

**COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC/PUBLIC SAFETY**

**June 3, 1996**

**5:30 PM**

Chairman Sysyn called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

**PRESENT:** Ald. Sysyn, Reiniger, Soucy, Domaingue, Robert

**MESSRS.:** R. Davis, R. Girard, T. Lolicata, T. Parsons,  
R. Sherman, R. Sidore, Lt. Tessier, W. Schwartz

**TABLED ITEM**

On motion of Ald. Domaingue, duly seconded by Ald. Reiniger, it was voted to remove the following item from the table to discussion.

Request of Mayor Wieczorek regarding a parking proposal affecting the Downtown and Millyard areas with a proposed new rate structure and devised parking system.

(Note: communication from Tina Parsons enclosed.)

Tabled 5/21/96 for further discussion on 6/3/96.

Mr. Girard stated he could give the Committee some information at which point defer to Mr. Sherman; that he had met with Mr. Davis today and it was his understanding that they were still working with Cambridge Systematics on the particulars and the details of the Mayor's proposal but available for discussion would be an option discovered by the Finance Department for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Sherman distributed a handout to those present and explained what it did was to take the City's revenues and broke it out between property taxes and non-property taxes; that the point they were trying to make noting that they kept hearing that they were "feeing the people to death" and in looking back at 1984 property taxes made up 61.7 percent of the revenues and fees made up 33.3 percent and with the 1996 budget they were at the 71.9 percent and 28.1 percent; that the reason the residents were screaming was because their property taxes were picking up a larger and larger portion; that the City had not been doing a good job in keeping up with the non-property tax side of the picture and to complicate things even further in reference to the second chart noted there was distribution between the residential

taxpayer and the non-residential taxpayer and back in the 70's it was about a 53/47 split and had now gotten up to a 58/42, so not only were the property taxes a larger portion of the funding source, but residents were picking up a larger portion of the larger portion; that fees weren't a bad thing and they really needed to deal with that part of the graph noting that was the problem they'd had in the past; that in reference to the requested parking budget showed meter revenues of \$931,000 and broke it down into two columns - the meter revenue column and the garages and leased lots - the reason they separated them was that under State statute those monies could be used for specific purposes; that there was the meter money for one purpose and the money from the lease for other purposes; that they took the two revenue sources and when going through the budgets, the Police, Traffic, and long-debt debt pulling all that related to them tried to put them in the appropriate columns; that there were certain direct costs which went to each one of those areas (i.e., administrative costs, meter collection costs, debt service payments, etc.); that after the direct costs and under the meter revenue there was \$568,000 of revenue remaining; that under the garages they were \$919,000 in the hole; that after they got passed the direct costs there were other incidental costs which could also come out of the revenues and once they backed up the street resurfacing and street maintenance accounts out of the meter money, meters was then in the hole and after they backed out the bus facilities out of the garage monies they were further in the hole noting that was the budget as it was proposed; that on the second sheet the Mayor's Office then when through and said, okay we're going to propose increased fees, so again there were the two columns with the meter fees and the garage fees with the meter fees being \$400,000 higher than they were under the requested budget and the garage fee was about \$675,000 higher based on the new fee structure which was proposed by the Mayor's Office, then back out the direct fees with meter money again having an excess with the garages till in the hole, but less in the hole; that they then back out the incidental costs and meters would have left over funds and the garages still in the hole to the tune of over \$500,000; that they did not have a clarification as of yet from the Solicitor's Office as to whether the meter money could assist in covering the deficit on the garages; that even if it could they'd still be in the hole.

Mr. Girard stated just for clarification of the Mayor's parking proposal, the Mayor in his proposal to the Board only used \$650,000 as a project revenue which anticipated the entire \$1.1 million which for a variety of reasons they did not think should be budgeted as he had previously explained it to the Committee which it had been originally presented; that it took into account the \$1.1 million and not the \$650,000 mentioned.

Mr. Sherman stated the \$1.1 million was currently in the budget which had been referred to public hearing; that under auto registration what the statutes allowed was for the City to tack a fee onto vehicle registration and depending on the year of the

vehicle they could tack anywhere from five cents to one cent onto the cost of the registration per...\$5.00 per thousand to a dollar per thousand; that they had gone back through the auto registration records and if they did the maximum they could raise \$2 million and it would charge the City residents, those who register their vehicles within the City both businesses and residents that fee; that it did not necessarily mean that they were parking in garages or at meters, but it would give them the ability to tack on that fee; that they then went through and took all of the direct expenses and if they used the auto registration fees only to pay for capital items, only for the garage reconstruction or construction in the first place if they wished to build a new garage and moved those costs under the auto registration fee; that after they had the direct costs they also had a surplus in each of those accounts then and after they went past the indirect costs or other costs associated with it, still had a surplus in all three accounts; that the decision at this point was what would they do with the surpluses; that the way it was currently designed was that all of the surpluses would go to the trust funds; that the trust funds over the last two or three years had been drawdown to zero; that there was a point when the trust funds were first started that they had close to a million dollars in them and because of the deficits those trust funds had been drawdown and there was nothing left in those trust funds now; that it would be their suggestion that they don't put all of the money in the trust funds but take care of some of the problems they currently had; that the meter money could be used for street resurfacing; that under the auto registration scenario believed they had requested \$657,000 this year for one of the garages (Granite Street Garage) noting they were only allowed two-twenty and deferring the maintenance until another period and bonding it as well; that the suggestion would be that it be drawn out of the CIP bonding section and pay for it in cash, the whole \$657,000; that it would allow them to take care of the maintenance problems; that at the last board meeting there was a \$90,000 bill for the Numerica building which wasn't even in their numbers at this point recalling what had happened with the Canal Street Garage because they hadn't taken care of it; that those trust funds got drawdown further and further until there was no money left and now the parking garages were fighting for the same dollars which the school sand everything else were fighting for; that not only could they do the maintenance when it really needed to be done rather than to defer it, but they wouldn't have to bond it, it would allow them to have more bonding capacity for other projects and it would still allow them to put money in the trust funds, so down in future years if there was more maintenance that needed to be done, if they needed a new garage in the Downtown area somewhere or if they were not increasing fees in outgoing years it would give a cushion as it had previously to be able to keep the fees steady for some time.

Chairman Sysyn asked if it would be done as a \$3.00 flat fee.

Mr. Sherman replied based on the year of the car, the most they could pay on the brand new cars was \$5.00 per thousand; that it

was a mill rate, just like a tax rate or just like the current registration; that they did have the ability to knock that rate down; that the most they could charge would be \$5.00 mill and if they only wanted to charge one and make it a \$10.00 fee it could be done; that it had a floor and it had a ceiling and depending on the year of the car they could play within those rates, so if they didn't want to have \$800,000 going into a trust fund and make it only \$500,000 going into the trust fund at the end of the year they could go back and work with the rates; that it was based on the value of the car and the mill rate; that currently on a brand new car they pay \$18.00 per thousand and would be allowing to add \$5.00 making \$18.00 to \$23.00 and believed the next mill rate was \$15.00 and would go from \$15.00 to \$19.00 if they used the whole \$4.00 and every year it would go down one; that it would share the costs of maintaining the garages between those that register their cars in the City and those that use the facilities and it helped to balance it a little bit.

Ald. Domainque asked what did the \$2 million represent under auto registration and was that at the max of \$5.00 per thousand.

Mr. Sherman replied what they had done was to take a listing from the Tax Collector as far as the value of the vehicles each year they were registered and multiplied it out having the highest rate taking charge and it didn't take very long to get down to the one mill rate noting it was only five years out that they would get to the one mill rate and it dropped off real fast.

Ald. Soucy apologized for being tardy and asked if they were talking about increasing the current millage rate in order to fund, in order to supplement the current fund for repairs.

Mr. Sherman stated the current mill rate for a brand new vehicle was \$18.00 per thousand and if they went the maximum, it would go from \$18.00 to \$23.00 per thousand for a new car and once that car got a year older it would go from \$15.00 to \$19.00 noting there was nothing that said they couldn't go from \$19.00 to \$21.00 if they wanted but the maximum would be to add \$5.00, they could add \$4.00, they could all \$3.00; that the minimum they could charge would be \$1.00.

Ald. Soucy in reference to brand new cars noted \$23.00 per thousand, a brand new Mercedes (\$45,000) at \$23.00 per thousand; that the same vehicle the next year...

Mr. Sherman replied it would drop to \$19.00 and would drop to \$15.00 versus \$12.00, \$11.00, \$9.00 and by the time it would hit the fifth year it would be \$4.00 versus \$3.00 noting that the value of the vehicle dropped every year as well which was where they got burned in the early 90's because people weren't buying new cars, so their cars kept getting older and older.

Ald. Soucy stated there had been concern in the past about people looking at cities and towns around them and looking at the

millage rate in each town and registering their vehicles asked if they had calculated any loss in total numbers of vehicles being registered in the City; that as an example a person owns two vehicles and Bedford has a rate of \$23.00 and the rate is \$18.00 in Manchester, but you own a piece of rental property indicating she knew of instances where people had done so as it had been discussed in the Legislature and wondered what type of a decline in overall registrations they could anticipate.

Mr. Sherman replied the base rate was the same everywhere; that in calculating the \$2 million the only thing they did to adjust something such as that was to take the current value of all of the vehicles in the City and devalued them by 10 percent assuming those values were going to drop; that they were seeing the 97's come on real slow at this point, so while people went back out in '95 and '96 and got rid of their cars that had been five or six years old the 97's seemed to be coming in much slower, so they tried to make an adjustment for the fact that people would be keeping their cars for a while.

Ald. Domainque stated she was probably not as concerned about people who could afford to buy a Mercedes as she would be about the average family car and asked if there was any way that the Finance could give them a few scenarios and break it down as to what it would be at different levels, so that they might have a feel as to what might be acceptable.

Mr. Sherman asked if she was looking for different values of cars.

Ald. Domainque stated she was not looking at the maximum mill rate, but the median.

Mr. Sherman stated how much revenue would be generated if they adjusted the rates; that what they had put in for the top two years which would be the four and the five was \$642,000, so if they dropped that to a four and a three and went three the next year they were probably only talking about a couple of hundred thousand dollars knocked out of the equation; that when they got down to the bottom and did not want to put the whole amount into a trust fund, they could knock the rate down and put only \$500,000 into trust funds; that the surpluses were based on the fact that they could meet the full \$1.1 million which the Mayor's Office didn't think they could get, but was currently in the budget and was based on accepting both the meter and the garage increase proposals.

Mr. Davis stated when they were present on April 2nd and Mr. Girard had presented him with the Mayor's plan noted it was a hot issue and needed to have feedback from Intown Manchester as it was very important; that while they looked at the proposal and thought it had merit they had questions which they wanted to try to have answered; that they had brought in Bill Schwartz from Cambridge Systematics who was here this evening and let him know

that basically they had some things they wanted to accomplish with the downtown parking system; that they wanted to think of Downtown as a total parking system - in other words if you squeeze it here, something's going to pop out someplace else - it was a system which required some care and maintenance and management to work properly and they also said that they thought that there was probably some proper pricing structure that would help to bring up the short-term parking spaces to the level that it would tend to discourage the long-term daily users from using that parking; that in a system such as that they wanted to discourage the long-term daily users from using the street to park on and would want to encourage them to park in the garages and want to make short-term parking available for the people needing it the most who were the customers and the people who shopped Downtown; that they wanted to be able to make the point at Intown Manchester that there was a lot of parking Downtown and couldn't make their case for Downtown unless they were saying there was a lot of parking available, but it needed to be priced properly and the pricing needed to encourage people to park in the right places whether it was off-street or on-street and they also felt that they would need as any new system was implemented a parking validation program and they needed to be able to say as merchants Downtown "you can come Downtown and you can park for free, we'll make it possible for you to park free with a validation stamp or sticker at the point of sale" noting they wanted to be able to say that; that they had tried to review as closely as possible with the Finance staff whether the proposal as it stood now really benefited Downtown noting there were some things about it which were particularly good; that it did deal with the short-term parking pricing issue, it did help to raise that; that they were concerned that the garages while they were suppose to raise more revenue were not necessarily used to their maximum extent; that if they were to raise revenues from the garages they felt that they should try and get as many cars in those garages as possible and that a proper pricing structure would do that; that rather than selling fewer spaces at a higher price, they would rather sell more spaces at the same or perhaps even lower price and they were not sure that the proposal in its current form really addressed the resident parking issue; that they would like to see it packaged so that increased rates, both on and off the streets in the Intown area did not encourage people to park further out into the neighborhoods where they were already creating problems as it understood it; that they felt that the proposal had good intentions, it certainly was simpler, it was understandable, it was presented to them by Mr. Girard and the Mayor as a proposal whose primary intention was not necessarily to raise revenues but which was to straighten out and to make the Downtown parking system better to provide for the care and upkeep of the garages; that they liked the proposal as they saw it here and believed that the auto registration piece of the proposal certainly addressed the revenue issues which he knew was important to the Committee; that they believed that the meters, if they were restructured could raise revenue and thought that was perhaps moving the Downtown parking system in the

direction it needed to go; that in terms of increasing of garage rates was where they had their questions; that they were told today by the Finance staff and believed it was true that it took a long time sometimes to do those proposals properly, it took a long time to get the proposals started and passed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and if that was the case he wished to suggest that having addressed the revenue issues, step back, take a breath and think about the Downtown parking system and think about how they would try to make it work to the best advantage of all of the people who needed to use it; that they address the pricing issues, the growth issues, the validation program, and think of it as a system and not have to come up with a short-term solution that may not accomplish what they needed to do which was the basic premise on which they were coming to them.

Chairman Sysyn stated some garage users were paying \$45.00 per month and were only using it for perhaps 20 days per month noting they were being underutilized.

Mr. Girard stated he believed the Mayor had made his position clear over the years that parking was an economic development tool and was not necessarily attempting to raise revenue, but as long as there was on-street parking which was less expensive than or, in fact, free as compared to the garages such as when the City decided to make metered parking free on Saturdays and took a \$50,000 a year hit because of the meters being free, so they wanted to generate revenue by increasing volume but in taking a look at the pricing structure now of on-street versus off-street they already had the wrong incentives to utilize the off-street facilities.

Mr. Sherman stated another problem with the City garages dealt with the safety issue noting that a lot of people did not want to park in the garage because of it and if there was sufficient financing they could probably deal with that issue at which point the people might tend to go back into the garages noting that he personally would prefer to have his car in a garage when it was snowing.

Chairman Sysyn stated that years ago she believed the Police were parking in a garage without paying and just the fact that there was a Police vehicle in there would deter some of the crime.

It. Tessier stated there were officers who parked in the Vine Street Parking Garage particularly in the winter time.

Mr. Girard stated that in 1992 the Police Department had addressed the Traffic Committee with such a request; that at the time it was viewed as being an employee benefit; that the Police Department in 1992 had wanted the Police officers to be allowed to park their personal vehicles in the garages for free under the idea that officers going to and from work would certainly help deter crime noting there was never a proposal for parking cruisers inside the garages.

Chairman Sysyn stated the night watchman at the Vine Street Parking Lot would walk a woman to her car to make sure she was okay; that she had had occasion to leave her car in the garage behind where she works during a snow storm.

Mr. Girard stated Manchester was one of the lowest areas in the State with respect to its monthly parking rates noting that Portsmouth was at \$50.00 and Concord at \$70.00.

Ald. Domainque stated in raising the issue of utilization which Mr. Davis started to talk about and having looked at the numbers asked if Mr. Davis could finish his statement.

Mr. Schwartz stated the information he had was just given to him based on the Elm Street Improvement Study which was being done for the City; that they had looked at the number of spaces and a variety of facilities and did some analysis in June of 1995 where they put together of how many spaces in each facility and how many cars were parked and looked at the average utilization rate and over the course of different days of the week and different times of the day the utilization ranged; that the lots were generally in the 50 percent range, with some of the garages in the 50 to 60 percent range, the Millyard in the 20 percent range; that over the course of the day as they got into mid-afternoon it was fairly consistent and what he wanted to offer up was that he agreed that it made sense to have an on-street parking system which would be used for short-term parking which was what was generally intended for and going 50 cents an hour on-street as being consistent with many other cities; that they had done a parking study in Springfield, Massachusetts in the mid-80's and surveyed similarly sized cities or smaller cities noting Manchester was one of them with Manchester at that time being at the lower end of the spectrum on a hourly rate for on-street parking at 25 cents and agreed with the monthly rates being generally higher; that what raised some issues was that based on the utilization information different levels of demand depending on where the facility was, with the Millyard being at a lower rate of use and the garages being at a higher rate of use with the lots some of which were underused; that it started to raise some questions as to whether you'd end up generating the revenue that you would based on increasing the rates; that they had to look at the whole system because if they went forward with an on-street increase and a garage increase people would find, some people would not be willing to pay that so they would find some other place to park so they would then have the resident parking issue to deal with and it started to raise the questions of where would people go and where would they find the parking they would need; that if, in fact, this was the opportunity to take a look at the various components of the system and say, yes, we can only do this once, so let's do it then they might be placing themselves in a position of not getting what was wanted and what they were suggesting would be that they would need to take a step back and take a look at the whole system and understand it

better; that he understood there were some fiscal implications involved to work it through and in a quick reaction to what they had looked at and in the discussions held today the approach to go to with on-street meters and a system-wide approach to it made sense; that the proposal if it was agreed to of raising additional revenues through registrations made sense and would actually deal with the budget from the standpoint of this year's line item for net increase in revenue but from a financial standpoint it made sense to start putting money in trust funds as the City needed money in its reserve to start planning for the future and taking care of its facilities and taking care of other transportation improvements which were needed, so agreed that was a logical solution; that it was just with the off-street and taking a look at the monthly pricing structures given the different utilization rates and taking a look at the hourly structure within the commercial facilities that they would start to have questions because of the need to make sure that they had the proper structure to get people to park off-street, be willing to park off-street and to give people a choice; that they could not do it without looking at the system and having an understanding in more detail noting they had been looking at it for about eight hours analyzing what information was available noting it wasn't really enough to give a firm opinion and hoped it clarified what some of the questions were and depending on where the decision process was thought it was up in the air.

Chairman Sysyn stated she thought what they were also looking for was if they could come up with something like what had been presented regarding how much money was being generated.

Mr. Schwartz stated they had looked at it today; that they had calculated out some spreadsheets and what they were able to do at the outset was to...they took it from the angle of taking the meters and raising them to the calculations that Rich did to generate additional metering which by itself going from existing levels; that it was his understanding based on the information they had been given that meters generated approximately \$450,000 a year, not the leased spaces and going to the pricing structure which was developed including an increase in the number of meters not including the leased spaces brought the number up to about \$900,000 and change, a little over \$500,000 in additional revenues would be generated by going to 50 cents an hour; that the off-street situation they had not had an opportunity to get to into detail but thought that the number that Rich came...the way in which it was looked at in terms of the original proposal was to take a look at the net increase; that they had to base it on the more practical, realistic demand levels, so the numbers that they came up with for budgeting purposes was a reasonable number and in his opinion the \$1.1 million number in there from the lots and garages alone and forgetting the registration proposal could not, at this point, say was likely to happen; that there were too many variables involved.

Chairman Sysyn asked what had been found in other cities that was best for in-town parking like the fee structure, etc.

Mr. Schwartz replied one of the things to be said was that the rates in Concord were \$70.00 a month for a lot noting he had not done a recent on-street meter inventory noting it was still 25 cents per hour; that many other cities were at the 50 cents per hour level and in a larger downtown it could be as much as a dollar-an-hour, but it all depended...if there was a system based upon market forces, say the whole system was operated by commercial parking operators and individuals could make as much money as they wanted and had to run the whole system the pricing structure would reflect supply and demand as would be expected in any market economy, so the pricing structure on a monthly basis typically would give somebody a good bargain, a good value over what the cost of parking on the street would be; that it was very important to give people the perception that if they were to go through a pricing change that they would be given something which was of value to them, an alternative place for them to park which they would consider to be a reasonable alternative; that such an example would be Boston where the spaces in the heart of the financial district were \$300.00 a month, with the spaces on the immediate perimeter or just on the edges of downtown were \$200.00 or something like that and then in crossing over to other neighborhoods where they had to walk for 20 minutes, which people did, was priced accordingly; that that was his experience where they would come up with a structure which reflected the demand that was out there and unfortunately they couldn't really do that until they knew what the demand levels were and did not just get the demand levels from seeing how many people parked; that they had to do an analysis of where people worked, where people shopped, where people wanted to go, and started to look at it on a block-to-block basis and get a handle on patterns; that in the area of the court house there seemed to be a lot of demand for parking in that area whether short-term or a couple of hours where they could probably justify a higher rate, but there were other surface lots where the demand was much less; that the other side of the coin was that they would want to keep it simple and did not want it to get too complicated, but for the monthly parker they would want to give that individual a choice and thought that was a very important issue.

Mr. Davis stated there was no off-the-shelf solution, there was no perfect solution which could be adapted from another city noting that each city was unique; that within the region there was very, very inexpensive on-street parking which was something which would need be addressed, but there was no perfect solution from other city which would adapt itself immediately to our needs; that they needed to look at it much more intensively and come up with solutions which were unique and good for us here; that it was moving in the right direction and if he was to be told that they would have one shot at this and would not look at it again for another 10 years he might reconsider that, but thought it was moving in the right direction.

Ald. Domainque stated she would perhaps like to see some of the Mayor's proposal adopted only because it appeared that the Intown

Manager felt was something that could work but at the same time looking long-range and studying as they've suggested in detail the parking situation and the supply and demand, but it appeared that they were dealing with a situation where some of the revenues had been plugged into this budget and not to plug any of it in and/or to postpone or put it on hold would be drastic in terms of the tax rate.

Mr. Girard stated there were a couple of things to consider; that the budget that the Board had referred to public hearing did include a \$1.1 million figure for the parking revenues; that the information that the Board did not have at the time for referring to the public hearing was the information that the Finance Department came across which was the value of having the Revenue Administrator because without it they would not have found it, so the Board did not have the ability to consider that as a revenue option either in conjunction with or instead of the Mayor's proposal noting that at this point the budget was going to public hearing and the Committee still did have a little time to have the Finance Department flush out some of the options it had to have done and either way they would still be able to bring some revenue forward into the budget to take care of the taxpayer issues and asked Messrs. Davis and Schwartz how long they expected an analysis of the system to take before they could come back to Committee and make their recommendations relative to the Mayor's proposals.

Mr. Schwartz asked if they found that patterns in the summer (June, July, and August) were not consistent with the rest of the year.

Mr. Girard replied in times of New England the garages did see an increased use.

Mr. Schwartz stated within three or four months they could complete the whole analysis from start to finish, but in terms of the calendar months...

Mr. Girard inquired if they would be in a position to take a look at the areas where parking meters had been proposed to be placed and be able to give some preliminary recommendations regarding those placements and/or the on-street fees.

Mr. Schwartz stated the way they operate if they needed answers to specific questions they could do so.

Chairman Sysyn inquired as to how much would it cost for the analysis.

Mr. Davis replied Mr. Schwartz had been up here for parts of three days now, having traveled up here from Cambridge noting Intown had a small consulting budget which had been set aside for this year noting they were well into it at this point, so they were sensitive to the additional monies which would be needed indicating they would look to some help also.

Ald. Domainque stated it was very important as the Board was talking about a very tight budget but when talking about Intown Management's money, it was the businesses that contributed that money through the tax program so it was really the businesses money and they had to be mindful of that as well.

Chairman Sysyn asked if they could have something before the end of June so they could work on some of the suggestions before the budget closed.

Mr. Sherman stated if they were going to do something with the auto registrations they needed to keep in mind that there were mail-in auto registrations so within the next couple of weeks July's would be going out, so they might lose the first months right off the bat.

Ald. Robert asked what the cost was of what they were trying to do, how much money were they talking about.

Mr. Schwartz replied it depended on what answers they were after; that if they were looking to do a comprehensive parking study for a city the size of Manchester they'd be looking at something probably around \$30,000 and if they were looking for consulting advice on reviewing the proposals which had been brought forward, going through the analysis and giving some very basic recommendations based on continued meetings, continued analysis it would be in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range noting that he billed out on an hourly basis and had already spent almost \$2,500 just working with...

Ald. Robert asked if there was any monies left in Contingency.

Mr. Sherman replied it had been committed to salaries this year; that there was still the \$90,000 bill which needed to be covered for the Numerica garage and thought that they were perhaps looking at next year's funds and if they could deal with some of the fees initially; that based on the full proposal there was \$800,000 going into the trust funds and asked did they want to alter that proposal slightly and change some of those numbers, hold off maybe on the garage side and could still have enough to pay for a full study but had to keep in mind that they had to keep money to buy meters.

Mr. Lolicata stated it should be based on starting in the fall so as to get a true value of Manchester; that they would have to start in either September or October to do the study right.

Ald. Soucy asked what exactly the trust fund covered.

Mr. Sherman replied it covered operations, capital, and maintenance of all parking facilities (off-street).

Ald. Soucy stated she was thinking of the average person who lived in the City of Manchester but did not necessarily work

Downtown was paying additional registration fees for garages, was paying an increased fee for parking and wondered what they would see for it as a result, was the intent to focus on Downtown businesses and changing the parking structure to benefit them.

Chairman Sysyn stated living across from Central High School she walked many times to Downtown noting there were a lot of people who parked up in her area who worked Downtown so they didn't have to pay for parking.

Mr. Lolicata stated it should have been done years ago and thought what Randy had mentioned was a good idea because the garages according to Desmond Associates right now if they started to initiate something like this right now in ten years they would have to redo the garage over again, right now they were looking for \$1.5 million over two years just to get the Center of NH back on its feet.

Chairman Sysyn asked what they had done last year; that she thought they had to come up with some money for the garage behind Hampshire Plaza/Canal Street Garage.

Mr. Girard replied they had to issue a \$2.3 million bond; that there was almost \$450,000 from CIP for FY97 and the Center of NH Garage.

Mr. Sidore stated he thought the chart was very important because what it said was that in 1990 when it started to decline and the percentage of major commercial value, as a percentage of the total property taxes in the City had to remember that the commercial real estate market went to hell; that all of the buildings were valued at a lot less than 10 years ago, down in the Millyard the same thing, and it would not improve if they created a parking situation which would be less friendly to people who were there noting that people would move their businesses to the edges of town, to Bedford, Hooksett, and wherever; that it had to be designed for what parking control was supposed to be designed for which was to control traffic and parking; that there had been no discussion this evening except for a couple of mentions of the Millyard and yet a significant number of changes in the proposal Mr. Girard presented related to the Millyard area and hoped that no changes would be made until it was thoroughly explored.

Mr. Davis stated that they new the Millyard was a growth area; that there was new business going in especially in the northend of the Millyard and knew that they would like to fill some of those spaces in the center and the southend indicating they had to think about it and provide for it as part of the overall parking plan, so he certainly agreed with Mr. Sidore.

Ald. Soucy stated with reference to raising the rates noting she understood that they'd be raising the rates of on-street meters to get people who were long-term parkers away from the meters so

that there was more turnover asked if it wouldn't be more logical to keep the rates at where they were in the garages in the short-term to get those people who were parking on the streets into the garages and then look at long-term; that if they were going to entice them and if they were to raise both rates at the same time did not see a connection; that if they could raise the rates on the Downtown streets.

Mr. Schwartz stated they might want to raise the rates where there was a demand noting there were some garages that were very underutilized; that in some facilities it was 20 days a month working situation at \$1.75 a day to park on average and generally speaking it varied depending on the facility and compare it with 50 cents an hour or put the figure out that 8 hours at 50 cents, \$4.00 was a heck of a lot more than the monthly space; that before they make major changes they needed to assess the whole thing; that the other matter he wished to make clear was that they needed to looking at issues where you raise the on-street spaces with a revenue forecast associated with it and that in terms of the decision-making process seemed it had to be done in conjunction with the overall budget recommendations that had to be made and the deliberations which would go on over the next month and consider the other proposal which was on the table which he thought sounded like a good one; that he'd worked with Desmond before noting that a former colleague of his worked with them now and they always have said that you need to be planning for the future as well, it made good sense that the money be put into the assets the City had as needed rather than deferring maintenance because you end up paying so much more later on.

Ald. Domainque stated she agreed with Ald. Soucy in that they should keep the parking garage rates competitive; that it was her understanding that it would then impact the revenue proposal which had been brought forward in the current budget and if they did that if they were looking at alternative proposals brought in by Finance they needed to make sure that the revenue loss there would be made up by the alternative proposal and also had a question as to whether or not...the thought was to move the on-street parkers into the garages there would be a revenue loss to some extent if they did so, even though they were raising the hourly rate many of those could be moved off-street into garages asked if they would then, in effect, see a reduction from the parking meter revenue.

Mr. Girard stated they shouldn't because part of the parking meter strategy was to add meters where they were currently governed by time zones and would be replaced; that a lot of the abuse of on-street was where there were time zones; that when the Mayor was considering the parking proposal they did exactly what Mr. Schwartz was alluding to which was to take a look at a market approach to the parking system so they could try to accommodate the demand and where it was noting they had run into two problems when looking at it; that first and with all due respect to the Traffic Department it was very difficult to administer a system

right now and did not think that the City had the administrative capabilities to manage a market-based system which would have to move as the patterns in the Downtown moved; that in taking a look at parking as an economic development tool they thought that there should be an order to the system, so if they went to a multi-tiered system which was what they had now they really had to be able to administer it change it with the times and then there was a fine line between...using a market approach...there was a fine line between having parking as an economic development tool or parking as a revenue mechanism because when going to the market they were basically looking at a range...that right now it was a mish mash of meters, time zones, rates, and the garage structures which made no sense; that when they took a look at trying to encourage the long-term parking users of using and abusing the short-term users into the garages they reordered the structures of the garages noting that it was their opinion at the time that there would still be enough of a differential between what it would cost to park all day on the street and feed the meter than if they were to park at both an hourly rate at the garages and also on a lease rate at the garages noting there was a 25 percent differential between the proposed 8-hour rate on-street if they were to play the game with the meter maid and what it would be in the garage and almost a 40 percent differential of what you would pay if you were to lease a space in the garage and tried to build in with the financial objectives noting they may not, in fact, be enough and perhaps the first four hours at 50 cents an hour was too steep if they were trying to encourage long-term parking and maybe put the first two hours at 50 cents per hour and then 25 cents an hour thereafter which would alter the revenue projections but it would go along way to allaying the concerns of Intown Management as to the incentives.

Ald. Domainque stated she was a little concerned about the amount of money being taken out of the Traffic budget to pay for the meters, so her question to Finance was with the alternative proposal could any of that money be used to restore or offset their cost by paying for some of the parking meters; that she was concerned with the amount of money being taken right out of that budget in the first year for those meters noting he had a budget he had to be allowed to work with for the Traffic Department and wanted to make sure they were covering all of the bases.

Mr. Lolicata stated they had just started last year in getting new meters; that the second step was getting the program through would take at least a couple of years to get all of the meters for all that they wanted plus putting them in noting there was a lot involved; that 15 years ago they had a thousand more meters than they did now and because of Victory Garage which used to be a parking lot and those other lots taken off of Elm Street indicated they needed to simplify the whole system; that Manchester's biggest problem was enforcement; that it took money to make money and they had to invest and thought the overall picture in a couple of years they would be forcing people to where they belonged and wouldn't have employees parking on Elm

Street, but would have them going where they belonged in a garage at a 10-hour meter and you'd be surprised how many people out there would start paying.

Ald. Domainque stated nobody was disagreeing with the fact that in a couple of years they'd be seeing that revenue increase but rather her concern was that during that period of time they still had a department they had to operate and recently they had heard about the striping machine or paving machine that they didn't have room for in the budget and had hoped that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen would come up with it because it was necessary because of the Federal law which changed the content of the paint and wanted to make sure that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen was not shortchanging the Traffic Department in this endeavor and wanted to know if there were any other sources they could glean the revenue out of so they could restore some of the money which would be pulled from his department to pay for the parking meters.

Mr. Lolicata stated that money was being bonded or something because of the money involved but after the Federal mandate, another year or so it would be either to go out and get somebody in there for double the dollar or give him the equipment to work with and let them do their jobs; that sooner or later something was bound to happen.

Chairman Sysyn believed the meters paid for themselves.

Mr. Lolicata stated the meters paid for themselves in two or three weeks.

Mr. Sherman stated the question that was asked was could the auto registration money be used to buy the meters; that the answer to that was, no, however, when the Mayor put in his proposal and believed it was \$105,000 there was money in there in the meter column and in the lock column where there were meters, but the auto registration could not be used but did not mean they could not shift another cost of the garages to the auto registration.

Mr. Lolicata stated once he got all of the old ones in and if somebody could do something until the following year, it could be done within a three-year period with brand new meters.

Mr. Schwartz asked if they could modify the existing price on the existing meters.

Mr. Lolicata replied on the new ones, yes noting it could be done with some of the older meters depending on what the structures would be.

Mr. Schwartz strongly recommended that if they were going to raise the rates they be able to do it all at one time.

Ald. Reiniger stated as the representative of the Downtown area noted he was also concerned about the residents as well as

promoting having more people live Downtown; that he could not support it without some type of a permit program for residential people.

Chairman Sysyn asked if the buildings in the Downtown area had parking spaces provided for their tenants in the rear of the buildings and thought they were suppose to have one parking space per tenant.

Ald. Reiniger stated he had received a lot of complaints regarding Middle Street, Merrimack Street, etc. noting that they landlords had to rent out two-bedroom units with those who only had one vehicle due to parking; that there was a news magazine **Municipal Weekly** noting that in the last edition had an article about a conference in Washington a couple weeks ago with the conclusion being to have incentives for living downtown; that he thought it was counterproductive to have meters without having some type of provision to help residents.

Ald. Domainque asked Ald. Reiniger if he would be willing to support the basic proposal if the parking permit issue were to be included in the long-range study or was he looking for something more immediate.

Ald. Reiniger replied he was looking for something more immediate.

Ald. Robert inquired as to the status of Ald. Reiniger residential permit parking proposal.

Ald. Reiniger stated his proposal had been reviewed by this Committee and was now sitting in Committee on Bills on Second Reading.

Ald. Soucy stated there was also the Auto Reclamation Trust Fund which was on the table at this time which was another potential charge to people registering their vehicles.

Ald. Domainque stated when they ran into the expense to the garages and everything else, the taxpayers ended up having it on their tax bills.

Chairman Sysyn recessed the meeting until 6:00 PM on Tuesday, June 11, 1996 at Memorial High School in the conference room.

On motion of Ald. Domainque, duly seconded by Ald. Soucy, it was voted that this item remain on the table.

On motion of Ald. Soucy, duly seconded by Ald. Domainque, it was voted to recess the meeting.

A True Record. Attest.

  
Clerk of Committee  


