

Town Council

Town of Watertown

Committee on Public Works, Meeting December 14, 2011

Report: January 11, 2012

The Committee met December 14, 2011 at 9:30am in the Lower Hearing Room. Present were: Susan Falkoff, Chair; Stephen Corbett, Vice-chair; Vincent Piccirilli, Secretary; DPW Superintendent Gerald Mee; DPW Clerk Mary Haley; Treasurer/Collector Phyllis Marshall; Traffic Division Commander Sergeant Joseph Deignan, and Councilor John Donohue.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the posting of hours of operation on parking meters. There are two internal labels on meter heads, one for hours of operation, and another for rates and maximum time. Councilors Piccirilli and Corbett observed that some meters around Watertown are either not marked with hours of operation, or are marked inconsistently. For example, one meter is marked as 24 hour operation with the adjoining meter marked as 7am to 6pm operation. Apparently, this occurs when new meter heads are installed without labels or when repaired meter heads are exchanged without regard to the labels. Furthermore, Committee members noted inconsistencies between signs in the field and the hours as specified in the Watertown Traffic Rules and Orders.

All agreed that correct labels should be installed to avoid confusing the public. If approved by the Town Council, Ms. Marshall will order new labels, and have each meter inspected and new labels installed as the meters are emptied. It was also agreed that consistent parking regulations would make it less confusing for the public.

Despite some reservations on the future parking strategy for municipal parking lots in Watertown which the Committee felt should be discussed during the development of the Comprehensive Plan, the committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Town Council request the following actions from the Town Manager for parking meters:

1. Street meters: All meters on streets shall have a label installed which states "Hours of Operation 7 AM to 6 PM Excluding Sundays and Holidays". All street meters shall have a 2-hour parking limit and this shall be marked on the label with the meter rates.
2. Municipal parking lots: All meters in the Spring St Parking Lot, the Baptist Walk Parking Area, the Library Parking Lot, and the Wells Avenue Parking Lot shall have a label installed which states "24 Hours of Operation Excluding Sundays and Holidays". These meters shall have either a 2-hour or 8-hour parking limit as currently posted and this shall be marked on the label with the meter rates. These lots shall all have signs that state 24-hours of operation, excluding Sundays and holidays, with a parking limit - denoted by pole color and clearly marked - of either 2-hour or 8-hour.
3. According to Sergeant Deignan, the police department, in its annual notification of the winter parking ban, includes permission for Watertown residents to park overnight in the municipal lots from 7 PM to 7 AM free of charge, and the enforcement of 24 hour meter operation in municipal parking lots is suspended during these times.

Next, the committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Town Council request the following actions from the Town Manager for the Watertown Traffic Rules and Orders (TROs):

1. The TROs, last published as amended February 26, 1992, should be updated with all the amendments voted by the Traffic Commission and approved by the Town Manager, as soon as possible.
2. The updated TROs should be posted on the Town website, as well as available in hard copy at the Town Clerk's office.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40am.

Report prepared by: Vincent Piccirilli