

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PARKING TOWN OF NORWICH

The Selectboard for the Town of Norwich, in light of general concerns raised about parking in the Village District, and in light of upcoming decisions about the viability of the current location of the Post Office, requested an ad hoc committee, under the aegis of the Office of the Town Manager, to review the current situation for parking in the Village District, identify problems and recommend solutions. Members of the Committee were Town Manager Steve Soares, Police Chief Doug Robinson, Town Planner Phil Dechert, Roger Blake, Liza Bernard, Peter Rutledge, Marion Cross School Principal Rob Edson and Jack Candon.

BACKGROUND

The Committee met in the conference room in Tracy Hall on September 26, 2006, October 10, 2006, November 21, 2006, December 12, 2006, January 9, 2007 and February 22, 2007, and determined an inventory of existing public and private parking spaces (Addendum A). The identified 'user groups' are:

- (1) people who work in the Village District;
- (2) people who avail themselves of the retail locations and service offices in the Village District;
- (3) people who use the parking spaces for 'drop off' convenience and leave the vehicle(s) while they leave for other places;
- (4) people with school related needs; and
- (5) people involved with special events at Tracy Hall, the Marion Cross School, local churches and other gathering places

OBSERVATIONS

It is important that we encourage people to utilize the Village District and support the businesses that are there. During the work week, there are normally an adequate number of available parking spaces in the Village District. On most weekends that is also true. The problems arise:

- (1) during 'pick-up' for the Marion Cross School;
- (2) during 'return/drop off/pick-up' function of the Crossroads Academy

[#1 and #2 both exacerbate an already tight parking situation at the Norwich Square and which take spaces needed for customers of the businesses and which create traffic flow congestion which discourages customers of the Norwich Square businesses]

- (3) during special events at the Marion Cross School and/or Tracy Hall and/or the churches

[It was *also* brought to the attention of the committee that there are no convenient 'handicap van accessible' spaces currently in the Village District and that particular problem needs to be on the table in future planning and site plan reviews in Town]

REMEDIES

It is not practical to add spaces in the Village District to solve the problem times and areas. It is important to manage existing spaces more effectively.

- 1 Employees of the school, and of the retail and service businesses in the Village District need to utilize spaces on Main Street along the green and south of Elm Street. It should be noted that encouraging parking along Main Street along the green and south of Elm Street **will** require a new crosswalk to mitigate the danger of added pedestrian use at that location. The need for this new crosswalk cannot be discounted. It should be a priority.
- 2 To facilitate this new parking protocol, it will be necessary to revise the winter parking hours from 11 PM – 8 AM to 11 PM to **6 AM** for that area in roughly a two (2) block area around the intersection of Main Street and Route 5 at the Norwich Square; and for the earlier hour to be coordinated among the tenants of Norwich Square, the Public Works Department and the Police Department.
- 3 The north side of Elm Street from the side of Main Street to the entrance/exit of the Norwich Square should be lined for use for "Delivery Only" to allow the delivery vehicles serving the Norwich Square to park on a temporary basis along that side of Elm Street to effect deliveries.
- 4 An appropriate program of educating the users of parking to utilize the under-utilized public spaces; including Huntley Field rather than Dan & Whits or Norwich Square as a place to 'drop off' cars and leave them for extended periods while the owners car pool to an out of town location, go for a bike ride, or any other non guest/customer/client use.
- 5 Require the supervisors of special events to direct vendors or other set-up participants to park at Huntley Field. It is not satisfactory to have those persons set up and then park at Norwich Square or Dan & Whits as their 'off-site' choice. Arrange to shuttle the vendors and set-up participants to Huntley Field. [This protocol can be emphasized at the time of booking the Tracy Hall or Marion Cross School space by a hand out directing vendors and set-up people to Huntley Field with a map and directions].
- 6 Coordinating with Crossroads Academy for an alternate location for their drop off/pick up function that gets it away from Norwich Square.
- 7 The Marion Cross School encourage its 'users' to investigate alternative ways of accessing the school property (i.e. through use of the school bus service; walking; staff parking along the green on Main Street or at Huntley Field with a shuttle arrangement; continuing reminders to parents of the courtesies possible in the regular school's informational flow.

- 8 If and when Advance Transit (or any public transportation) adds stops – to plan for adequate new parking to avoid burdening the existing spaces

FURTHER DISCUSSION INVITED

For the majority of times and circumstances, parking is not a problem in Norwich for businesses or their customers. When problems arise (special events, school drop offs and pick ups), however, they are big problems. In the absence of practical new spaces, better use of existing spaces will be necessary. Most of the gains will be through the results of educating users and directing special event sponsors to utilize Huntley Field parking. We need a better understanding of the reasonable expectations of the private property owners as well as those of the business owners and users that depend on the private parking provided – and ways to mitigate the impact of public use of private spaces.

Implementing some or all of the proposed remedies should resolve many of the Norwich Square parking issues and increase the viability of the current location of the Post Office. This needs to be a continuing discussion with convenient methods of community involvement recognized and regularly utilized. It is necessary to identify and provide for functional park and ride(s) that people will use (rather than currently utilized private parking at the Norwich Square and Dan & Whits) for those drivers going across the river to Hanover. Parking needs to be a material consideration in all site plan reviews. The recommendations of this first report recognize that this is a moving target and will need to be re-visited and revised. The Parking Committee will try to meet again in the fall after school has begun to review the effectiveness of the recommendations and to change those that are not working.

February 22, 2007

Addendum A

Inventory of public and private parking

Parking Areas

Private Spaces:	Norwich Square	60 spaces plus 3 handicap spaces
	Mascoma Bank	22 spaces plus 1 handicap space
	Eastern Mtn Mortgage	25 spaces, no handicap spaces
	Dan and Whits	45 spaces plus 1 handicap space
	Norwich Inn	32 spaces plus 2 handicap spaces
		10 additional spaces in the rear
	Larry Lane area	22 spaces
Public Spaces	Huntley Field	40 spaces
	Lower Huntley Field	50 spaces
	Tracy Hall (Rt 5 Side)	9 spaces
	Tracy Hall	17 spaces plus 1 handicap space
	Marion Cross School	18 spaces plus 1 handicap space
	MCS RT 5	15 spaces
	Main Street @ MCS to	
	Hazen St – both sides	110 spaces
	Beaver Meadow Road	8 spaces
	American Legion	25 spaces
	Norwich Police Dept.	8 spaces
	Norwich Fire Dept	8 spaces
	Library Lot and Hazen St	25 spaces plus 1 handicap space

HUNTLEY MEADOW
PARKING

TURNPIKE RD

KOCH RD

MAIN STREET

BEAVER MEADOW RD

TRACY HALL

TRACY HALL TO
HUNTLEY MEADOW
APPROX. 0.9 MILES

