



Pam McElroy <pmcelroy@exeternh.gov>

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## Paid Parking in Exeter- reasons to decide NO

1 message

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Anne Kenny <amkennyart@comcast.net>

Fri, Mar 1, 2024 at 12:42 PM

To: selectboard@exeternh.gov, Pam McElroy <pmcelroy@exeternh.gov>

Cc: Russ Dean <rdean@exeternh.gov>, npapakonstantis@exeternh.gov, Nancy Belanger <nbelanger@exeternh.gov>, mcowan@exeternh.gov, jgilman@exeternh.gov

Select Board Members:

Attached below in pdf are my views on paid parking being considered in Exeter. I am against paid parking to address parking concerns downtown. Please read the attachment at your convenience. I hope to make your meeting this Monday, March 4, and during public input speak to this issue more briefly. I wanted you to have my complete thoughts in writing to consider reading. I hope you may have some questions or comments at the meeting or let me know if there will be a public open forum on this topic.

Thank you all for your time on the Select Board. It is a huge commitment of time and we as residents benefit greatly from your thoughtful work. I appreciated the thorough research performed by Stantec Consultants on parking downtown and was actually surprised by some facts and statistics. The analysis was very informative and various recommendations thoughtful.

Sincerely,

Anne Kenny

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 Paid Parking Discussion Select Board 2024 .pdf  
26K

Select Board Meeting Monday, March 4 , 2024  
From: Anne Kenny, Resident

RE: Paid Parking in Exeter

**Paid Parking Discussion:**

Based on the consultants data, the parking situation in Exeter is not a shortage of spaces. I talked with the consultants at Town Hall. I noted to them that I have never had a problem parking in Exeter during any time of the day or night. And like 74% of people surveyed, I am willing to walk 3 minutes to parking. Only 57% of parking is being utilized during the peak time downtown according to their study. Downtown, 1/4 of the spaces are marked 2 hour (maximum) parking. I would increase that number.

The issue I want to raise is the negative impacts of implementing paid parking economically, culturally, and the impact on "quality of life".

First, a paid parking model is a burden, especially to residents of our small town that frequent and support our local businesses and restaurants. The accumulated hours over time of dealing with paid parking kiosks is an economic cost for residents. In addition, the financial expense over years of parking downtown multiple times per week is a financial negative. Like other residents, I focus the majority of my shopping and dining out in downtown Exeter. If there were paid parking it would affect my multiple visits to downtown weekly. Parking is easy at present in my experience. I do not hesitate to stop downtown when I need something. Visitors to Exeter love the ease of parking even with a 3 minute walk to parking lots I have heard.

Secondly, paid parking is annoying and I believe most people feel this way. Culturally, it changes the aesthetics and quality of life in our small, quaint town for residents and visitors. It is a more urban/city approach. You consistently hear people saying they do not want to go to Portsmouth because of parking issues and because of paid parking as the most common option for parking there. Exeter has the feel of an older, small, historic downtown. I would not take that lightly and implement paid parking that would negatively impact that vibe of our special town.

Third, the time management and expense involved in paid parking is an important concern. The maintenance required for parking meters and the personnel to enforce parking limits is a burden. I don't see volunteers doing it, not reliable. The staff needed to manage tickets and collections of parking violations another expense. It seems unnecessary to add this to our Town Administration and Finance Department demands. It was stated that the Police do not want this responsibility. Finding employees at present is a challenge as stated by the Town. This is one more challenge to find staff. It requires expenses that residents should not have to bear. If it is proven that paid parking kiosks actually generate revenue I doubt it takes in to consideration residents hourly time and parking expenses on a yearly basis when you make an economic analysis: How much is your time worth? The expense of parking in your own town? Quality of life issue?

**The following is a list of ideas & consultant recommendations to address parking concerns:**

As the consultants pointed out, employee parking can be accommodated in strategic areas of downtown and implemented through a creative and thoughtful approach. Designating spaces for business employees could be implemented and special decals for their cars. The need to have paid parking downtown because employees are using the street parking on a daily basis is not a reason to burden town residents and visitors with a paid parking model.

“Better targeted signage for parking areas around downtown”. Not everyone that visits downtown knows all the options available. Signage would help.

Additional signs for 2-hour parking could be added to the Water Street on-street parking. Possibly make it 1/2 the signs rather than the current 1/4.

**In summary:**

The quality of life for residents frequenting downtown on a daily basis and the ease of our visitors coming to shop, eat and play in Exeter should be of the utmost importance for your decision. And I stress the detail “every day”. Residents are ultimately the local support for downtown in addition to visitors. Don’t take your eye off that view. Paid parking is an annoyance, a negative. Over time it would decrease the enjoyment of visiting Exeter. It is an advantage we have now that would be costly in many ways to lose.