alderman Long stated she might want to reach out to West High to see about the tennis courts. I sit on the Planning Board and every developer is asked whether they are going to put up bike racks. It is here and we encourage it. It is easy transportation. Thank you for bringing this forward.

*On motion of **Alderman Stewart**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to have the QC Bike Collective work with City staff for placement of bike racks throughout the city.*

5. Communication from Sergeant Michael Donahue of the Manchester Police Department recommending fee adjustments to the city's towing contract.

Michael Donahue, Sergeant, Traffic Unit, stated with me tonight is Lt. DiTullio. We both manage the traffic unit and we ask the tow companies here in the city to do roughly 3,000 to 4,000 tows a year for the Police Department. I have included some changes due to issues we have had with campers and different larger vehicles. When you look at things like labor costs and the cost for fuel and the daily cost, it has almost become prohibitive for them under the current contract we have with them. We do have five companies that are currently under contract, which is good through December of this calendar year. That does include snow emergencies in the winter. Everything is spelled out. We do ask a lot of those tow companies that are on our contract that are not necessarily asked of those that are businesses licensed here in the city. They have

to have certain items like tarps and they have to have employees that are vetted. There are a bunch of different things that are all binding in the contract. The issue that we are looking to have adjusted to reflect what is happening currently in municipalities around us in the southern part of the state is just the fees so they can stay active as a business and we can have the necessary services that we need on a regular basis continue and not have them wanting to leave the city's contract. If you look at it, all of the fees that are changed in this contract are itemized and none of the language, with the exception of the fees, is being adjusted per this recommendation.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I have a couple of questions for you. My first question is when we were talking about towing contracts during this past winter season we were told that the city had three towing contracts and this letter tells us that we have five. Can you help me to understand the discrepancy in that as well as we were told that for snow emergencies each one of our contracts required the private towing company to have two trucks on the road during snow emergencies and these contracts say one? I am confused on the discrepancy with that as well.

Sgt. Donahue replied I don't know where that information came from. There are five businesses on the Manchester Police Department contract. I don't know what contracts other departments in the city might have. I don't know if DPW or another division has one. We have one contract with five companies here in the city.

Alderman George-Kelly responded well that is what I mean. We were told that the contract was with three companies in the city from the Police Department and now we are being told that there are five.

Greg DiTullio, Lieutenant, asked who informed you of that.

Alderman George-Kelly answered your Chief when we were discussing this during the winter season. We also asked the Chief to take a look at those contracts to make sure that they were updated to be able to meet the needs of towing during the winter season. I understand completely and support the idea that the increases in pay need to change and those increases need to be made but I am concerned that we are making changes to this contract now when there are further changes needed to meet the demands of the city before the winter season comes around.

Lt. DiTullio responded we will revisit the contract, which is up in December, again. Obviously we are still several months away from that. With the costs that these tow companies are accruing, they are actually losing money on their end based on inflation, gas prices, and everything we ask them to do. Realistically, we wouldn't be able to operate efficiently as a city without these tow companies. That is why we are making the recommendation for the fee adjustments today. As far as the snow emergency tows, those were a big ticket for us last winter and something that will be revisited as well. We are currently working on a new proposal to bring before you. I am hoping that we can get it in front of you before the end of August so we can get things moving in the right direction. For right now, there are five companies on the city contract and these are the recommendations that we have going forward.

Alderman George-Kelly stated so just to clarify, the plan is to increase rates now and then revisit the contracts again to plan for the winter season and bring that before this committee by the end of August.

Lt. DiTullio replied that would be our goal.

Alderman Stewart stated thank you for putting this together. I can certainly sympathize, as Alderman George-Kelly said, with increased labor costs and increased fuel costs and the inflation and everything that comes with it. We certainly want to keep these tow companies working with the city because we need them, not just during snow emergencies. We do especially need them during snow emergencies and we want to make sure they are around this winter as well. The only thing I wanted to ask about are the fee increase you are recommending and if they are in line with what these companies charge other municipalities? How did you come up with the numbers?

Sgt. Donahue responded we inquired from Hooksett, Bedford, Nashua and similar municipalities that have tow contracts that surround us and that is where these fees came from. We wanted to be in line with those other contracts. We are not as high as some and we are not as low as others. These are kind of in the middle. Not every municipality has a snow emergency outlined in a tow contract. We do, Nashua does and some of the larger cities do. If you look at that, that is the only thing where the fee is a little bit more specific and written into our contract. If you see, it went from the number that it is now, \$110, which is the same as any other tow in the city to a fee of \$200. That \$200 is specific to the snow emergency only. It is less than that for a regular tow by \$25. I don't know if you saw that but the fee that the city would get from that also increased \$10 per tow. The individual tow companies would make less per tow if that makes sense because they are \$165 versus \$175 but the volume of towing on those nights and the distance traveled seems to be a little bit different so we think it is a win-win for everyone. We do have representatives from the five companies on the contract here tonight in support of the proposal before you. One last thing that I want to make sure you understand is that in addition to the Manchester Police Department contract, there is an ordinance for private tows unregulated by the Manchester Police Department. That is ordinance 70.40 and it has the same \$110 stipulation that they cannot exceed for a private tow that the Police Department didn't call for. We are asking that the ordinance be amended to reflect what current day charges are for the other municipalities. It doesn't need all of these items added to the ordinance. The only thing referenced is 70.40 is the \$110 and then the storage per day fee which are outlined in the document. That is the only thing that would change on that ordinance. Those two numbers versus all of the other stuff that I itemized that is relative only to the Police Department contract.

Alderman Sharonov stated I have a question about the snow emergencies. The proposed amount is \$200 and \$35 goes to the City of Manchester. Is \$200 the amount that we charge the driver to pick up the car from the lot?

Sgt. Donahue answered \$200 is what we charge the driver to pick it up and the city gets its cut at that time.

Alderman Sharonov asked so the city doesn't lose any money by towing someone who didn't move their vehicle.

Lt. DiTullio replied no the city does not lose any money.

Alderman Sharonov stated maybe you didn't understand the question. The \$200 is going to be charged to the city by the towing company correct because it is at the request of the Police Department that they are towed?

Sgt. Donahue responded no. They would bill the customer or the person who violated the parking ordinance and got their vehicle towed. The customer would have to pay \$200 to get their car back. Of that \$200, \$35 comes back to the City of Manchester. Prior to that it was \$25 to the city and \$110 was charged to the customer.

Alderman Sharonov asked so if somebody's vehicle gets towed during the snow emergency they would have to pay more money to pick it up.

Sgt. Donahue answered that is correct.

Alderman Long moved to approve. Alderman Sharonov duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated as far as your contract with the five companies, is the snow emergency contract with those five also.

Sgt. Donahue replied yes it is.

Chairman Barry called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

6. Communication from Nick Vailas of ExpressMED to have two 1/4 hour parking spaces in front of 35 Kosciuszko Street changed to Covid Testing Parking from Monday through Friday, 8 AM - 7 PM and Saturday from 9 AM - 4 PM.

On motion of Alderman Long, duly seconded by Alderman George-Kelly, it was voted to approve.

7. Request from St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral to close the following streets for their annual Glendi event to be held on September 16, 17, and 18:
 - Kenney Street at Hanover Street
 - Hilton Street at Amherst Street(10 AM-11 PM on the 16th & 17th and 11 AM-5 PM on the 18th)

On motion of Alderman Long, duly seconded by Alderman Stewart, it was voted to approve.

8. Communication from Alderman Sharonov requesting a traffic study be conducted for the installation of a crosswalk for the Rockingham Trail just south of the roundabout on Candia Road.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Sharonov**, it was voted to approve.*

Alderman Sharonov asked would the committee like me to talk about it.

Chairman Barry stated we are going to approve having the traffic study done so that's not necessary.

9. Communication from Mark Foster of 77 Scenic Drive regarding traffic calming/mitigation solutions for the north end of Elm Street.

Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, stated the request was made by the resident on Scenic Drive. DPW has been working up there for a couple of years doing different mitigation. They are upset about crashes that are happening in their backyard because people are going past the dead-end of Elm Street. We have done a lot of improvements on signage and changing the lighting. In September we installed a dead-end sign that has a flashing light that is vehicle activated because all of the crashes were happening between midnight and 2 AM. It was a lot of DUI's or hit and runs. We feel at this point that we have done everything we can.

***Alderman Long** moved to receive and file. **Alderman Sharonov** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Sharonov asked can we send a letter to this gentleman so he knows the city already did all of this stuff.

Ms. Clarke stated Alderman Cavanaugh has met with him and we have gone through the list with him. I believe he has it but they still want more done and that is why it was brought to this committee.

Alderman George-Kelly asked do you know how many accidents have happened since we have done all of that stuff because there have been a number correct.

Ms. Clarke answered it has been 1-2 a year. It is actually the same as before it just wasn't in someone's backyard. The Police Department pulled the information for the last 10 years and there have been 1-2 a year every year. It hasn't substantially changed. Since we installed the flashing light in September there has been one crash.

***Chairman Barry** called for a vote. *There being none opposed, the motion carried.**

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Stewart**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.



City Clerk