

Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting  
November 13, 2013  
Montpelier City Hall Council Chambers

In attendance: Mayor John Hollar (presiding), City Councilors Thierry Guerlain (via video chat), Jessica Edgerly Walsh, Alan Weiss, Andy Hooper, Tom Golonka and Anne Watson, and City Manager Bill Fraser. Assistant City Clerk Crystal Chase acted as Secretary of the meeting.

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The mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

- 16-265. Phayvanh Luekhamhan from Montpelier Alive rose to introduce the new festival coordinator Ashley Witzemberger.
- 13-266. Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved passage of the consent agenda, and was seconded by Councilor Watson. The motion 6-0 passed at 6:33.
- 13-267. Ben Eastwood approached the council as the only applicant for appointment to the Conservation Commission, speaking of his love for the city and desire to keep Montpelier a pleasant place to live. He also noted his background and understanding of conservation and good attention to detail.
- The Motion to Appoint Mr. Eastwood was made by Councilor Golonka and seconded by Councilor Hooper. Vote carried by a vote of 6-0.
- 13-268. Chief Facos reviewed the memo that was given to council on the parking fees. Council member Watson questioned the variation of the increase verses particular lots. Facos noted that the more desirable parking areas are getting the higher increase to help persuade folks to the less desirable lots. Watson also inquired about the use of "smart meters". Facos noted that smart meters are on the committee's radar but not for this budget cycle. Councilor Weiss asked for the Chief's feelings on the proposal from Montpelier Alive to give away more parking for holidays. The Chief noted that it was the council's decision to make. Councilor Guerlain wanted to know if the new funds would be used for repairing and repaving lots. Facos was not able to give a timeline for that but noted this would be the funding source for those types of projects. Mayor Hollar wanted to know what the deficit for each year is and what the forecast was for smart meters. Chief Facos stated that the deficit each year was in the ballpark of 30,000 and they are hoping to get smart meters in for FY16. Councilor Edgerly Walsh thought this would be a good opportunity to designate a small percentage (2% was giving as an example) for alternative transportation infrastructure. In Further discussion councilor Golonka was not comfortable linking this proposal into a budgetary item but thought it could be discussed when they start the budgeting discussions in the upcoming weeks.

Council Edgerly Walsh made the motion to pass the proposal with the amendment that 2% of revenue be used for alternative transportation infrastructure Councilor Guerlain seconded.

Councilor Golonka argued that the proposal is to simply raise the rates, not decide what to do with the money and still didn't see any reason to link the two motions.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh responded that she would be willing to withdrawal and table her amendment, but would like to add this discussion to the next meeting's agenda. The underlying motion to approve the proposal was still on the table and passed with a 6-0 vote.

- 13-269. Council Member Golonka spoke on behalf of committee stating that he thought the committee had had good success with this step and that the committee had reached its potential and looking to council for the next step. Discussion around other town's reactions to the PSA resulted from an inquiry from Council Member Watson. Council Member Watson stated that she would like to see a roadmap including budgeting as well as staffing. Golonka noted that there didn't necessarily need to be a vote on this tonight but it's still nice to get a feel from the council.

Mayor Hollar reiterated that they were just looking for preliminary support for moving forward, a straw vote was taken reflecting unanimous approval.

- 13-270. Mayor Hollar suggested that they give the charter discussion a time limit of a half hour. Council reviewed a subchapter at a time with brief discussions regarding subchapters 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Council then decided to table item picking up on sub section 10 at the next council meeting.

- 13-272. Council Member Weiss wanted to first note that the ordinance around this committee states that a budget would be prepared, and they had not seen a budget. Phil Zalinger, committee chair, noted that their budget revolves around what projects are brought before them, so there is no way to project a budget. Councilor Golonka requested that guidelines be put together, but said he was willing to support current requests as he felt they met the objective of committee. Hooper concurred with Golonka but shared that he had heard some concerns from store owners about the placement of the benches and how they relate to smoking in the area. Kevin Casey, committee member, said that approved items will go to Montpelier Alive for implementation. Council member Weiss voiced his concern about the budget differential between the 20,000 that was stated and the 12,000 that is being asked for. Phayvanh Luekhamhan responded that they are only asking for the 12,000 because they are confident they can raise 8,000 on their own. Council member Guerlain wants to see the committee come up with a plan on what would be most beneficial to spend the money on rather than just holding a bucket of money waiting for proposals. Linda Setchell came before council to ask that they create

a master plan and to state that money should be used in most efficient and effective way. She also wanted to mention that she has seen a lot of conflict of interest in the committee that needs to be addressed. Golonka addressed her concern stating that maybe an ethics clause should be added to the committee. Chair Zalinger followed up by saying that if there was ever conflicts of interest in a certain project people recuse themselves.

Mayor Hollar suggested that more discussion was needed on the structure of the DID, but that they should go forward with what was before them.

Councilor Hooper moved approval, seconded by Councilor Edgerly Walsh. Vote 4-2 with Councilors Weiss & Guerlain opposed.

- 13-273. Phayvanh Luekhamhan, Montpelier Alive director, let the council know that the holiday expenditure proposals on the table could be considered as a whole or a-la-carte. City Manager Fraser noted that this was coming from surplus funds and was a one-time deal, not an annual commitment. There was some discussion on the implementation of the proposed downtown incentives. Ms. Luekhamhan told council that she would take comments back to committee and may do some revisions.

Council member Edgerly Walsh made a motion to approve the \$12,000 allocation. Councilor Hooper seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

- 13-271. Mayor Hollar opened public hearing on the 2014 VTRANS Transportation Alternatives Grant Application for sidewalk extensions on Elm Street, Northfield Street and Towne Hill Road, and with no comment the public hearing was closed.

Councilor Golonka moved that the council endorse and sign the resolution, and the motion was seconded by Councilor Weiss, passing by a vote of 6-0.

- 13-274. Councilor Hooper felt it was a great idea to revisit the DID.

Councilor Weiss attended the Veterans Day service and thought it was sincere, simple and short.

Councilor Watson felt that forming a transportation committee could be useful and also wanted to note that there are several committee members specifically on the parking, pedestrian and bike committee who's contact information is not available on the web site.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh also thought that revisiting the DID was a good idea.

- 13-275. Mayor Hollar reminded folks that the Carr lot committee would be meeting Friday afternoon

13-276. The Assistant City Clerk reminded residents that property taxes were due on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup>.

13-277. Assistant City Manager Jessie Baker gave a brief update on the district heating project, noting that road repair will begin in the next couple of weeks, weather depending. Councilor Golonka asked Baker if there was an update on the state's side of the project. Mr. Fraser responded that we had not received any updates.

Adjournment was moved by Councilor Weiss and seconded by Councilor Hooper, passing by a vote of 6-0.