

Minutes were approved on December 20, 2023, by the Public Works Committee.

**CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
5:30 P.M.**

City Hall - Armand A. Bolduc Council Chamber

4/10/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Haynes called the meeting to order at 5:44 PM

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Councilor Soucy led the salute to the flag.

3. RECORDING SECRETARY

Katie Gargano, City Clerk

4. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Gargano called the roll of the following councilors: Councilor Soucy and Councilor Haynes were present.

Councilor Felch arrived moments later at 5:45 PM.

5. STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Kirk Beattie, City Manager; and Glenn Smith, Finance Director

6. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.A. Approval of Public Works Subcommittee minutes of March 13, 2023

Minutes of the Public Works Subcommittee meeting of March 13, 2023 were distributed to the Subcommittee members on March 20, 2023.

Councilor Soucy made a motion to approve, 2nd by Councilor Felch. The minutes were approved as distributed.

7. PUBLIC WORKS (Haynes (Chair), Felch, Soucy)

7.A. Parking Garage/Downtown Urban Planning Parking Study

City Manager Beattie began the discussion on the study that was conducted by Walker Consulting. The highlights from the final report were the supply and demand. There are a total of 719 public parking spaces. 199 on street and 514 off street. The finding was that there is a good supply of parking as we stand currently with or without the parking garage. For the slight deficit that the city

has, they provided some solution options. One was to try and utilize a nonpublic parking lot on nights and weekends through a public/private agreement to share those facilities. Better signage for the parking spaces over on Church Street. Placement of electric vehicle charging stations and the report goes on to break down what is short/long term and low/high cost. The parking times could be adjusted to try and get more turnover in those two hour spaces. Improving parking violation systems.

Councilor Soucy asked if this report was factored out through 2035. Manager Beattie said yes. They looked at many factors like people working from home and other things that offset parking. Councilor Soucy liked the idea of a more enforceable parking payment/ticketing system.

Councilor Felch stated that they do need paid parking downtown. There are options to pay through an app. He thinks they need to use this type of system rather than putting more strict time limits on spaces because he wants people to stay and enjoy Laconia. If you pay for parking then they can always add more time to the kiosks.

Councilor Soucy made a comment about speaking with the police chief about a year ago about looking into an enforcement mechanism. The initial set up is not inexpensive but it would be a great system to have. Manager Beattie said the program they are interested in using is about a 50k start up fee. Then yearly its about 12k a year.

Chairman Haynes ask Manager Beattie was he needs accomplished tonight. Manager Beattie said they are in the process of finalizing their budget now and they are where they need to be for the next fiscal year budget. He needs the direction the council wants to go on with the parking garage. Do they want to move it down the line one more year and continue to try and garner interest or do tear down/repair. They are waiting to find out if they need to get an open market loan for the tear down or get a bond for repair. Councilor Haynes is concerned about the possible interest rate that kind of loan might have.

Councilor Soucy would like to know how much it would be to bond a tear down and what is the maintenance is for the year.

Councilor Felch asked about who authorized the parking study and where the money that was earmarked to repair the parking garage?

Manager Beattie stated that it would have been approved by the Council at some point and there is no money that has been placed aside there was only a bond payment estimate and the interest payment as a placeholder. – the Clerk later found that the parking study RFQ was approved at the 3/14/2022 City Council Meeting.

Councilor Soucy doesn't want to make a decision without seeing the math on the two options, but he is leaning toward tearing it down because it just keeps getting worse and worse.

Chairman Haynes asked if there were any members in the audience that would like to speak on this issue may do so now.

Patrick Wood of Ward 1 was very impressed with the parking study. He said that worse case scenario they need about 100 more parking spaces without the parking garage to accommodate visitors. He said there also isn't much available to try and use private lots for parking. The few are the bank of NH and Hectors and the clinic but not much else. He thinks the city needs to create an agreement with these places as soon as possible to help. He also believes paid parking is a positive solution but thinks there will be blow back on it.

Chairman Haynes asked the committee what they want to instruct the city manager to do next.

The manager is to get an updated price on how much it is to tear it down, what would the cost be to get a loan, versus getting this project bonded. How much money would the businesses lose if they had to close down due to construction. How much the cost would be to fix.

Councilor Soucy made a motion to table, 2nd by Councilor Felch. All in favor 3-0

Chairman Haynes wanted to share that he thought it would be good to look at what additional places might be available to help with parking. Manager Beattie agreed and said that those conversations can start to happen. Chairman Haynes thinks that all solution options should be discussed individually except for the parking garage because that has been tabled.

8. **Any other business that may come before the Committee**

Councilor Felch would like to see the cost of instituting paid parking in the downtown. How much the kiosks cost and to have the ability the costs of an app. There needs to be a discussion on the location of where it would be.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Haynes adjourned the meeting at 6:21 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Gargano, City Clerk